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The OCI (u)'s Betrayal

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CHAPTER I

The Theory of Progressive Bourgeois Camps

The leadership of the OCI (u) [*Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (unifié)* – Communist Internationalist Organisation (Unified)], like any revisionist leadership claiming to be Trotskyist, hides its true positions behind a tangle of Trotskyist phrases. Instead of saying they support the government and the popular front coalition led by Mitterrand, as a Stalinist or a social democrat would do, they assert “our tactic is directed against the bourgeoisie; and in this fight against the bourgeoisie, [we do not take] the slightest responsibility for the Mitterrand government.” (*Draft Political Report*, p..3.)¹

However, it is enough to set aside the phrases needed to disguise oneself as a Trotskyist for the OCI’s true politics to appear:

“In this fight against the bourgeoisie, taking no responsibility for the Mitterrand government, we are in the camp of Mitterrand in his actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie.” (Ibid, p. 3.)

Since the document mentions no other tactics or combination of tactics, we must conclude this is the central orientation of the OCI for the entire next period: to be in the bourgeois “camp” of the popular front. We must acknowledge the power of synthesis by the author of the document (Pierre Lambert); this formula is, verbatim, the one used by all revisionists of Leninism and Trotskyism.

With total clarity, Lambert tells us the OCI is part of the camp composed by the traitorous workers’ parties, Gaullists and leftist Radicals and led by the highest institution of the bourgeois state and the Fifth Republic — the presidency, exercised by Mitterrand.

Supported by all historical experience, Trotskyism holds the popular front “camp” is bourgeois and therefore counter-revolutionary. This character is accentuated to the maximum when the popular front reaches government because it becomes the leader of the capitalist “camp” through the exercise of capitalist state power. The present revisionism of the OCI has not led it to change this classical conception. Lambert is aware that he has gone over to the counter-revolutionary bourgeois “camp”; for this reason, he hides his revisionist merchandise stating his “tactics are directed against the bourgeoisie”.

If we develop this reasoning, we come to a novel conclusion, to say the least: that Mitterrand’s is a rather bizarre bourgeois camp, since it carries out “actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie” and the main, or only, tactic of the OCI is to be a political part of it.

It is obviously a contradiction. Aware of this, Lambert tries to base his tactics on the following argument: Lenin and Trotsky were part of Kerensky’s camp against Kornilov; Trotsky was part of Chiang Kai-shek’s camp against the Japanese invasion of China and of the Spanish Republic camp against Franco.

We reply that, indeed, Trotsky formed part of those bourgeois camps against their respective adversaries, and he called those who opposed such tactics as traitors. But there are two fundamental differences between Trotsky and Lambert. Trotsky never said we

¹ See bibliographical references at the end of this work.

should be a political part of the Kerensky-Chiang-Negrin camp but only a military member. Besides, all his tactics were aimed at destroying that camp. That was his goal when he entered it, and so he proclaimed it. His policy could be summarised in the phrase, “We are in Kerensky’s military camp to defeat him, as the only way to defeat Kornilov and all the Kornilovs who will come”.

When Lambert says one must be “in the camp of Kerensky or Negrin in their actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie”, he is stating not only that he fights against the Kornilov uprising and Franco’s fascist insurrection, but he supports the political actions of Kerenski and Negrin.

The three examples given by Lambert relate to historical situations in which the objective circumstances forced the revolutionaries (the Bolsheviks in Russia and the Trotskyists in China and Spain) to form part of a common camp with a bourgeois government against the fascist or Bonapartist reaction or the imperialist invasion of a semi-colonial country. But they constantly denounced Kerensky as an agent of Kornilov, Chiang as an agent of the Japanese, and Negrin as an agent of Franco and they fought their actions as being anti-worker.

It is a situation similar to the one that leads us to apply the tactic of entryism in some mass bourgeois-worker party. Let us suppose in a great social-democratic party (Blum’s, for example) there are currents of the left that begin to develop positions similar to those of Trotskyism. According to Lambert, we would have to apply entryism saying that “we are with Blum in his actions against the bourgeoisie”. We Trotskyists hold and do the opposite. Upon entering, we would denounce Blum’s counter-revolutionary policy more than ever and we would try to develop those Trotskyist-like currents to destroy Blum’s party from within and recruit those currents for the national section of the Fourth International. This is Trotskyism traditional principled policy when the objective situation forces us to enter or remain in a front or party that is not the party of the working class in the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Then, returning to Lambert’s current policy, he is in a “progressive” bourgeois camp against another bourgeois camp he considers to be more reactionary. This is the most notorious characteristic of revisionism in this century. This revisionism has historically been expressed in two ways: that of the Mensheviks and that of Stalinism. The essence of Menshevism with its “anti-tsarist front” and of Stalinism with the “popular front” (which we will develop in detail a little later) comprised: the axis, the permanent strategy of those parties, is to form those fronts with the “liberal” bourgeoisie (the Mensheviks) or “democratic” bourgeoisie (the Stalinists), even when they do not exist in reality.

There is a third type of revisionism that differs from the previous one as the formation of the multiclass fronts of this nature is not its permanent strategy but a reaction to objective reality.

Let’s explain. When two bourgeois fronts face each other in a physical confrontation (colonial war, a civil war between republicans and fascists, etc.) in revolutionary parties appear opportunist currents that capitulate politically to the bourgeois leadership of the “progressive camp”. They use the argument of “defeating fascism” (or imperialism) first. This is the case of Kamenev and Stalin in 1917, Stalin–Bukharin in 1924, Stalin–Mao in 1925-27, Molinier–Schachtman in 1936, Pablo in 1951, Mandel regarding Nicaragua in 1979, and now the OCI in France.

The first two revisionist groups are a clear political project that is constantly pursued: the formation of a camp with a “progressive” sector of the bourgeoisie. The leadership of the same may be formally in the hands of a bourgeois-workers’ party, as it happens with the present Mitterrand camp in France. But its pro-capitalist, counter-revolutionary essence does not change; no matter how much it is led by the counter-revolutionary workers’ parties and whether only the “shadow” of the bourgeoisie takes part in it. This is why the political line of progressive bourgeois camps is revisionist.

The third revisionism is the empirical response to a process of reality, to the emergence of two bourgeois camps physically confronted. It does not respond to a general conception but makes up an opportunist capitulation. In some cases (such as Molinier's, which we will see later) the capitulation is not directly to the "progressive" front but to its "left" wing, to some wing of a bourgeois-workers' party part of the camp but maintains a critical position in front of its leadership. This political line is as revisionist as the previous one, since it does not try to break the camp, but to push it to the left.

In the present chapter, we will dwell on the consequent revisionists. In the next one, we will study the turncoats of the revolutionary parties.

1. From the Possibilists to Bernstein

When we say the theory of "progressive bourgeois camps" makes up the basis of revisionism in this century, we refer to post-Bernstein revisionism, i.e., after the Russian revolutions of 1905 and fundamentally of 1917. However, we think it useful to quickly review the previous revisionists and their differences with Menshevism.

Bernstein's revisionism corresponds to the era of rising capitalism and the beginnings of imperialism when the struggles of the workers' movement conquered reforms that did not question capitalist private property or the bourgeois state. Let's start with the French situation in the 1880s, to see how Bernsteinian revisionism is a typical product of that time.

In 1881, the proletarian organisation, called the Federation of Socialist Workers of France, suffers a major electoral setback. As a result, there is a strong internal discussion that leads to the formation of two currents, which are faced in the Congress of Saint Etienne. The minority, led by Jules Guesde, claimed to be Marxist. The majority has gone down in history with the name of "possibilists", the nickname put to them by Guesde's followers. This current, that proclaimed to be an enemy of Marxism, had all the conceptions that later characterised Bernsteinianism, the first revisionist current within Marxism.

They promulgated in their organ, *Le Proletaire* [The Proletarian], the famous formula, "Raising, somehow, in the immediate term, some of our demands to finally make them possible" (hence the nickname of "possibilists"). This phrase means, in practice, the abandonment of the struggle for socialism, fighting only for the crumbs that capitalism can grant.

Twenty years later, Bernstein takes up this conception. He was based on a fact, the workers' movement, in its great struggles, wrested from capitalism one conquest after another (legalisation of the unions, later on of the socialist parties, etc.). This is why Bernstein considers the struggle for socialism through the conquest of power is not posed. For him, the daily program of the workers' movement and social democracy consists in conquering reforms, not in proposing revolutionary tasks that question capitalist private property and the bourgeois state. Socialist society would be reached through the accumulation of reforms, and the very conquest of power would be the product of a gradual evolution. For Bernstein, the parliamentary state structure is above the classes, and the proletariat can come to power within its framework. In summary, socialism would be the product of the social gains of the proletariat and the electoral advances of social democracy (today we have 10 deputies, tomorrow we will have 100, and the day after tomorrow the majority in parliament).

This conception, embodied in the famous aphorism "movement is everything, the end, nothing", explains that Bernstein did not formulate a strategy for the conquest of power, but only tactics.

From this conception, based on the reality of the class struggle and the practice of the workers' movement of his time, Bernstein reaches the general theoretical conclusion the historical process would always develop with this dynamic and perspective. He argues the

stage at which imperialist capitalism can grant reforms will be constantly expanded, and will only end with socialism.

The historical process gave a resounding denial to this conception and to the reformist politics derived from it. The first imperialist war showed that the world capitalist regime and the imperialist countries could not continue to expand the democratic rights and the minimum conquests of the working class. On the contrary, the survival of the system forced capitalism to wrest from the workers the economic and political rights already granted.

Rosa Luxemburg and initially Kautsky opposed the Bernsteinian theory. They pointed out the central problem of social democratic politics was the conquest of power by the proletariat, not the achieving of small reforms. Those who developed this conception the most were Lenin and the Bolsheviks, and it is no coincidence — in Russia, the revolutionary overthrow of Tsarism was on the agenda as the first step to get the minimal and democratic conquests already achieved by the workers' movement of Western Europe.

2. Menshevik revisionism: the theory of progressive bourgeois camps

The Russian Mensheviks are considered, with good reason, as a pole of fundamental importance in the development of Marxism this century. Today they are known much better than Bernstein, whom many consider an antiquity who should only be studied by historians. Instead, Menshevism, as a political current antagonistic to Bolshevism, is an obligatory point of reference. However, there has not been enough reflection on this current as a starting point of the revisionism characteristic of the present century.

Menshevik revisionism is the opportunist response to a historical stage different from that of Bernstein. It is not for the stage of the minimal conquests of the proletariat of the advanced countries, but for the stage of revolutions and counter-revolutions. In Russia, the struggle between Bernsteinians and orthodox (revolutionary) Marxists manifested itself as a fierce battle between economism and Iskrism; between those who said the working class should fight for economic gains and those who gave a political focus to the struggle — the overthrow of the Tsar to establish democracy.

The struggle between Mensheviks (revisionists) and Bolsheviks (Marxists) had an entirely different axis. Both agreed completely in the struggle against Bernstein and his Russian disciples, the economicists, and that the axis of the workers' struggle in Russia had to be for the overthrow of the Tsar.

The Mensheviks never denied the need to fight for the overthrow of the Tsar as an immediate task of the workers' movement. The difference with the Bolsheviks lay in how to do it and what kind of regime should follow.

The great "contribution" of the Mensheviks to revisionism is the theory of progressive bourgeois camps or fronts. According to this theory, to overthrow autocratic tsarism and establish a new regime, the workers' movement and its parties were to form an anti-tsarist camp or front, whose leadership would be in the hands of the liberal bourgeoisie and its party, the Kadet. To put it in the words of Axelrod, one of his most important theorists:

"The proletariat is fighting for conditions of bourgeois development. The objective historical conditions make it the destiny of our proletariat to inescapably collaborate with the bourgeoisie in the struggle against the common enemy" (quoted by Trotsky, "Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution", *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40)*, p. 58).

During the Russian Revolution, Plekhanov, the former-Marxist who had become a spokesman for the social-patriot far-right, said: "We must cherish the support of non-proletarian parties and not repel them from us by tactless actions." (Ibid, p. 60.)

From there to the theory of the revolution by stages was a single step. The Mensheviks held that the overthrow of Tsarism, far from ending the "anti-tsarist" multiclass front, would open a stage in which, under the rule of the liberal bourgeoisie, backward Russia would become an advanced capitalist country. In this stage, the proletariat would gain experience

and conscience, through the struggle for minimal claims. Then the second stage would open; the stage of the conquest of power by the proletariat.

The essence of Menshevik politics was synthesised years later by Trotsky, by stating that the “line of demarcation between Bolshevism and Menshevism” was that this sought to form “a common front — that is, political collaboration — with the class enemy.” (*The Crisis of the French Section*, p. 56 and 57.)

3. The Bolshevik and Trotskyist response

Faced with the camps theory of Menshevism, Lenin and Trotsky proposed an opposite theory. The adoption of this second theory, each on his own, is what explains their profound unity in 1917 and the fact of jointly leading the October Revolution, overcoming their previous divergences.

For them, the fundamental division of Russian society is, as held by orthodox Marxism, in classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat. The axis of its policy is the development of the class struggle until the conquest of power by the proletariat. From this derives a camps theory diametrically opposed to that of the Mensheviks, because outside of the two fundamental classes, there are other exploitative and exploited sectors in society.

One of these is the counter-revolutionary camp, composed of Tsarism, the landowners and the entire bourgeoisie, including the “anti-tsarist” liberal sectors. The other, the revolutionary camp, is composed of the working class, the peasants and all the exploited. This is, as we can see, a camp theory based on the traditional Marxist conception of the class struggle.

The difference between Lenin and Trotsky before 1917 was that Trotsky developed this theory to its ultimate consequences. By understanding, like Lenin, the true nature of the opposing camps, Trotsky came to conclude the revolutionary camp required a leadership, and this could not be other than the proletariat. With this, he refuted, at the same time, the Menshevik theory of the revolution by stages.

Given the revolutionary, anti-capitalist camp is headed by the proletariat, the revolution against the exploiters is directly socialist because of its class dynamics, its tasks and the type of government it will impose for power: a dictatorship of the working class supported by the peasantry and the whole of the exploited. This is the theory of permanent revolution as developed by Trotsky at the beginning when drawing the lessons of 1905.

This theory of Trotsky has a fundamental deficiency; it does not include the concept of a centralised party to lead the working class (which in turn leads the revolutionary camp) in the fight against Tsarism. At this stage between 1905 and 1917, Trotsky conceived the proletarian organisation as a party of the type of Western social-democracy, suitable for elections and parliamentary struggle, that is, for reformist, non-revolutionary action.

In Lenin the opposite contradiction takes place. He shares Trotsky’s conception of the character of the camps, but he does not consider which class should lead the revolutionary alliance of the exploited classes. Therefore, he agrees with the Mensheviks regarding the two stages of the revolution. Whereas, his conception of revolutionary organisation is a centralised party, fit for the struggle for power. His general conception is “more revolutionary” than that of Trotsky because the practice of the construction of such a party would lead him to the same conclusions as of the former. Lenin will finally reach these conclusions, not by assimilation of the theory of permanent revolution, but as a culmination of the development of his own theory of camps and the party.

The contradiction in Trotsky’s thought was resolved in 1917, by a process analogous to that of Lenin. The development of his theory convinces him, after years of fighting the Leninist conception of the party, of the need to build a centralised organisation like the Bolshevik to make the revolution. Lenin’s party was, thus, the right one for Trotsky’s theory.

The synthesis of Leninism and Trotskyism that takes place in 1917 obeys the class logic of the camps theory shared by both.

4. Stalin and the popular front

The conception of the “camps” and of the struggle between them that surpasses the class struggle appears, thus, with the Mensheviks. However, who elevates this conception to the level of a general theory, of a permanent application by the workers’ parties in all countries and circumstances, is Stalin with his popular front.

In 1935 the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International was held, already totally dominated by Stalinism. There, this strategy is promulgated, which has become the characteristic of Stalinism ever since.

The problem under discussion was the advance of fascism in Europe. The triumph of Mussolini, some fifteen years before, was now joined by Hitler in Germany, while the Third French Republic had gained strong Bonapartist features since the reactionary uprising of 1934. Trotsky says:

“The conclusion has been drawn from this that what is necessary is the firm unity of all ‘democratic’ and ‘progressive’ forces, all the ‘friends of peace’ (there is such an expression) for the defence of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and Western democracy, on the other. (...) At the centre of all the debates at the congress stood the most recent experience in France, in the form of the so called ‘People’s Front’, which was a bloc of three parties: Communist, Socialist, and Radical.” (“The Comintern’s Liquidation Congress”, 23 August 1935), *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36)*, p. 87-88 and 90).

As we see, this is the theory of camps, now at the international level. Where the Mensheviks said “Tsarism”, Stalin says “fascism”; and instead of the “anti-tsarist liberal” bourgeoisie, we have the “anti-fascist democratic” bourgeoisie. The international reactionary camp, led by Nazi Germany, is composed of fascist Italy, the Japanese government and other forces such as Lavat in France and Franco in Spain. The democratic camp is made up of the Soviet workers’ state and the so-called “democratic” and “friends of peace” forces — the popular front government of Blum, his Spanish namesake of Largo Caballero and Negrín, and French, British and American imperialisms.

The policy of the communist parties in all countries should be oriented around the strengthening of the “antifascist” democratic camp at the national and world levels. Everything possible must be done to keep the “democratic” bourgeoisie in the antifascist camp, which is precisely what the Mensheviks advocated regarding the “liberal” bourgeoisie.

At the national level, this policy had its clearest expression in Spain, where the CP became part of the popular front government of Largo Caballero before the civil war, and Negrín’s during the same.

The theory of popular fronts has known several forms. For example, in semi-colonial countries, the Stalinists seek to form “anti-imperialist fronts” with the so-called “national” or “anti-monopoly” bourgeoisie.

But the essence is always the same; the formation of the progressive bourgeois camp.

5. Mao and the theory of contradictions

As we have seen, the Mensheviks were the first to apply the policy of progressive bourgeois camps, while Stalin raised it to the level of a permanent strategy. A step was missing: to elaborate a theoretical-philosophical principle to give it a foundation. This is the role played by Mao Tse-tung, with the theory of contradictions.

In his well-known work “On contradiction” he said, raising at a philosophical level what was his policy against the Japanese invasion of China:

“When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a [semi-colonial] country, all its various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position.” (Mao, *Selected Works*, Vol 1, August 1937.)

And he concludes: “Hence, if in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction” (Ibid.)

Reversing the order of the arguments, we have that for Mao there are principal and secondary contradictions in society, but the character of principal or secondary is not permanent, but changes according to the circumstances. He himself says that “in capitalist society, the two forces in contradiction, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction” (ibid.). But, when an imperialist invasion takes place, this contradiction becomes temporarily secondary and subordinate, and the contradiction between the semi-colonial nation as a whole and the imperialist aggressor comes to occupy the main place. As a consequence, the whole nation, that is, its different classes, except for a “small number of traitors”, must unite against imperialism.

Here we have the theory of progressive bourgeois camps expressed in philosophical terms or pseudo-philosophical. Against the camp formed by imperialism and the “small number of traitors” that supports it, the progressive camp of the “nation” is formed, led by the bourgeoisie.

6. Revisionists and Marxists: summary of differences

In conclusion, we see a perfectly clear thread from the Mensheviks’ “anti-tsarist front” to Mao’s “contradictions”: it is the theory of progressive bourgeois camps.

This theory is justified by the abusive generalisation of an actual fact: the differences between the different bourgeois sectors. According to Trotsky, in the bourgeois class there are always much greater antagonisms than in the bosom of the proletariat. It is an easy fact to explain. For the worker, it is the same to be exploited by one or another boss, either “national” or “imperialist”, while among the different bourgeois sectors there is a constant and fierce struggle for the distribution of the national and global added value. At the political level, this struggle is translated into the clash of parties, bourgeois unions, etc., which often reach physical confrontation: coups, civil wars, imperialist invasions, inter-imperialist wars.

Sometimes, as in Mitterrand’s case, the most “leftist” sector of the bourgeoisie is the government itself. In other cases, the more “rightist” sector establishes a fascist or Bonapartist government and may have the rest of the bourgeoisie against them. From this actual fact, revisionism deduces the party of the proletariat must be part of the “progressive” or “democratic” camp or, in the case of semi-colonial countries, the “anti-imperialist” camp. For this theory and policy, it does not matter whether the “progressive” camp is in power or in opposition.

Against this theory of class collaboration, Marxism raises its classical conception, of a society divided into classes and of the need to develop the struggle between them until the conquest of power by the proletariat. This does not mean Marxism ignores the existence of friction between the different sectors of the bourgeoisie, and if these frictions reach a physical clash, the party must formulate a policy according to the circumstances. But this means the party must take advantage of those clashes, never supporting politically a front of class collaboration that may arise from them. Whatever the situation of the class

struggle, the immediate goal of the revolutionary Marxists does not change — it is the proletarian revolution and the conquest of power.

The latter is the fundamental difference between revisionists and Marxists, the one synthesising them all. Stalin hid his policy of class alliance during the Spanish Civil War behind the following argument: “first defeat Franco, then fight for socialism”. He said the same to justify the alliance with Anglo-American imperialism during world war: “the first thing is to defeat Hitler”. Mao expressed it in philosophical terms: first, eliminate the main contradiction — China against Japan — and then the contradiction between the classes will again be the main one. In other words, the revolution must go through two stages. In the first, the progressive camp must defeat the reactionary camp; in this, the policy of class collaboration applies. In the second stage, relegated to an indeterminate future, the struggle for socialism will be raised.

What do Marxists hold? Let us suppose the apparently most favourable case for the position of the revisionists — that two bourgeois camps are at war, as was the case between the Republic and the Franco regime in Spain. In this situation, the revisionists start from the basis there are two confronting camps and one is more “progressive” than the other, although they do not deny the bourgeois character of both.

The starting point of the Marxists is: both are bourgeois camps, therefore counter-revolutionary. This is the essence of the problem. The appearance of the problem is that there is a confrontation, which in no way means this confrontation is not real. It means the confrontation responds to the fact there are differences how to crush a great workers’ rise and impose the triumph of the counter-revolution. The leadership of the Republic says this must be achieved by abolishing the monarchy, an institution especially irritating to the masses, and channelling the struggles to bourgeois parliamentarism. The fascists argue, however, it is necessary to physically massacre the workers, liquidate their union and political organisations, following the Hitlerian model.

In Spain, that difference was settled by arms, but this is not always the case. In France, in 1934, there is a fascist coup that overthrows the president. However, the fascists could not drag an important sector of the bourgeoisie, because the two camps preferred to agree: keep the parliament to save the democratic forms, but increase the powers of the presidency to play a Bonapartist role. That is why Trotsky called the Third Republic, from February 1934, “semi-parliamentary Bonapartism”, i.e., a Bonapartist republic with some features of parliamentarism.

From the class analysis of the camps confronted in war, Marxists argue that their immediate goal, the conquest of power by the proletariat, does not change. On the contrary, if the proletariat does not take power, there can be no solution to anything; neither to fascism, nor to the misery of the proletariat, or any of the problems of the masses, all resulting from the existence of the capitalist regime.

But in the example we are dealing with there is an objective situation — fascism has risen to physically massacre the workers and liquidate all their conquests. This is combined with the fact the revolutionary Marxists (the Trotskyists) are a small minority, while the masses follow the counter-revolutionary workers’ parties part of the “progressive bourgeois camp”.

The masses see, correctly, in Franco the immediate enemy to defeat. Marxists want to win them for our conception that the enemy to defeat immediately is the bourgeoisie as a whole, through the conquest of power and the establishment of a workers’ state. For which of these two immediate goals do Marxists fight? For both; we know if we are not in the front row of the fight against Franco, there will be no way to win the masses for the fight against the bourgeoisie as a whole. This is why Trotsky says: “We participate in the struggle against Franco as the best soldiers, and at the same time, in the interests of the victory over Fascism, we agitate for the social revolution and we prepare for the overthrow of the defeatist government of Negrin. Only such an attitude can give us an approach to the

masses." ("Answer to Questions on the Spanish Situation", 14 September 1937, *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, p. 288.)

In other words, the war between the Republic and Francoism can end with the triumph of one side or the other. But the triumph of the Republic never means the historical defeat of fascism. This danger will continue to exist, as long as the capitalist regime exists. There will also grow misery, not as a danger but as a reality; no problem can be solved without the conquest of power.

CHAPTER II

Revisionism in revolutionary parties

The policy of the Mensheviks extended and generalised later by Stalin with the “popular front” and by Mao with the “contradictions” corresponds to a clear theory, the theory of camps. We insist on the word theory; it is not an empirical response to a certain turn of reality, but a conception that leads these revisionist and opportunist currents to apply this orientation so that the fronts arise in reality.

Neither the Mensheviks, nor Stalin, nor Mao always made the fronts. On the contrary, the Russian liberal bourgeoisie had as a strategy to seek agreements with Tsarism. Likewise, despite Mao’s efforts to form a solid front with Chiang Kai-shek against the Japanese invasion, this broke many times. And while the popular front is a permanent policy of the Stalinist parties since the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, in most occasions and countries they have not been able to form the front despite their efforts.

But in exceptional moments of the historical process, two antagonistic fronts emerge that may settle their political differences by means of a civil war. This is characteristic of situations generated by great triumphs of the workers’ movement: the February revolution in Russia, the 1952 revolution in Bolivia, and the ongoing revolutions in Nicaragua and Iran, or the electoral triumphs of the French and Spanish popular fronts in 1936.

In those moments, reality seems to prove the “camps” theorists right, since they arise in life itself and have, especially the latter, a multi-class character.

The emergence of these “progressive fronts” exerts a strong pressure on the revolutionary parties that do not live in a crystal ball, but, although very minor, they are immersed in society and in the proletariat. Under these pressures, within the revolutionary parties, currents emerge that adopt the Menshevik-Stalinist-Maoist theory of camps.

This phenomenon is observed mainly when the workers’ triumph is seriously threatened by the counter-revolution. For example, when the counter-revolution rises in arms to overthrow a popular-front government and crush the workers’ movement, as happened in the Spanish Civil War; or when imperialism resolves the time has come to colonise a semi-colonial country and overthrow the local bourgeois government. Precisely, Stalinism has found in the emergence of these serious counter-revolutionary dangers a magnificent opportunity to put into practice their camps theory. This, in turn, greatly multiplies the pressures on the revolutionary parties, leading some sectors of them to become a part, as we said, of the “progressive bourgeois camp”.

To summarise, let us say then the permanent policy of the Mensheviks and their disciples, the Stalinists and the Maoists, is based on the theory of camps. Hence, all their efforts are directed towards the formation of “popular fronts”, “anti-fascist fronts”, “anti-imperialist fronts”, or a thousand and one variations of the same, with sectors of the “democratic”, “antitrust”, etc. bourgeoisie. This policy does not depend on whether these fronts exist in reality. If they do not exist, as is the case most of the times, then it is a question of creating them, even if it forces them to swim against the tide.

Instead, the revolutionary or left-centrist parties which, in violation of all Bolshevik principles, have politically supported these popular fronts of a class alliance, have not done so by consciously adopting the theory of camps, but because they have bowed down to the tremendous pressures exerted on the parties inserted in the workers' movement when those fronts arise in reality.

However, the act of giving in to these pressures generates an infernal logic. The revolutionary party that violates its principles to support the multiclass front finally falls into theoretical and political degeneration and ends up adopting the theory of camps as the permanent basis of its policy. This happened with Stalinism, which emerged as a wing of a revolutionary party, and in our ranks with Pabloism.

The revolutionary party (or a sector of it) that abandons the politics of class independence when the two camps arise in reality, falls into an opportunist policy whose main characteristics are:

It abandons the systematic denunciation of the government in its daily agitation and press and concentrates all its attacks on its reactionary adversaries. It stops attacking the counter-revolutionary workers' parties that take part in the popular front government to seek agreements with them. It does not condemn the imperialist character of the government, nor does it call the workers' movement to active solidarity with its colonial class brothers. It does not carry out a relentless struggle against the armed forces of the regime. It abandons the task of "patiently explaining" to the masses the fundamental goal in the stage opened by the proletarian triumph is to carry out the workers' insurrection to overthrow the bourgeois government and establish revolutionary workers' power. It does not raise government slogans. It does not have a permanent policy to develop and strengthen the revolutionary party, an indispensable condition for the triumph of the revolution.

It is precisely opposite to the policy of a true Trotskyist party. While attacking the bourgeoisie, imperialism and the reactionary adversaries of the government, the Trotskyist party is constantly and relentlessly attacking the popular front government, the "progressive bourgeois camp", and the counter-revolutionary workers' parties that support or integrate them as servants of the declared enemies of the masses. In its daily agitation, the Trotskyist party constantly denounces the government and repudiates all its measures, however "progressive" they may seem. It instils in the masses an absolute mistrust and class hatred towards the government and constantly opposes it with slogans of power that show what kind of government it is necessary to establish. It does not abandon for a single day the struggle against its own country imperialism, against the popular front government that serves it and against the armed forces of the regime.

There are certain sects and ultraleft or anarchist groups that may agree with this general policy. But there is a fact that separates them from the Leninist party. The axis of the Leninist party policy is to lead the workers and mass movement to its goal, the insurrection, to overthrow the government and establish the socialist republic. For this, it considers and constantly proclaims it is an indispensable condition to develop and fortify their party. The revolutionary party that hides its goal and this condition falls into opportunism. If a revolutionary party does not put itself forward to conquer power in the stage of the popular-front government, if it does not prepare for the revolutionary overthrow of the government, then it falls into opportunism because it is precisely at the stage of the popular-front government the possibility is raised of the working class seizing power led by the Trotskyist party.

Now we will see how, throughout the history of the class struggle of this century, there have always been revolutionary parties or centrist currents of the left that adopt the revisionist policy of the camps.

1. Kamenev-Stalin vs. Lenin and Trotsky

The classic example of what we say happened in the Russian revolution between February and October, under the provisional government. On the one hand, there was a revolutionary bloc composed by a wing of the Marxist party (Lenin-Trotsky), some anarchist groups and the left Social Revolutionaries.

At the other pole, an opportunist bloc emerged, composed of anarchists like Kropotkin, revisionists of Marxism like Plekhanov, the Menshevik internationalists led by Martov, and a section of the revolutionary Marxist party: the Kamenev-Stalin wing of the Bolshevik Party.

From the revolution of February to March 1917 the Bolshevik party was led by a youthful current whose main spokesman was Molotov, editor of *Pravda*. The axis of its orientation was the systematic denunciation of the bourgeois government that emerged from the February revolution and the repudiation of all its measures. Kamenev and Stalin, on their arrival in Petrograd in March, sweep away that group from the leadership and stamp a new orientation, totally opportunistic, to the party and its organ. Let's see what they said, for example, regarding the crucial question of war:

"When one army stands opposed to another army," we read in one of its editorial articles, "no policy could be more absurd than the policy of proposing that one of them should lay down arms and go home. Such a policy would not be a policy of peace, but a policy of enslavement, a policy to be scornfully rejected by a free people. No. The people will remain intrepidly at their post, answering bullet with bullet and shell with a shell. This is beyond dispute. We must not allow any disorganisation of the armed forces of the revolution." (Editorial "No secret diplomacy", *Pravda* No 9, 15 March 1917.)

If so, how does it intend to end the war? The same article replies:

"Our slogan is not the empty cry 'Down with war!', which means the disorganisation of the revolutionary army and of the army that is becoming ever more revolutionary. Our slogan is to bring pressure to bear on the Provisional Government to compel it to make, without fail, openly and before the eyes of world democracy, an attempt to induce all the warring countries to start immediate negotiations to end the world war. Till then let everyone remain at his post."

And if those warring countries do not want to make peace, what happens? "If the democratic forces in Germany and Austria pay no heed to our voice, then we shall defend our fatherland to the last drop of our blood." (Resolution of the Petrograd Soviet, quoted with approval in the same article.)

And *Pravda* of 16 March insists: "The way out is the path of bringing pressure to bear on the Provisional Government with the demand that the government proclaims its readiness to begin immediate negotiations for peace."

Let's examine these positions in detail. In the first place, there are no classes that struggle, but a "free people" that "remains in its place". This "free people" is, evidently, the one that triumphed in the February revolution; but not just the workers and peasants who made the revolution, but also the liberal bourgeoisie that came to power thanks to it, and established the provisional government.

There the camp is already formed, called "people": the bourgeois provisional government, the liberal bourgeoisie with its party, the Kadet, the Soviet led by the counter-revolutionary workers' parties, and the workers and peasants who fight in the bourgeois army, called here "armed forces of the revolution". Opposite to it, stands the other camp, the reactionary camp, integrated by the other "belligerent countries" (again, we do not speak of classes but of countries).

Our duty as revolutionaries is to fight loyally in the camp of the "people"; that "everyone remains at his post", "we shall defend our fatherland to the last drop of our blood". But at the same time, it is necessary to end the war, which is in the hands of the "chief" of

our camp, the provisional government. To do this, we must “pressure” it to declare “its readiness to begin immediate negotiations for peace”.

And now, what *Pravda* very conveniently “forgets” to mention: that the leader of our “camp” is a bourgeois and imperialist government; that the war is an inter-imperialist war of prey, started on the Russian side by Tsarism; that the army is the same Tsarist army, with its caste of officers and its same structure, that it sends the soldiers (that is, workers and peasants) to die in the trenches at the service of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie and its allies of the Entente.

None of these matters to Kamenev and Stalin: what matters is the unity of the “people”, i.e., the camp of the bourgeois government and the masses.

As we know, it was Lenin who stamped a radical reorientation of the policy of the Bolshevik Party, reorientation expressed in his *April Theses*: no support for the provisional government, relentless fight against it, orientation towards the conquest of power by the Soviets led by the revolutionary party. But he did not impose this line without difficulties; on the contrary, he had to do it through an arduous and prolonged political battle against this wing of the Bolshevik Central Committee.

The policy of Kamenev and Stalin is the classic example of how a wing of the revolutionary party applies the policy of supporting the “progressive bourgeois camp”, yielding to the pressure generated by the emergence of it in real life. Stalin will raise his policy to the level of a theory some years later.

2. Stalin and socialism in one country

The crowning of the Stalinist theory is, of course, the “socialism in one country” formulated by its author in 1924 and consecrated as a basis for the communist parties orientation at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

The theory of socialism in one country was born as a reaction to an actual event, the defeat of the German revolution, and was consolidated with another similar event, the defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1925-27. These defeats momentarily brought down the hopes of Lenin and Trotsky, that the extension of the proletarian revolution to a capitalist advanced country like Germany would end the isolation of the USSR and would give a powerful impetus to the development of the productive forces under the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Along with this, the total paralysis of the productive forces in the USSR due to the civil war and the isolation of the workers’ state, had forced the Bolshevik leadership, since 1921, to implement the New Economic Policy (NEP). The essence of this policy was the restoration of the capitalist internal market (not foreign trade, whose monopoly remained in the hands of the workers’ state), to facilitate the exchange between agriculture, mostly private, and industry, mostly state.

The application of this policy had a double effect. On the one hand, it gave a boost to the productive forces, but on the other hand, it allowed the resurgence of a small capitalist, exploiting class in the USSR: the NEPmen in the cities and the kulaks, or rich peasants, in the countryside.

The ruling bureaucracy, led by Stalin and Bukharin, launched the slogan “enrich” to the peasants, arguing this would win the peasants to socialism. But in reality, as Trotsky points out, this only meant the enrichment of a small minority of peasants at the expense of the majority. At the same time, the so-called “NEPman” emerges, the private trader between agriculture and industry.

Against this situation, the Left Opposition proposed its industrialisation plan, whose funds were to come from the taxes levied on the new class of kulaks. As it is known, the Opposition was accused of “super industrialisation” and of “enemy of the peasantry”.

The NEP policy, as applied by the bureaucracy, was the origin of “socialism in one country”. Let’s listen to Trotsky:

“Irresoluteness before the individual peasant enterprises, distrust of large plans, defence of a minimum tempo, neglect of international problems — all this taken together formed the essence of the theory of “socialism in one country”, first put forward by Stalin in the autumn of 1924 after the defeat of the proletariat in Germany. Not to hurry with industrialisation, not to quarrel with the muzhik, not to count on world revolution, and above all to protect the power of the party bureaucracy from criticism!” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 32.)

Hence, the theory of socialism in one country is also a particular application of the camps theory. Here, the enemy camp is the camp of the bourgeoisie of the capitalist countries, which has managed to defeat the proletarian revolution. The progressive camp is the camp of the NEP, with the workers’ state and the bourgeoisie that begins to resurface (Kulaks and the NEPmen). This camp must be preserved at all costs. For this, it is necessary to build socialism “at a snail’s pace”, according to Bukharin’s well-known phrase, not to accelerate industrialisation or implement policies that prevent the enrichment of the allies in the countryside. At the same time, the class struggle of the kulaks and NEPmen against the exploited and the workers’ state is denied or hidden.

Obviously, the enrichment process of an exploiting class brings a dynamic lethal to the workers’ state. The kulaks and NEPmen find their enrichment has a limit, imposed by the existence of nationalised industry and state monopoly of foreign trade. When questioning these obstacles for their development, they put in danger the very existence of the workers’ state, a source of power and privileges for the bureaucracy. Then, the bureaucracy makes a 180-degree turn; the slogan “enrich” is replaced by “destruction of the kulaks as a class”; and the “snail’s pace” of industrialisation becomes a “furious gallop”. The camp is broken, but not because of the bureaucracy, which favours as much as possible the enrichment of the “countryside allies”, but by the latter, who correctly see in the existence of the workers’ state an obstacle to their greater enrichment and development as a capitalist class.

Socialism in one country is also the theory of camps at international level. The progressive camp, in this case, is the camp of the USSR and the bourgeois and imperialist states that “peacefully coexist” with it, have good trade relations, etc.

Not to abound in examples, let us remember that in order to maintain the “antifascist” camp with the democratic bourgeoisies, the policy of the popular fronts was adopted, which led to the defeat of the revolution in Spain and France.

At present, any bourgeois state that maintains good diplomatic and commercial relations with the USSR is considered a “camp ally”. Based on this consideration, the Soviet bureaucracy is a fierce enemy of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, while it and the Argentine CP are among the best allies of the Viola dictatorship. The only difference between the two dictatorships is that the latter maintains excellent commercial relations with the USSR.

3. Marceau Pivert and the combat popular front

In the revolutionary rise of the French proletariat of 1936, which led to the establishment of the popular-front government of Blum, a left-centrist socialist tendency, the *Gauche Révolutionnaire* [GR – Revolutionary Left] led by Marceau Pivert, was dragged to support the bourgeois popular-front government of Leon Blum.

To begin with, let us say that the Bolshevik wing of the workers’ movement was extremely weak. It was composed only by the Trotskyists of the *Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste* (POI – Internationalist Workers Party), in a revolutionary united front with the Seine Federation of the Young Socialists, led by Fred Zeller. This front had been able to be formed thanks to the audacious work of entryism by the Trotskyists in the SFIO [French Section of the Workers’ International].

As for Pivert's current, it cannot be denied it had a critical stance towards the government, and that it promoted the workers' struggles. So much so that, according to Daniel Guérin (*Front Populaire, révolution manquée*), at the SFIO Congress of Huyghens the GR presented a motion of total solidarity with the strikers.

However, its policy regarding the government did not advance beyond criticism; it never broke with Blum but Pivert himself was part of his government.

His policy, called "the combat popular front", consisted in forming a front with the ranks of the workers' parties, to pressure their treacherous leaderships towards a "revolutionary" policy. According to Guérin:

"As regards the Popular Front number two [of combat], we were dragged to participate loyally, too loyally, in the Popular Front number one [Blum's]. This commitment had an apparent justification. We had to be inside No 1 to promote it and take it to be confused with No 2. We thought we could find a solution to our vocabulary difficulties, making us champions of a combat Popular Front. (...) But it turned out to be a bastard denomination. Despite the two words added, we did not distinguish ourselves sufficiently from Popular Front No 1; thus, we helped to a certain extent to spread the deception." (Guérin, op. cit., p. 103.)

Guérin is right when he says the "combat" popular front is indistinguishable from Blum's, despite the revolutionary phraseology, the support for the workers' struggles and the criticism of the government: "All the fraternal eloquence [of Pivert] could not erase the initial obstacle — he belonged to the government team; he appeared [to the strikers] as a consular character who brought a greeting from the top." (Ibid. p. 123.)

This, as Guérin recognises, is because: "We could not repudiate the Popular Front without further ado [because] we would move away from that formidable movement, emerged from the depths of the masses..." (Ibid. p. 103.)

This argument of "not isolating oneself from the masses" is also a variation of the theory of "camps". The masses are in the camp of the popular front, so there we must be. It is the typical argument used by the centrists and even the revolutionaries who capitulate to the popular front. Given the need to not leave the "camp" where the masses are, we do not call these to break the alliance with the bourgeoisie and the popular front government. The French revolution of 1936 was defeated because, as Trotsky said, "the workers could not recognise the enemy because they had disguised him as a friend" (quoted by Guérin, Ibid. p. 136).

4. Molinier and Schachtman: the first appearance of the camps theory in our ranks

The ranks of Trotskyism have not been immune to the phenomenon by which a sector of the revolutionary party becomes part of the opportunist front. This happened in France, precisely in 1936. There it was not a direct capitulation to Blum's popular front, but indirect, by way of the adaptation to Pivert's "combat popular front". Its protagonists were Raymond Molinier and Pierre Frank.

To them was addressed Trotsky's letter mentioned in the previous heading, to alert the French section about the existence of "dangerous symptoms in our ranks".

These symptoms materialised shortly afterwards when Molinier and Frank broke with the Trotskyist party to create their own group around the newspaper *La Commune*. The first political act of this group was to call Pivert's centrist current to form a common front.

In a letter to his collaborator Jan Frankel (11 December 1935), Trotsky said: "You are certainly already informed about Molinier's betrayal. These fellows do not want to remain 'isolated' so they capitulate to the Pivert tendency, which in turn capitulates to Blum. If you tell them that they are participating in the preparation of the sacred union, they will naturally be indignant. But it is only the simple truth. (...) This is the first wretched

capitulation to the powerful chauvinist pressure that bourgeois public opinion is putting on the working class with the indispensable help of the Stalinist bureaucracy.” (*The Crisis of the French Section*, p. 113.)

Again, we have Pivert’s argument, with a slight variation. According to Pivert, it is about being in Blum’s front so as not to move away from the masses. For Molinier-Frank, it is about being with Pivert for the same purpose. The political line is always the same: being with the masses means being in the bourgeois “progressive camp” in which the masses trust.

Schachtman applied another variation of the camps theory in Spain when asking Trotsky whether the revolutionaries had to support in the Cortes the military budget requested by Negrin. His surprise (as he himself clarifies) was huge when he received the following response from Trotsky: “If we were to have a member in the Cortes, he would vote against the military budget of Negrin. (...) To vote for the military budget of the Negrin government signifies to vote him political confidence.” (*The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, p. 287-288.)

Here the policy of camps, as applied by Schachtman, has an apparent grip on reality, since the two camps actually exist and are faced with a civil war. The budget requested by Negrín is to fight against fascism; therefore, says Schachtman, we should approve it.

Trotsky’s response, of avoiding any act of political solidarity with the bourgeois government, is the response emerging from Bolshevik politics and the lessons of the Russian revolution. Just as the Kornilov uprising and the counter-revolution were defeated by denouncing Kerensky and conquering power, the only guarantee for a definitive and historic victory against fascism is the policy of class independence, oriented towards the overthrow of the bourgeois popular front government of Negrin and the conquest of power by the proletariat.

5. The Pabloite version of the camps theory

In 1951, in his famous document *Where are we going?* Pablo presents a new, novel version of the theory of camps. Let’s see what he said:

“For our movement objective social reality consists essentially of the capitalist regime and the Stalinist world. (...) The relationship of forces is, to express it in a schematic way, the relationship of forces between those two blocs.” (SWP, *Education for Socialists Bulletin*, March 1974, p. 5.)

As we see, here too there are two “camps” at international level: the “progressive camp” of the USSR and the “reactionary camp” of the capitalist regime. What is the novelty?

For Marxism, the “capitalist regime” is a totality, made up by the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It means then that Pablo incorporates in his “reactionary camp” the proletariat of the capitalist countries and mainly of the United States, country leader of the camp. Whereas, for previous revisionists, the proletariat was always part of the “progressive camp”.

On the other hand, the Pabloite “progressive camp” was integrated by the USSR as a whole, that is, by the bureaucracy.

It is noteworthy that Pablo’s revisionist theory, like all we are seeing in this chapter, also responded to a real fact, the “cold war” between the Soviet bureaucracy and Yankee imperialism.

Pablo’s position was magnificently refuted by Favre-Bleibtreu of the French section in “Where is Comrade Pablo going?": “We thought that social reality consisted in the contradiction between the fundamental classes: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Clearly an error, from now on, the capitalist regime, which encompasses precisely these two classes, becomes a totality that is counterposed... to the Stalinist world.” (SWP, *Education for Socialists Bulletin*, March 1974, p. 10.) Favre-Bleibtreu added that, by abandoning Marxist,

class criteria, in favour of the revisionist idea of the camps, Pablo would be forced to align himself with the “anti-capitalist Bloc” (Stalinism) and end up capitulating to it.

The Orthodox Latin American Trotskyists, as we called ourselves at that time, those of us who fought Pablo, argued that Favre-Bleibtreu’s definition was fair but limited; Pablo would capitulate not only to Stalinism but to all the bureaucratic or bourgeois apparatuses that had mass support.

6. Bolivia and Nicaragua: Two applications of Pabloite revisionism

Facts did not take long to prove Favre-Bleibtreu and us right. The Bolivian proletarian revolution of 1952 destroyed the armed forces of the bourgeoisie and brought to power the bourgeois nationalist party of Paz Estenssoro, who formed a government with some union bureaucrats such as Lechin.

True to his revisionist theory, Pablo argued that two fronts had been formed. The reactionary front composed of the Bolivian oligarchy (the “*rosca*”),¹ the great tin bosses, the expropriated landlords and imperialism. The progressive front was formed by the nationalist government and the leadership of the Workers’ Central.

The Trotskyist party POR [*Partido Obrero Revolucionario* — Revolutionary Workers’ Party], at that time very powerful, argued, guided by Pablo, Mandel, and Posadas, that the government should be defended from the attacks of imperialism and the *rosca*, and support its “progressive” measures. In other words, it should be part of that camp.

The results of that policy are known. The Bolivian bourgeoisie could rebuild its army and crush the revolution. For its part, Bolivian Trotskyism, which was in a position to take power, so far could not recover from this defeat (30 years later).

In the three decades since the Bolivian masses have risen again and again, but Trotskyism, reduced to the state of small sects, has played absolutely no role in these rises.

The other case, much more recent and known by our movement, is that of Nicaragua in 1979. There a guerrilla organisation of petty-bourgeois and mass influence, the Sandinista Front, led the struggle that swept power from the Somoza dictatorship, to establish a new bourgeois government.

The Socialist Workers Party of the United States characterised the GRN [National Reconstruction Government] directly as a workers’ and peasant’s government. Instead, Mandel, a faithful disciple of Pablo, correctly characterised it as bourgeois but held it was necessary to support it. He carried this policy to the extent of supporting the government in its acts of repression to the internationalist combatants of the Simon Bolívar Brigade, created on the auspices of the Bolshevik Faction and among which there were many Trotskyist comrades.

In this, Mandel was consistent with his policy of years, of supporting the Latin American guerrilla groups and through them Castroism.

With his policy in Nicaragua, Mandel applied the camps theory. He supported the “progressive camp” of the counter-revolutionary bourgeois government formed by the FSLN even against the Trotskyist revolutionists.

7. The reasons for a capitulation

We have seen how in all the stages opened by great triumphs of the workers’ movement, a sector of revolutionary Marxism, forming a bloc with opportunist currents, falls into capitulation to the popular front based on the theory of “camps”. The most recent victim

¹ From the rise of tin mining until 1952, Bolivia was dominated by the tin oligarchy, nicknamed “la Rosca”, literally a small, hard kernel but sometimes translated as “The Screw”.

of this phenomenon is the leadership of the OCI, the same comrades who defended our International from Pabloite liquidation.

That comrades with such a trajectory have capitulated to the popular front, as has happened with other revolutionaries in history, requires a Marxist explanation, that is, of class.

When a popular front government comes to power, among the masses, mainly its most backward sectors, hopes are raised the government can solve their problems (unemployment, the high cost of living, etc.). These false hopes exert tremendous pressure on the parties active in the workers' movement. This is how in the factories, offices, universities, military service, etc., the militants are surrounded by comrades who trust the government. These militants begin to think: "After all, can this be true? The popular front government, could it be better than we thought, or what Trotsky taught us? In any case, let's give the government a deadline to see what it does."

Another pressure is exerted on the leadership of the revolutionary party, which is even stronger and more dangerous. Stronger, because it does not come from the backward masses, who will quickly be disillusioned by the inevitable betrayals of the bourgeois government, but from the leadership cadres of the counter-revolutionary workers' parties, those most interested in keeping the popular front government in power, since they form part of it.

Our cadres and leaders have close relations (which can conflict, but no less close) with the cadres and leaders of the opportunist parties because they are in the same organisations and trade unions. When a popular front government comes to power, the traitor leaders become state officials or gain great influence in the state apparatus. They take advantage of this situation to "offer their good services" to our leaders, to make them believe, with a patient and astute policy, all the demands can be met gradually under the new government. The new government, they say, is sympathetic towards the revolutionary left, is almost friendly with it. If the revolutionary left does not think so, ask for an interview with such minister, such secretary of state, or with the own president and you will see how they receive you and respond to your requests.

Therefore, the real enemy is not the government but the bourgeoisie and especially the big monopolies.

No true revolutionary party is immune to these pressures. A "Trotskyist" party that does not suffer great internal struggles in a period of popular front government is not a party but, in the best of cases, a crystallised sect, isolated from the masses and their organisations. If it is a party inserted in the mass movement even if it is very minority, a section of its leadership will yield to the pressures of its "reformist friends", with arguments of the type, "we should not isolate ourselves from the masses" or "it is necessary to fight the hopes in the field of hopes", and will end capitulating to popular frontism.

This is practically the same as what Trotsky said in his letter already quoted, to explain the reasons for the capitulation by Molinier and Frank. The OCI is now suffering the same pressures and is traveling the same path as the founders of La Commune.

CHAPTER III

The Anti-imperialist United Front as Expression of the Theory of Progressive Bourgeois Fronts

One of the most important specific expressions of the theory of progressive bourgeois camps was formulated by the Communist International itself; it is the anti-imperialist united front. Subsequently, this theory was developed opportunistically by Stalin and Mao and by the revisionist currents of Marxism and Trotskyism, until reaching Lambert and Favre.

The main content of this theory can be summarised thus: the strategic axis of the revolutionary party in the backward countries is the formation of a single anti-imperialist front with the national bourgeoisie.

Given the enormous importance of the backward countries in the world class struggle, because they cover the vast majority of humanity, this particularly odious aspect of the revisionist theory of camps deserves to be devoted to a chapter. In this chapter, we will first see the theory of Lambert-Favre and their teachers, Stalin and Mao. Then we will see the conceptions of the Third International, Lenin and also of Trotsky until 1917; conceptions that in our opinion were oriented in a sense very similar to the one the Bolsheviks had before the revolution of 1917, that is, the revolution by stages and the revolutionary workers' and peasants' dictatorship to develop the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Finally, we will see the subsequent ideological development of Trotsky until he reached his conception of permanent revolution in the backward countries.

1. The Lambert-Favre theory of the anti-imperialist united front

In our ranks, this variation of the theory of “progressive bourgeois camps” was explained by Luis Favre in a speech in the General Council of the Fourth International (International Committee) [FI(IC)], directly inspired in its content by Pierre Lambert.

At the beginning of his speech, Favre argues categorically: “I believe, in general terms, the axis of the struggle for the united front in the colonial and semi-colonial countries goes through the struggle for the anti-imperialist united front and the self-organisation of the working class.” (“On the anti-imperialist united front”.)

Here, two concepts are expressed. One, implicit, is that the united front is a permanent strategy. We will not dwell on this false concept here since it is the subject of a later chapter. The other concept, this yes it is explicit, is that in the colonial and semi-colonial countries the united front is materialised in anti-imperialist united front and this is the axis of the revolutionary strategy in those countries.

Established this axis, Favre defines the front: “The party of the proletariat must fight in a united bloc with the parties of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie.” (Ibid.)

This is so, according to Favre-Lambert, because “there is a qualitative difference between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of the colonial and semi-colonial countries.” (Ibid.)

The conclusion is: “It is not a matter of making the anti-imperialist united front only when there is a conflict with imperialism: the struggle against the imperialist domination of the country is permanent. (...) Well, we are ready to wage that struggle with anyone. To make a bloc with anyone based on that line. Even with the [Peruvian] *Partido Socialista Revolucionario* (PSR – Revolutionary Socialist Party),¹ which self-proclaims to be a bourgeois nationalist.” (Ibid.)

Summing up the arguments by Lambert-Favre, we have: in the semi-colonial and colonial countries there are two camps, the anti-imperialist camp with the proletariat, the masses, and the sector of the bourgeoisie called “nationalist” and the imperialist camp, with imperialism and the sectors of the bourgeoisie linked to it.

The duty of the party of the proletariat, the axis of its policy, is to form a “united bloc” with the parties of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, and against the imperialist camp.

The axis of Lambert-Favre’s policy is not to achieve class independence of the proletariat and, in this context, to study the tactical convenience of making this or that limited and circumstantial agreement with some sector of the bourgeoisie, but exactly the opposite. What is permanent, strategic, is the agreement with the bourgeoisie. The “self-organisation of the working class” (assuming, with a great deal of good will, this is synonymous with class independence), goes to a secondary level.

On this ground, Lambert and Favre do not agree with Molinier and Schachtman, who gave in to the politics of the camps when they arose in reality. Their agreement is with the Mensheviks, the Stalinists, and Pablo, who elevated this policy to the level of a permanent theory and orientation. Lambert and Favre argue that, when the bloc with the bourgeoisie does not exist (which is in the absolute majority of cases), the revolutionary party must create it.

2. Stalin, Mao, and the struggle against “militarism” and “imperialism” in China

Actually, Lambert and Favre have not “reinvented the wheel”. Their conception is identical to the one formulated by Stalin and Mao for the Chinese revolution of 1925-27.

The infamous Comintern program drafted by Bukharin under the inspiration of Stalin argued as Lambert and Favre hold today, that the colonial bourgeoisie could play an anti-imperialist role and, therefore, “Temporary agreements [with the national bourgeoisie of colonial countries] are admissible only in so far as the bourgeoisie does not obstruct the revolutionary organisation of the workers and peasants and wages a genuine struggle against imperialism.” (Quoted by Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, p. 167-168.)

If any difference exists between Stalin-Bukharin and Lambert-Favre, it is the first are a little more cautious, they use the conditional tense in their assertions (“to the extent that”). According to them, it is possible for the bourgeoisie to fight against imperialism, and in this case, the agreements with it are “admissible”. Instead, for Lambert-Favre, what is sought is not an agreement but a “united bloc” with the “anti-imperialist” bourgeoisie, and this policy, more than admissible, is a “duty” and the “axis” of the revolutionary party’s activity.

Returning to Stalinism, the main driver of this policy in the Chinese Communist Party was the young Mao Tse-tung, recently elected to the Central Committee of the party (see the Introduction by Chinese Trotskyist Pen Shu-tse² to *Leon Trotsky on China*). Mao exposed his positions in the party newspaper, in the article “The Peking coup d’état and the Merchants”; the merchants here are the bourgeoisie.

1 **Revolutionary Socialist Party** (PSR) is a political party in Peru formed in November 1976 by a group of radical army officers who had been active under Velasco Alvarado and who subsequently advocated a return to the objectives of the 1968 coup. The PSR was founded to participate in the 1978 elections for the Constituent Assembly and won 6 of the 100 seats.

2 In modern transcriptions from Chinese, known as Peng Shuzi.

“Because of historical necessity and current tendencies, the work for which the merchants should be responsible in the national revolution is both more urgent and more important than the work that the rest of the people should take upon themselves. We know that the politics of semi-colonial China is characterised by the fact that the militarists and the foreign powers have banded together to impose a twofold oppression on the people of the whole country. The people of the whole country naturally suffer profoundly under this kind of twofold oppression. Nevertheless, the merchants are the ones who feel these sufferings most acutely and most urgently.” (Quoted by Peng, op. cit., p.41, emphasis by Peng.)

Consistent with this analysis, Mao arrives at the following conclusion: “The broader the organisation of merchants, the greater will be their influence, *the greater will be their ability to lead the people of the whole country, and the more rapid the success of the revolution!*” (Ibid, p. 42, emphasis by Peng.)

Another new member of the CC, Chu Chui-pai, goes a little further: *“Merchants, peasants, workers, students, and teachers, all who belong to the common people should join the Kuomintang”*. (Ibid, page 43, emphasis by Peng.)

The conception expressed here is that the tasks of the anti-imperialist (“national”) revolution must be fulfilled mainly by the merchants, i.e., the bourgeoisie, who must lead the camp of the “people” against the camp of “militarists and the foreign powers”. With an addition, by Chu, that the progressive camp should be integrated into a single party, the Kuomintang.

As Peng says, quite rightly: “It is quite clear that we are presented with two manifestations of the same Menshevik thinking.” (Ibid, p. 43.) These three expressions, we note, if we add the one of Lambert-Favre, are identical to that of Stalin-Mao except by the aspect of the single party.

3. Mao and the Japanese invasion of China

The classical conception of the anti-imperialist united front as a variation of the theory of progressive bourgeois camps was elaborated by Mao during the Japanese invasion of China in the prelude to the Second World War.

In a programmatic report submitted to the Communist Party of China (CPC) National Conference (May 1937) under the title “The tasks of the Chinese Communist Party in the period of resistance to Japan”, it says:

“As the contradiction between China and Japan has become the principal one and China’s internal contradictions have dropped into a secondary and subordinate place, changes have occurred in China’s international relations and internal class relations, giving rise to a new stage of development in the current situation.” (*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. 1.)

What are those “internal contradictions” that have passed to a “secondary and subordinate place”? Mao himself responds:

“China has long been in the grip of two acute and basic contradictions, the contradiction between China and imperialism and the contradiction between feudalism and the masses of the people. (...) The development of the national contradiction between China and Japan has demoted the domestic contradictions between classes and between political groupings to a secondary and subordinate place.” (Ibid.)

For Mao, the contradictions are never between the classes but between the people and feudalism on the one hand, between the Chinese nation and the Japanese aggressor on the other. In both cases, they are contradictions between bourgeois camps, with the working class and the masses forming part of the most “progressive” of them. The moment Mao writes this document, the China-Japan contradiction has relegated the contradiction between people and feudalism to a secondary place, due to the fact of the invasion. Mao continues:

“This has placed the task of establishing an anti-Japanese national united front before the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people. Our united front should include the bourgeoisie and all who agree to the defence of the motherland, it should represent national solidarity against the foreign foe.” (Ibid.)

But there is more: “China should not only unite with the Soviet Union, which has been the consistently good friend of the Chinese people, but as far as possible should work for joint opposition to Japanese imperialism with those imperialist countries which, at the present time, are willing to maintain peace and are against new wars of aggression.” (Ibid.)

From here a program is derived whose main points are:

“For the sake of internal peace, democracy, and armed resistance and for the sake of establishing the anti-Japanese national united front, the Chinese Communist Party has made the following four pledges in its telegram to the Third Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang:

(1) the Communist-led government (...) will be renamed the Government of the Special Region of the Republic of China and the Red Army will be redesignated as part of the National Revolutionary Army, and they will come under the direction of the Central Government in Nanking and its Military Council respectively;

(2) a thoroughly democratic system will be applied (...);

(3) the policy of overthrowing the Kuomintang by armed force will be discontinued; and

(4) the confiscation of the land of the landlords will be discontinued.” (Ibid.)

So, we have that the Japanese invasion of China has led to the emergence of two camps: the imperialist camp, composed of Japan and its allies, and the “progressive”, or “anti-imperialist” (anti-Japanese) camp, led by the bourgeois government of Chiang Kai-shek and integrated by the national bourgeoisie and the imperialist powers that have differences with Japan. The party of the proletariat must be integrated into this progressive anti-imperialist camp, for which it “suspends” the struggle to overthrow the government and the revolutionary expropriations of the landowners by the peasants. Moreover, it dissolves the revolutionary governments of the areas controlled by it and its army, to integrate them to the bourgeois government and army under the command of the fascist Chiang Kai-shek.

Mao concludes: “Our enemies — the Japanese imperialists, the Chinese traitors, the pro-Japanese elements and the Trotskyites — have been doing their utmost to wreck every move for peace and unity, democracy and freedom.” (Ibid.)

He is right in saying that Trotskyists are enemies of the unity with the bourgeoisie he advocates, since it is a matter of political unity, of subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. Precisely at the same time, Trotsky wrote, in a letter dated 23 September 1927:

“We never denied the necessity of a military bloc between the CP and the Kuomintang. (...) We demanded, however, that the CP maintain its entire political and organisational independence, that is, that during the civil war against the internal agents of imperialism, as in the national war against foreign imperialism, the working class, while remaining in the front lines of the military struggle, prepare the political overthrow of the bourgeoisie.” (*Leon Trotsky On China*, p.570.)

This is exactly the opposite of what the camp theorists hold. The national war of defence against imperialism does not relegate the class struggle to a secondary plane. On the contrary, the proletariat and its party fight in the first row against the foreign invader, but maintain their total political and organisational independence and prepare the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois leadership.

The Trotskyists fight against Japanese imperialism in the front row, but:

1) They are not subordinated to the “jurisdiction of the Central Government and its Military Council”, but “to create ‘war’ organisations on a class basis (...) the vanguard of the

proletariat remains during the time of war in irreconcilable opposition to the bourgeoisie.” (Ibid., p. 564 -565.)

2) It does not “suspend the policy of overthrowing the Kuomintang” but “prepares the genuine worker-peasant government, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat.” (Ibid., p. 565.)

3) It does not “suspend land confiscations” but rather understands that “great opportunities open up for workers’ economic struggles” (Op. cit., p.565).

The parties that follow the Lambert-Favre orientations for the colonial and semi-colonial countries, if they are consistent until the end, should apply Mao’s policy, not Trotsky’s.

4. The policy of the Third International for the colonial and semi-colonial countries

If Lambert, Favre and the current supporters of this revisionist theory we are discussing want to find a point of support, very relative and very difficult on the other hand, in the classic texts of Marxism, we will save them the bother of searching for it. They can find it in the documents and resolutions of the Third International and in certain texts of Lenin and Trotsky of the time, referring to the backward countries.

Next, we will analyse some of these texts, which in our opinion — and we say it quite frankly — in relation to the permanent revolution are centrist, as were the Lenin’s positions before 1917, when sharing with the Mensheviks the bourgeois character of the revolution and stagism, disagreeing with the Mensheviks about class dynamics. They are texts that express the conception not only of the revolution in stages but also of the support or defence of the “progressive bourgeois camp” in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, mainly the most backward ones.

It is, however, a “sui generis” Menshevism, which has a revolutionary aspect since this revolution by stages is integrated within the world socialist revolution, and it insists on the political independence of the European working class. Let’s delve into the topic.

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern approved the “Theses on the Eastern Question”, which include a thesis on the “anti-imperialist united front”. There it says:

“The workers’ united front is the slogan advanced in the West during the transition period, characterised by the organised gathering of forces. Similarly in the colonial East at the present time, the key slogan to advance is the anti-imperialist united front. Its expediency follows from the perspective of a long-drawn-out struggle with world imperialism that will demand the mobilisation of all revolutionary elements. This mobilisation is made all the more necessary by the tendency of the indigenous ruling classes to make compromises with foreign capital directed against the fundamental interests of the mass of the people. Just as in the West the slogan of the workers’ united front has helped and is still helping to expose the social democrats’ sell-out of proletarian interests, so the slogan of an anti-imperialist united front will help to expose the vacillations of the various bourgeois-nationalist groups. This slogan will also help the working masses to develop their revolutionary will and to increase their class consciousness; it will place them in the front ranks of those fighting not only imperialism but the remnants of feudalism.

“The workers’ movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must, first of all, establish itself as an independent revolutionary factor in the common anti-imperialist front. Only when its importance as an independent factor is recognised and its complete political autonomy secured can temporary agreements with bourgeois democracy be considered permissible or necessary. Similarly, the proletariat supports and advances such partial demands as an independent democratic republic, the abolition of all feudal rights and privileges, the introduction of women’s rights, etc., in so far as it cannot, with the relation of forces as it exists at present, make the implementation of its soviet programme

the immediate task of the day. At the same time, the proletariat seeks to put forward slogans which further political links between the peasant and semi-proletarian masses and the workers' movement.

"Explaining to the broad working masses the need for unity with the international proletariat and the Soviet republics is one of the most important functions of the anti-imperialist united front. The colonial revolution can triumph and defend its gains only if accompanied by a proletarian revolution in the advanced countries." ("Theses on the Eastern Question", *Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, 5 December 1922.)

Then it synthesises the program for the backward countries, in relation to the anti-imperialist united front:

"The demand for a close alliance with the proletarian Soviet republic is the key-note of the anti-imperialist united front. This slogan must be accompanied by a determined struggle for maximum democratisation of the political system, which will deprive the most politically and socially reactionary elements of their popular support and will give the workers' organisations the freedom to fight for their class interests (the demands for a democratic republic, agrarian reform, a reform of the tax system, the organisation of the administrative apparatus on the basis of popular self-government, labour legislation, the restriction of child labour, maternal and child welfare, etc.)." (Ibid.)

As we can see, the perspective of the workers' revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat for the backward countries are not put forth here. On the contrary, there is only the fight against "imperialism" and, within the country, against the "remnants of feudalism", with the aim of reaching a democratic republic in which the working class wins claims similar to those of the Western proletariat.

The fifth thesis clarifies the role of the party of the proletariat in the democratic revolution and the democratic republic:

"A dual task faces the Communist and workers' parties of the colonial and semi-colonial countries: on the one hand, they are fighting for a more radical answer to the demands of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, directed towards the winning of national political independence; on the other hand, they are organising the masses of workers and peasants to fight for their own class interests, making good use of all the contradictions in the nationalist bourgeois-democratic camp." (Ibid.)

Again, it is about carrying out the bourgeois democratic revolution and getting a specific, independent place for the working class within it. The task of the communist party, the revolutionary party of the proletariat, is not to seize power but to gain an independent place within the bourgeois camp that carries out the bourgeois democratic revolution.

We have a good example of the application of this policy, in the "Open Letter of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern to the communists and the working people of Turkey":

"The Communist Party of Turkey has always supported the bourgeois national Government in the struggle of the working masses against imperialism. The Communist Party of Turkey even proved its readiness, faced by the common enemy, to make temporary sacrifices in regard to its programme and ideals." (*The Communist International Documents (1919-1943)*, vol. 1 (1919-1922), p. 380.)

Some delegates spoke against the position of the Theses. For example, delegate Roy from India argued: "Revolutionary national movements in those countries where millions and millions are pining for national liberation, and which must free themselves economically and politically from imperialism before they can make further progress, will not succeed under the leadership of the bourgeoisie." (Ibid., p. 382.)

However, as Radek pointed out in his reply, the theses of the Second Congress of the Comintern also advocated support for the nationalist movements of the East without referring to the class struggle. Radek added that Marx, at the time, had advocated a policy of support for the bourgeoisie while it was revolutionary. This is the position that prevailed in the Fourth Congress.

5. The theoretical context of the Third International positions

The key to the resolution of the Third International we are analysing resides in a theoretical conception imposed by Lenin and Trotsky in relation to the backward countries.

The theory of permanent revolution, as Trotsky had formulated up to that point, was related to the Russian and European revolution, not to the backward countries, to which he did not pay much attention until after the October Revolution. Trotsky considered that the permanent revolution, as a combination of the bourgeois-democratic and socialist revolutions and as the need for the seizure of power by the proletariat to solve the tasks of the democratic revolution, was a theory for the revolution in the tsarist empire combined with the European revolution. That is, a theory for the advanced countries and for a country like Russia, European and backward, but with elements of strong capitalist development (according to his well-known exposition of the law of uneven and combined development in the preface to his *History of the Russian Revolution*).

After 1917, when studying the situation of Asian and African countries and verifying the tremendous weakness of its capitalist development, he arrives at a conclusion similar to that of Lenin and the Mensheviks and opposed to that of the permanent revolution. He considers that the revolution in the backward countries of the East and Africa will go through two clearly differentiated stages: first, the national and democratic revolution, until the proletariat is consolidated as a class; then, the stage of the socialist revolution.

However, as we said at the beginning, this conception includes an additional aspect — that the first stage of the backward countries will be combined with the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries of Western Europe. In other words, he sees the world revolution (a concept totally absent from Menshevik theory) as a process in which “uneven revolutions” are combined: socialist in the advanced countries, bourgeois democratic in the backward countries.

Let's see it in his own words. The Manifesto of the First Congress, written by him, says, in relation to the “open insurrections and the revolutionary ferment in all the colonies [that] have hence arisen”: “Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia! The hour of proletarian dictatorship in Europe will strike for you as the hour of your own emancipation!” (*The First Five Years of the Communist International*, Vol. 1, p. 24-25.)

And he insists: “In those countries where historical development provided the opportunity, the working class has utilized the regime of political democracy in order to organise against capitalism. The same thing will likewise take place in the future in those countries where conditions for the proletarian revolution have not yet matured.” (Ibid., p. 26.)

That is to say, there are mature and “not yet matured” countries for the proletarian revolution. In these, the task of national liberation and democracy is raised, and the struggle for it will be combined with the proletarian revolution in Europe.

Trotsky will say something similar in the Second Congress: “The simultaneous struggle against foreign oppressors and their native confederates — the feudal lords, the priests, and the usurers — all this is transforming the growing army of the colonial insurrection into a great historical force, into a mighty reserve for the world proletariat.” (Ibid., p. 125.)

As we see, here Trotsky speaks of an “army of colonial insurrection”, without class differentiation, and of the enemies of that army: the foreign oppressors, the feudal lords, priests and usurers, not the bourgeoisie.

Between the Second and the Third Congresses he insists again, emphasising the two aspects of his conception, both of the character of the national revolution in the East and of its intimate link with the proletarian revolution in the imperialist West. In reply to the ultraleftist Gorter, who argued that the English working class was isolated from the petty bourgeoisie, unlike the Russian who had the support of the peasantry, he said:

“English proletarians cannot attain their final victory until the peoples of India rise and until the English proletariat provides this uprising with a goal and a program; and in India victory is out of the question without the aid and the leadership of the English proletariat. Here you have the revolutionary collaboration between the proletariat and the peasantry within the confines of the British Empire.” (Ibid., p. 139.)

Here we have the connection between the British and Indian revolutions. What is the “goal and program” the British proletariat will provide to the Indian peasantry? Trotsky responds:

“[Gorter] approaches things from an English insular standpoint, forgetting about Asia and about Africa, overlooking the connection between the proletarian revolution in the Occident and the national-agrarian revolutions in the Orient. (Ibid., p. 140.)

That is to say, in India, the proletarian revolution is not raised, but the national and agrarian revolution; and not in isolation, but in intimate relation with the revolution, this one proletarian, in the metropolis.

Only towards the Fourth Congress, Trotsky’s position begins to change: in the sense of the internal class dynamics of the revolution, but not yet in terms of its class goals. “The growth of the indigenous proletariat paralyses the national revolutionary tendencies of the capitalist bourgeoisie, but at the same time, the vast peasant masses are finding revolutionary leaders in the person of the conscious communist vanguard. The combination of military oppression by foreign imperialism, of capitalist exploitation by the native and the foreign bourgeoisie and the survival of feudal servitude creates favourable conditions for the young proletariat of the colonies to develop rapidly and to take its place at the head of the revolutionary peasant movement.” (*The Communist International...*, op. cit., p. 246.)

Summing up, Trotsky in Lenin’s life goes as far as the proposal of the combination of peasant struggles and nationalist movements of backward countries with the socialist revolution in the advanced countries. As an analysis of the revolutionary perspectives of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the farthest he goes in his analysis is his assertion that the peasant or anti-imperialist revolution can have as a point of support and leadership the proletariat if it becomes politically independent. But, like Lenin before 1917, who considered that the anti-tsarist revolution would be led by the proletariat and the exploited masses but its objectives would be purely national and democratic, Trotsky never puts forth for the backward countries, as class dynamics of the revolution, the seizure of power by the proletariat, the establishment of its dictatorship and the beginning of the realisation of the socialist revolution.

6. The Chinese revolution and Trotsky’s theoretical evolution

At first, Trotsky will approach the Chinese revolution with the theoretical conception we have just studied. That is, it will be a two-stage revolution, and the Chinese process was in its first stage, of nationalist and bourgeois democratic character. At this stage, the policy of the Chinese Communist Party must be in alliance with the national bourgeoisie and even with its government, against Japanese imperialism. It is nothing less than the politics of the “progressive bourgeois camp”, in this case, “anti-imperialist”.

Thus, in a note dated 22 March 1927, he clearly states:

“The communists cannot, of course, relinquish support for the Nationalist army and the Nationalist government, nor, it appears, can they refuse to become part of the Nationalist government. But the question of the complete organisational independence of the Communist Party, i.e., of its withdrawal from the Kuomintang, must not be put off one day longer. (...) The communists can form a united government with the Kuomintang on the condition of the total separation of the parties forming the political bloc.” (“A brief note”, *Leon Trotsky on China*, p. 126.)

Trotsky is proposing here that the CP must put an end to the policy it had been practicing, of entryism in the bourgeois nationalist party, but not only must it not break its political alliance with it, but it must support its government and even take part in that bourgeois government.

Around the same time, he insists:

“The drawing of organisational lines (of the CCP with the Kuomintang), which inevitably flows from the class differentiation, does not rule out but, on the contrary, presupposes—under existing conditions—a political bloc with the Kuomintang as a whole or with particular elements of it, throughout the republic or in particular provinces, depending on the circumstances. But first of all, the CCP must ensure its own complete organisational independence and clarity of political program and tactics in the struggle for influence over the awakened proletarian masses. Only with this kind of approach can one speak seriously of drawing the broad masses of the Chinese peasantry into the struggle.” (“The Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang”, 27 September 1926, *ibid*, p. 116)

The contradiction in this position is clear. Trotsky is proposing that the CP must achieve its organisational independence, as a party, based on class differentiation, to gain influence over the proletariat and that the proletariat lead the peasantry. In other words, it must form a bloc of exploited classes against the bourgeoisie. But at the same time, it must maintain its political alliance with the bourgeoisie, its bloc with the Kuomintang. This, with the goal, “not of course in order to remove the working class from the framework of the national-revolutionary struggle, but to assure it the role of not only the most resolute fighter...” (*ibid*, p. 114).

In short, it is the proposal to fight in a bloc against the bourgeoisie and at the same time to make a bloc with the bourgeoisie to carry out the national and democratic revolution.

Trotsky begins to overcome this contradiction, shortly after. In a letter to a comrade of the Left Opposition (29 March 1927), he proposes:

“The problem of a struggle for a workers’ and peasants’ government should in no case be identified with the problem of ‘non-capitalist roads’ of development for China. The latter can only be posed provisionally and only within the perspective of the development of world revolution. Only an ignoramus of the socialist-reactionary variety could think that present-day China, with its current technological and economic foundations, can through its own efforts jump over the capitalist phase. (...) If, thus, the problem of the Chinese revolution growing over into a socialist revolution is right now merely a long-term option wholly dependent upon the development of the world proletarian revolution, the problem of the struggle for a workers’ and peasants’ government has the most immediate importance for the course of the Chinese revolution as well as for the education in revolution of the proletariat and its party.” (“Letter to Alsky”, *ibid*, p. 129.)

Trotsky here continues to hold that the revolution is bourgeois-democratic and that the socialist revolution must be postponed for a second stage (you cannot “jump over the capitalist phase”, “the socialist revolution is a long-term option”). However, here he already elevates it to the conception of workers’ and peasants’ government to promote the democratic revolution. What he is proposing here is the Leninist conception (not his own) of what the Russian revolution should be: a bourgeois, democratic, national revolution for its goals, worker and peasant for its internal class dynamics. It is the policy that Lenin synthesised in his slogan “Revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants”.

This letter of Trotsky has a fundamental importance for another aspect: here, the Lambertist theory of the two camps — progressive and reactionary — confronting each other is refuted several decades in advance. Let’s see:

“You have made an error, expressed with particular clarity [when] you say that in China, ‘two camps that are bitterly hostile to one another’ have come into being: in one are the imperialists and militarists and certain layers of the Chinese bourgeoisie; and in the other are ‘the workers, artisans, petty bourgeoisie, students, intelligentsia, and certain

groups from the middle bourgeoisie with a nationalist orientation....' In fact, there are three camps in China — the reactionaries, the liberal bourgeoisie, and the proletariat — fighting for hegemony over the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry. (...) The Kuomintang in its present form creates the illusion that two camps exist, furthering the national-revolutionary disguise of the bourgeoisie, and therefore, making its betrayal easier." (Ibid., p. 128.)

The three camps that Trotsky raises are the class camps and each one of them struggles to win the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie; they are not the two camps of Lambert and which appear here with the same names.

What should be the policy of the CP in this situation? "What we must safeguard in the course of the revolution is above all the independent party of the proletariat that is constantly evaluating the revolution from the point of view of three camps, and is capable of fighting for hegemony in the third camp and, by so doing, in the entire revolution." (Ibid., p. 129.)

The "third camp" is, of course, the alliance of workers and peasants against the bourgeoisie. This, combined with the need for a workers' and peasants' government, shows a decisive improvement in Trotsky's positions. However, the contradiction persists that for him, the revolution is bourgeois democratic:

"[We must not forget] the 'petty detail' that what is taking place in China is not a socialist overturn but a bourgeois-national revolution." (Ibid., p. 131.)

Let it not be said our interpretation of Trotsky's policy throughout this stage is abusive. As we have just seen, he explicitly excludes that the Chinese revolution can assume anti-capitalist, socialist tasks; for him, its tasks are exclusively democratic and bourgeois.

Let us quote, finally, his letter to the Political Bureau of the Russian party, 31 March 1927:

"A system of soviets in China would not be, at least not in the coming period, an instrument of proletarian dictatorship, but one of revolutionary national liberation and democratic unification of the country. (...) But in China, what is occurring is a national-democratic revolution, not a socialist one. (Ibid., p. 135.)

In other words, the contradiction between the character of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and its class dynamics is again expressed: it is led by the proletariat organised in soviets.

The final improvement comes only in September 1927, in his thesis "New opportunities for the Chinese revolution, new tasks, and new mistakes", against the program of Stalin and Bukharin:

"But from the circumstance that a state of civil war has broken out between the revolutionary troops and the Kuomintang flows the fact that the revolutionary movement can win only under the leadership of the Communist Party and only in the form of soviets of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies. (...) That, in turn, calls for a complete program in the period of struggle for power and the conquest of power, and after the establishment of the new regime. (...) In other words, the business at hand is the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Ibid., p. 263 and 265.)

And he adds: "The Chinese revolution at its new stage will win as a dictatorship of the proletariat, or it will not win at all." (Ibid., p. 295.)

This is the conception that Trotsky will develop from then on, synthesised in the theses of the permanent revolution. t

CHAPTER IV

French Reality Seen Through the Camps Theory

For the OCI — we believe to have established this quite clearly — the electoral win of the French masses in defeating Giscard and electing Mitterrand has given rise to two fronts or “camps”. The “reactionary” camp comprises the bosses grouped in their association, the CNPF [National Council of the French Employers] (which frequently has been referred to as the “true political General Staff of the bourgeoisie”), the bourgeois parties UDF [Union for French Democracy] and RPR [Rally for the Republic] and the institutions of the Fifth Republic. The “progressive” camp is made up of Mitterrand, the SP, the CP, the Radicals and the left Gaullists (who have ministers in the government). The other member of this camp is the OCI since it is “in the camp of Mitterrand in his actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie”.

Regarding the Mitterrand camp, it is important to make a clarification. There are in the government of Mitterrand two bourgeois ministers, Jobert and Crépeau. The documents of the OCI point to the need to make “an SP-CPF government without bourgeois ministers”; therefore, it would seem that there is a struggle between “camps” within the government itself, in which Jobert and Crépeau would be elements of the enemy camp. However, this is not the case, since the OCI refuses to raise the traditional Leninist-Trotskyist slogan “out with the bourgeois ministers of the popular front”. Later we will see the reasons for this refusal, the arguments with which the OCI supports it and how this is consistent with its entire revisionist course. Here we only want to record that, for the OCI, the ministers Jobert and Crépeau and their parties, the Radical and the left Gaullist, are part of the progressive, Mitterrandist camp.

Since these two camps exist, for the OCI the present and future reality of France, for the next few years, will be characterised by a sharp, increasingly violent confrontation between them; that is to say, exactly the same as Pablo proposed for the world reality in the 1950s.

In contrast, for Marxists, the rise of the popular front government does not alter the fundamental, permanent reality of the social struggles under capitalism. The struggle, now and always, is waged between the classes. If there are two camps, these are the camp of the revolution, made up of the exploited and led by the proletariat, and the camp of the counter-revolution, made up of the exploiters and headed by the bourgeois government of the day, be it popular front, fascist or any other type.

Let us see now whether our assertion is correct that for the OCI the current and future French reality is not characterised by the class struggle but by the struggle between two bourgeois “camps”.

1. Two incompatible camps

According to the *Draft Political Report*, the Mitterrand government is a bourgeois government: “The Mitterrand-Mauroy government is a bourgeois government of class collaboration, popular front type. Once its class character has been determined,

revolutionaries cannot consider it a workers' and peasants' government. This is not *our* government." (Op. cit., p. 3, emphasis in original.)

These phrases appear with monotonous insistence throughout the document and apparently leave no doubt. But only apparently because it is only about the ritual repetition of some concepts, as to show that, after all, the OCI is a Trotskyist party. The actual characterisation of the Mitterrand government, rituals apart, appears a little further on and is consistent with the camps theory: "there is an insurmountable contradiction (antagonism) between the bourgeois government of Mitterrand and the bourgeoisie." (Ibid., p. 4.)

And further on: "... the Mitterrand-Mauroy government forcefully enters at every step in conflict with the bourgeois state apparatus, with the bourgeoisie whose interests, however, it defends." (Ibid.)

And this characterisation is completed with the following statement: "... the mere existence of the election of F. Mitterrand to the Presidency of the Republic and of an SP-CPF majority [to the National Assembly] is incompatible with the anti-democratic and reactionary institutions of the Fifth Republic." (*Informations Ouvrières*, No 1019, editorial.)

All of which joins the previously quoted assertion that the Mitterrand government carries out "actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie".

Summing up then, we have a government which is "bourgeois", but has some rather special characteristics, to say the least:

- performs "actions" (plural) against the bourgeoisie;
- its mere election is "incompatible" with the reactionary institutions of the Fifth Republic;
- enters "necessarily in conflict" with the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus;
- between it and the bourgeoisie, there is an "insurmountable contradiction".

This being the case, the time has come to change the traditional position of Trotskyism with respect to popular front governments. They are no longer bourgeois, counter-revolutionary governments and, in the case of France, imperialist; they are "sui generis" bourgeois governments (to use the Pabloite terminology) that have an "insurmountable" antagonism with the bourgeoisie.

On our part, we continue defending the old Marxist and Trotskyist characterisation. We hold there is no other "incompatibility" or "insurmountable contradiction (antagonism)" in a capitalist society than the one existing between exploiters and exploited, i.e., between the "camp" integrated by workers, peasants, and other exploited layers and led by the proletariat, and the "camp" of the bourgeoisie led by the bourgeois government of the day. These are the two "camps" that face each other now and will continue to do so while capitalist society exists.

A bourgeois government can at some point apply a policy or take some measure that disadvantages some sector of its "camp" (understood in the Marxist sense, of class).

What no bourgeois government can do is to rule against the entire bourgeoisie or against the bourgeois state apparatus. In other words, no bourgeois government can govern against its own class.

Driven by the theory of the camps, the OCI invents a new category —the "anti-bourgeois bourgeois government", worthy of support by the revolutionary workers' party.

2. The seed of a civil war

In an effort to justify his policy of being "in the camp of Mitterrand", the author of the *Draft Political Report* (Comrade Lambert), is forced to advance far beyond the "incompatibility" of the camps. In a display of magical realism — a school that has bequeathed works of

novelistic fiction, but whose intromission in politics is absolutely catastrophic — he argues the camps are faced in fact in a latent civil war, which may explode at any time.

The *Draft Political Report* repeats a thousand and one times that “the bourgeoisie cannot recognise the Mitterrand government as its government”, until arriving at the following statement: “Mitterrand clashes with the actual needs of bourgeois society because they are antagonistic to those of the masses, as these raised them when they overthrew Giscard. Always and everywhere, such a situation carries the seed of a civil war, and the bourgeoisie cannot but prepare it. Obviously, this is the general line of the development of the class struggle...” (Ibid, p. 5.)

Again, we have the conception of the “insurmountable antagonism” between the bourgeois government and the bourgeoisie. The needs of the masses are antagonistic to those of the bourgeoisie (indeed, we say), but who expresses the needs of the masses is... the bourgeois government. And by expressing the needs of the masses, the bourgeois government is confronting its own class in “the seed” of a civil war.

It says the outbreak of civil war corresponds to the “general line of development of the class struggle”. We could agree with this proposal since our era of the total decadence of the capitalist system is characterised precisely by wars and revolutions, a product of the bourgeoisie not being able to satisfy even minimally the needs of the masses. That is, there is a de facto civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. But what the OCI (u) holds is that there is a civil war between the bourgeoisie and the government of Mitterrand, and that is about to explode, tomorrow or next month: “the great capital (is preparing) civil war attacks and although Mitterrand wants to oppose them, he is creating the conditions himself (such as the operation against the SAC, the changes operated amongst public officials).” (Ibid, p. 5.)

In other words, Mitterrand does not want a civil war, but with the measures he is taking (here two are mentioned, against the state apparatus), big capital is already preparing the civil war against it.

And to confirm this is, indeed, the OCI's assessment of the current French situation, the *Draft Political Report* wants to justify its policy with three examples: the Bolshevik policy during the Kornilov uprising against Kerensky, the Trotskyist policy when the Japanese invasion of China, and again the Trotskyist policy in the Spanish Civil War. When a historical analogy is made it is not to look for differences (since there are no two identical historical situations) but the common points. What is common among these three mentioned historical situations is the existence of a military confrontation, not only political, between two sides: counter-revolutionary uprising, imperialist invasion, and civil war.

Therefore, for the OCI, the civil war not only corresponds to the “general line of development of the class struggle” but it is imminent, it can explode at any moment.

3. A new agreement between Pablo and Lambert

This basing of a whole policy (wrong and revisionist, too, as we will see) in an imminent war, has a not very honourable antecedent in our ranks. In the document *Where are we going?* Pablo said:

“Nothing else is now left for capitalism except to take the road toward ever greater military, economic and political preparations for a new war. (...) Capitalism is now rapidly heading toward war (...) Therefore, discussion among revolutionary Marxists cannot take place over the question of whether war is inevitable or not, so long as the capitalist regime remains standing, but is limited to questions of how soon, the conditions for the outbreak of war, as well as over the nature and consequences of such a war.” (Op. cit.)

Pablo justifies his policy of capitulation to Stalinism and bourgeois nationalism with the immediate and inevitable perspective of a “third world war” between the “Stalinist camp” and the “imperialist camp”. Lambert justifies his capitulation to Mitterrand with

the perspective of the “seed” civil war (which in his case means immediate) between the “Mitterrandist camp” and the “bourgeois camp”.

We insist that what the OCI’s *Draft Political Report* says, that the civil war corresponds to the “general line of development of the class struggle” would be justified if he added that this civil war is between the classes, not between bourgeois camps. But there is another problem. Lambert and Pablo fall into the methodological error of abstracting a trend of reality and basing all their politics on it. This is opposite to the Marxists, who seek at all times to specify the dynamics and perspectives of the situation and draw a policy that responds to the present situation, not future, of the class struggle.

Furthermore, unlike what Lambert claims, the outbreak of the civil war will not depend on Mitterrand’s measures against the state apparatus (assuming such measures existed) or any other measure of the bourgeois government. It will depend on the development of the class struggle and, fundamentally, on the rise of the masses. Until now, the workers’ and popular movement, held back by their treacherous leadership, has carried out some isolated struggles, several of them important for the character of the companies in question, such as Renault. But we do not yet see a tendency of these struggles to spread and centralise. For now, the perspective of the civil war in France should be measured in terms of years (maybe a few: two, three, or five), not months or weeks.

4. A deliberate confusion

The *Draft Political Report* says: “We were against the Chiang Kai-shek government, but we were in ‘his camp’ during the war against Japanese imperialism. The Bolsheviks declared against Kerensky’s government but were in the front row of Kerensky’s ‘camp’ against Kornilov. We condemned the Spanish popular front government and yet we were in that government’s ‘camp’ against Franco.” (Op. cit., p. 7.)

This is the only historical analogy in the document; therefore, we conclude that Lambert considers this is the current situation of the class struggle in France: a situation of a physical clash, of direct military confrontation between the “camps”.

For our part, we believe he is hallucinating by confusing the friction between bourgeois sectors, with its concomitance of strong, hostile expressions, with the seed of civil war. You really have to have a poor political vision to confuse the editorials of *Les Echos* or *Le Figaro* or the statements by Ceyrac (chairman of CNPF) with the Japanese invasion of China, the uprising of Kornilov or the Spanish civil war.

However, it is not by chance that the *Draft Report* does not give an example closer to the true French situation; for example, Germany under the Ebert-Scheidemann¹ government or France under Blum. These analogies are relative since in present-day France there is no rise of masses remotely comparable to those two situations. What the three situations have in common is the existence of deep differences between different sectors of the bourgeoisie, differences that gave rise to strong friction between some sectors and the government. But this is qualitatively different from the three examples of the *Draft Report*, in which the differences reached such a degree, that they resulted in physical struggles, in war.

Like everything in politics, the outlandish comparison of the *Draft Report* has a goal. It is true, and Trotsky has pointed it out, that the Bolsheviks fought in the front row against Kornilov, the Chinese Communists had to fight in the front row against the Japanese invasion, and the Fourth International supporters in Spain had to fight in the front row against Franco. In Spain, Trotsky described as “traitors” and “agents of fascism” those who refused to implement this policy.

But in those three cases, there was a military struggle. Never did Lenin and Trotsky argue one had to be “in the Kerensky camp” before the Kornilov uprising, or in the camp

¹ **Friedrich Ebert** (1871–1925) and **Philipp Scheidemann** (1865–1939) were German politicians of the Social Democratic Party. Ebert was the first President of Germany from 1919 until his death in office in 1925. Scheidemann was Chancellor of the Republic in 1919 for 127 days.

of Ebert and Scheidemann. Trotsky never called his supporters to fight in the “camp of Largo Caballero”, that is, in the camp of the republican government prior to the Francoist uprising, nor to support its actions against the bourgeoisie.

With its absurd comparison, the *Draft Report* tells us in a subliminal way that the Trotskyist policy in France today consists in fighting in the front row of the Mitterrand camp against the bourgeois camp.

But in addition, the *Draft Report* holds that in this struggle we must politically support the government. With this, it completely breaks with Trotskyism, which never became politically enraged with a bourgeois leadership, whether there was a civil war.

Later we will see what it means exactly for the Bolsheviks and Trotskyists to fight “with Kerensky against Kornilov” or “with Negrin against Franco”. Now let's take an example of the daily class struggle. Suppose the bosses send a fascist gang to destroy a union. Logically, the union bureaucracy will defend the organisation that is the source of its privileges, and the Trotskyists will defend the workers' organisation from the capitalist gangs. This puts us in the same “camp” with the bureaucracy from the military point of view, and we will have to accept that leadership as long as it is stronger than our organisation. But we will never support the bureaucracy politically, not even in the middle of the struggle. We always distinguish between the political plane and the military plane.

In conclusion, we say that the historical analogy made by the *Draft Report* is useless from every point of view. In France, there is no immediate prospect of civil war, but if there were, the policy of the OCI would be equally revisionist.

5. The actual French reality

If the OCI considers there is “incompatibility” and “absolute antagonism” between the popular-front government camp and the camp of the “capitalists and bankers”, where there is “a seed” of civil war between them, then it cannot be said that the same capitalists and bankers think the same.

Let's see, for example, one of the most “violent” statements of the daily *Les Echos*, an authorised voice of the CNPF:

“If by chance the President of the Republic or the Prime Minister read these lines, perhaps they will understand why the heads of companies, to whom they appeal every day, have distrust in them; you cannot call for an effort and, at the same time, allow the ministers to behave like vulgar militants to sow disorder in the companies” (10 August 1981).

In no way can this be considered as a call to overthrow the government. On the contrary, the same newspaper, a staunch enemy of Mitterrand, calls the bosses to have patience: “Ruled by the left, the right or the centre, France never yields to extremes for a long time. May the day come when France should reproach those who have economic and financial power, the heads of enterprise, for having despaired too soon!” (*Les Echos*, 30 September 1981).

Exaggerating a little the words used by *Les Echos*, the bosses are saying: “We have not seen worse rubbish than the left government of Mitterrand, but just have a little patience and France will reject it.”

So, what exists between the bosses and their government are some strong arguments. But those discussions have not gone, nor, for now, do they show symptoms of going, outside the common frame of a Bonapartist regime with elements of bourgeois democracy: the parliament and the editorial columns of the newspapers representing the different currents.

6. The true incompatibility

For Marxists, no bourgeois government, even a popular front, is “incompatible” with the bourgeois regime and state nor can there be an “absolute antagonism” between the bosses and a bourgeois government. The only thing incompatible with the bourgeois regime is the mobilisation of the masses and the emergence of a situation of dual power. This is what the bourgeoisie cannot tolerate for a single moment.

The popular front government of Blum was perfectly compatible with the Third Republic, which Trotsky characterised as “semi-parliamentary Bonapartism” after the coup of February 1934 (*Leon Trotsky On France*, p. 141). The government of Blum fell when it was unable to contain the rise of the masses, but the Third Republic survived until the invasion of France by the Nazis and the establishment of the Vichy regime. And Blum himself was called to rule again in the postwar period, under the regime of the Fourth Republic.

Mitterrand will be perfectly compatible with the Fifth Republic as long as he can stop the mobilisation of the masses. When the struggles of the French workers are extended and centralised, when organisms of dual power begin to emerge, even embryonic, then the situation will be incompatible with the keeping of the bourgeois regime. In such a case, the bourgeoisie will most likely find it necessary to get rid of the popular front government, by constitutional methods or through a *coup d'état*, depending on the situation.

When this situation is raised, and not a second before, the Trotskyists will fight militarily in the Mitterrand camp.

7. Who foresaw the current French situation?

For the revolutionary party it is essential to correctly predict the dynamics of the situation because otherwise, it is impossible to develop a line, that is, the set of slogans and tasks that the party presents to the masses. In this sense, let's see what were the forecasts made by the two currents in which the FI (IC) has divided.

Comrade Miguel Capa,² a leader of our current, made a very clear prediction in his article “The Mitterrand government, its perspectives and our tasks”. We allow ourselves to quote it extensively:

“Mitterrand assumes government amid a serious crisis of the French economy and without there having been a ‘first wave’ of big strikes forcing him to make concessions. These two facts will push his government to impose the harsh plans of hunger and unemployment of the bourgeoisie, continuing the orientation of Giscard-Barre. He will try to convince the workers to accept it and, if he fails, he will appeal to all means. (...)”

“For the workers’ movement and other popular sectors life becomes harder: both inflation and unemployment have accelerated during the four months of the popular front government (...)”

“Everything shows the popular front will quickly bring greater misery and unemployment for the workers, if the first strike and revolutionary wave does not break out that, for a time, prevents it.” (*Correspondencia Internacional* No 13.)

The article by Francois Forgue, in response to Capa, published in the same issue of the magazine, does not respond to these clear concepts, nor does it make a prediction of its own. No other material of the OCI (u) does it.

The closest thing to a prediction appears in the *Draft Political Report*:

“The contradictions between the Mitterrand-Mauroy government and the bourgeoisie are such that Mitterrand may be forced to commit himself far beyond what he had foreseen in a conflict with the bourgeoisie...” (p. 7).

² **Miguel Capa** is a pseudonym used occasionally by Nahuel Moreno because of anonymity reasons.

This is posed as a hypothesis; however, in the absence of any statement, we must consider this is the prediction made by the OCI (u) on the policy of Mitterrand. Its policy is based on this hypothesis since it will support the government in its “actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie”.

Who was right, Capa or Lambert? Is it true that Mitterrand has committed more than expected in a conflict with the bourgeoisie and, therefore, the masses are living better and better? Or, on the contrary, was Capa right in stating that Mitterrand would apply the hunger and unemployment plans of the bourgeoisie and his government would bring greater misery to the masses?

It is not necessary to go far to find the answer: the situation of the French proletariat is so grim, that the OCI (u) itself is forced to denounce it:

“Wages are frozen, prices continue their rise; rents increase more and more and become such a heavy burden that more and more unemployed people cannot pay them, and evictions have already begun; working conditions, far from improving, become intolerable (...) This, not to mention the pace of work acceleration, which already has caused a strike of several weeks by the metallurgists of the Sandouville Renault Factory. Not to mention the increase in social security fees.” (*Informations Ouvrières* 1028, editorial.)

And the list goes on: “... workers without specialisation continue without specialisation, work continues to be exploited work, studies are still blocked, overcrowded classes and without teachers, layoffs continue and increase.”

This entire picture is summarised in very few words: super-exploitation of workers, guaranteed by the government at the service of bosses.

All of which confirms Capa's forecast and refutes categorically Lambert's.

CHAPTER V

The politics of the OCI (u)

When there is a very serious political-economic confrontation between different sectors of the bourgeoisie (fascist uprising, imperialist invasion, confrontation in the streets, bourgeois sabotage, civil war), every Trotskyist party, every revolutionary current of the workers' movement that is not ultraleft or sectarian has as a policy to align itself in the camp it considers more progressive. If it is a fascist or Bonapartist uprising against a popular-front, democratic or parliamentary Bonapartist government, we align ourselves in the "camp" of the latter. We can even, very exceptionally, reach practical agreements, strictly delimited, for the struggle.

It would seem that this leads us to agree with the OCI (u). However, this is not the case. For the Trotskyists, this alignment is purely physical, military. We never subordinate ourselves to the political leadership of the bourgeoisie or of the counter-revolutionary workers' parties. In addition, we consider this alignment, which forces us to subordinate ourselves to the military command of the progressive camp, is a tactical fact that depends on the relationship of forces. We do it while the bourgeois-Stalinist-social democratic leadership is stronger than our party, but our political focus is always to break the class alliance, that is, the "progressive camp" of the popular front or the Bonapartist parliament. We materialise this axis by posing to the masses that, if the workers do not overthrow the popular-front government and take power, there cannot be a real struggle against the reactionary offensive. As Trotsky clearly states, Kerensky had to be defeated in order to defeat Kornilov once and for all. This task is complemented by another — the physical confrontation with Kornilov's insurrection, when this occurs.

The OCI (u) has the opposite policy. In the first place, the physical clash between the two bourgeois camps in today's France only exists in the feverish imagination of the author of the *Draft Political Report*, who seeks to justify his political alignment in the Mitterrand camp.

Second, OCI policy seeks to build confidence in the bourgeois government camp and in its leadership, Mitterrand. It is a policy of explicit support for the government, of counselling it and serving it as a fraternal adviser to urge it to break with the bourgeoisie and take an anti-capitalist course. In this chapter, we will see how this policy is expressed and its practical application.

1. The Lambert-Forgue theory of the "Mitterrand camp"

We have seen the politics of the "camps", in its Lambert-Favre variety, regarding the colonies and semi-colonies of imperialism. But, what about the imperialist countries? What does specifically happen with respect to France? Can this policy be applied there?

The response of the OCI and Lambert is a resounding yes, the theory and politics of "camps" applies in France too. We have already seen the *Draft Political Report* supports the need to be "in the camp of Mitterrand in his actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie".

For his part, Francois Forgue in his response to Capa, states:

“The ‘critique’ to the popular-front [it refers to the Mitterrand government] is not an end in itself but only a means for the working class to mobilise against the bourgeoisie.” (*Correspondencia Internacional*, No 13, October 1981.)

That is to say, it is a matter of mobilising the masses only against the bourgeoisie, not against the government (as if this were not precisely the general staff of the bourgeoisie and the counter-revolution). A government of class collaboration, imperialist to the core like the one of Mitterrand, is called to rule against the bourgeoisie. This government is not denounced, but its errors are fraternally criticised.

The argument about ends and means used by Forgue is too old to impact anyone. And, in addition, he misuses it.

Each end requires a suitable mean, or means. The means are the tools the party uses to achieve its ends. Any worker knows to remove a screw, the right tool must be used — a screwdriver. It is necessary the systematic criticism of the bourgeois government of the day, the tireless proposal that the workers must expel the bourgeois government and take power themselves, as the only means, as the only tool to defeat the bourgeoisie and remove that social screw that destroys us and crushes everyone.

Forgue tells us that the means we use to accomplish a task is a secondary issue. We say there is a deep unity between means and ends. To assert that “the main thing is the ends” is as false as “the main thing is the means”.

As an example of his orientation, Forgue says: “The popular-front government ‘respects’ the state bureaucracy; we attack it.”

A Marxist would say: “The popular-front government respects the state bureaucracy; we attack that bureaucracy and denounce the government for respecting it.”

2. The other member of the “progressive camp”

We must point out that in our enumeration of members of the “progressive camp” headed by Mitterrand, we left one unsaid, and not very honourable one, by the way. It is Pablo, the great theorist of the conception of the camps, who led Trotskyism to commit the great betrayal of its history in Bolivia.

In the first issue of his newspaper, called *Pour L'Autogestion* [For Self-Management], Pablo publishes an editorial referring to his policy for the Mitterrand government, where he says: “we will support all the measures taken, that meet the demands of the workers and the movement of general emancipation of capitalism and bureaucracy at the international level.”

Evidently, Pablo sees greater virtues in the Mitterrand government than Lambert does, since the “progressive” action of that government extends to the international level. But in essence, Pablo and Lambert say the same thing.

Pablo: this government takes measures that satisfy the demands of the workers.

Lambert: This government carries out actions against the bourgeoisie and this is why we are in its camp, supporting its “progressive steps”.

Terminological differences aside, the agreement is total. Both Lambert and Pablo are in the political “camp” of Mitterrand and support his measures. If the old saying is correct, “tell me who you are with and I will tell you who you are”, the comrades of the OCI must reflect. After decades of fierce fighting against Stalinism and against Pablo, its agent in our ranks, they are now in the same “camp” with both.

3. Driving the bourgeois government towards anti-capitalist positions

In a document written by Stéphane Just and approved by the OCI's Political Bureau as "preparatory to the 36th Congress of the OCI (u)" (and which therefore has the same importance as the *Draft Political Report*), it is said with clarity and frankness worthy of a better cause:

"We are ready to support all government resistance to the pressure and sabotage of the capitalists, every act that questions the Fifth Republic and its institutions (the state, RDR-UDF), to the reactionary reforms of the Fifth Republic that satisfy the demands of the masses, that move against the capitalists. Without hopes, and without planting hopes, we try to get the Mitterrand-Mauroy government to advance as much as possible on this path [of satisfying the demands of the masses and attacking the capitalists]." (*La Lettre d'Informations Ouvrières*, No 11, p. 4.)

This completes the affirmation of the *Draft Political Report* that the OCI is "in the camp of Mitterrand in its actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie". Here it is said the government will effectively resist the "pressure and sabotage of the capitalists" and "question the Fifth Republic", not to replace it with some other bourgeois regime but to "satisfy the demands of the masses" and "to move against the capitalists". That is to say, that the popular-front, counter-revolutionary, bourgeois, imperialist government of Mitterrand-Mauroy can be oriented in an anti-capitalist sense. The task of the OCI is to encourage it to "advance as much as possible on this path". If the government is criticised (something that the OCI does occasionally and in a fraternal way, like addressing a "derailed" comrade, it is always with the same goal: "Our criticism of the Mitterrand-Mauroy government is always approached from the point of view of the fight against the bourgeoisie and capital." (Ibid, p.4.)

If this were really so, if from the point of view of Marxism a rotten bourgeois, counter-revolutionary and imperialist government could be oriented against the bourgeoisie, then Stalinism would be right. There would be popular governments, not of class, which could rule against one or another class according to the pressure exerted on them.

By adopting the theory of camps, the OCI (u) has abandoned the Marxist method, which defines governments by their class character. Faced with these statements by Just, and others similar ones, the thousand and one ritual declarations of the *Draft Political Report* — that the Mitterrand government is "bourgeois" and "is not our government" — collapse.

A young comrade might wonder: does not Trotskyism demand that a policy be adopted to pressure the workers' parties to break with the bourgeoisie, take power into their hands and apply a revolutionary program of transitional demands?

Indeed, we reply; and we add that this analysis and tactics of Trotskyism confirm the classist method and politics of Marxism.

From the point of view of its class character, there is a gulf between workers' parties, although traitors, and bourgeois governments of whatever kind. A traitorous workers' party remains workers' and, therefore, a highly contradictory phenomenon within our class. On certain occasions, under the pressure of the masses, their pro-bourgeois leadership may be forced to advance beyond what they would like on the path of breaking with the bourgeoisie. We Trotskyists must have the policy to drive this process. But the moments in which we apply this policy are exceptional, and the moments in which this process occurs, in reality, are ultra-exceptional.

In addition, this policy is applied in relation to workers' parties, never in relation to bourgeois governments, especially when they include bourgeois parties, not even bourgeois-workers.

For reasons of class, a Trotskyist party can never apply the policy of the OCI (u), of calling the bourgeois government of Mitterrand to advance on the path of the break

with the bourgeoisie. Either this policy is absolutely unrealistic (and therefore reactionary), as unrealistic as to ask Reagan to advance as much as possible on the path of ceasing to be imperialist. Or it is a feasible policy, and in that case, Stalinism is right; there are governments that are neither bourgeois nor proletarian, and under those governments, we must abandon the class struggle because the pressure exerted on them can guide them in an anti-bourgeois sense.

Returning to Stéphane Just, we know that he never understood anything about Marxism, but we must recognise him the merit of clarity. We believe Lambert, being as revisionist as Just or perhaps more, would never have said the focus of our policy is to promote a bourgeois, imperialist government, which includes Gaullist and Radical ministers, towards the rupture with the bourgeoisie; and, to top it off, “without false hopes and without planting hopes”. It would be the same to say the focus of our policy for the Catholic Church is: “Without hopes and without planting hopes we try to get Pope John Paul II to advance as much as possible on the path of having *The Internationale* sang at Mass.”

4. Is planting hopes different to depositing trust?

According to the theory of Lambert-Just, the policy of the OCI should not “plant hopes”. However, we have already seen that for them the bourgeois government can become an anti-bourgeois government (“satisfy the needs of the masses” and “move against the capitalists”). This is already quite strange, but it has another aspect. For us, “planting hopes about the government” and “depositing trust in the government” are two ways of designating the same policy. It would seem that the OCI does not consider it this way, because “without planting hopes” all its policy is oriented towards the masses trusting the government.

We will see some cases of this, but not any case: we will see those mentioned in the *Draft Political Report*, as an example of what should be the policy of the OCI applied to the daily militancy of its members.

First example: The Health Insurance Fund

According to the *Draft Political Report* (in the chapter “A government of crisis”), Minister Barrot of the Giscard government had decreed the closure of the Central Insurance Fund for the Parisian Region (CPC). Now Minister of National Solidarity Nicole Questiaux, of the Mitterrand government, has decreed that the closure should take place before the end of this year. The CPC is under the control of the CNPF since 1967.

The OCI cell at the CPC published a flyer saying: “We did not vote for Mitterrand so his Minister Questiaux carries out this policy” (i.e., Giscard’s, op. cit., p. 4).

And the author of the *Draft Political Report* comments, furious: “This line is completely wrong” (Ibid.).

Why is it wrong? The *Draft Political Report* makes it clear: “The conclusion of this wrong line should be the following: ‘We must drive the fight against the dismantling of the CPC organised by the Mitterrand-Mauroy government and its minister and that has been dictated by the CNPF’, all of this in the line of: this bourgeois government must be thrown out” (Ibid.).

The line is wrong because it is directed against the government. What is the correct line?

“In the case of the decree dismantling the CPC, the correct line implies the following response: (...) ‘For the actual defence of our rights and guarantees, for the defence of the social insured, we want the satisfaction of our claims, we want the repeal of the Barrot decree.’ In this line (...) the OCI (unified) must print a flyer, calling for the constitution of committees and a delegation to visit Minister Questiaux.” (Ibid.)

In other words, the “wrong line” is to mobilise the CPC workers against the Mitterrand government. The “correct line” is to show the real responsibility for the dismantling is on the government of Giscard and the CNPF, and therefore the CPC workers must organise a delegation to visit Mitterrand’s minister, so she solves the problem. The OCI (u) does not call for mobilisation, but only to pay a visit to Minister Questiaux as the only alternative to Mitterrand’s ultra-reactionary policy of liquidating social insurance.

For Lambert-Just, this means “not planting hopes in the government”. For us, it means depositing an almost absolute trust in the government, in that this will solve the workers’ problems by a simple visit to the minister.

Second example: The strike at the airport

In July, a strike broke out at Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport because the government is carrying out a “restructuring” that will mean the loss of six jobs. Before the strike, the government offers a series of concessions but keeps the six dismissals. What is the policy of the OCI?

“It should have been said in the general assembly: (...) Was not there a political change after the victory of the masses that threw out Giscard? Why, then, seeing that the Giscardian management of the airport had to retreat before the strike, would we be forced to accept its plan of restructuring, against which we just made the strike? I propose that the delegation return to the ministry and ask for the six jobs, that is, the formal guarantee of repealing the Giscardian restructuring plan.” (Ibid, p. 5.)

The restructuring plan was developed and implemented by the Mitterrand government. However, the “correct line” of the OCI consists in denouncing the Giscardian officials and sending delegations to the ministry (in this case the transport ministry) so that Mitterrand’ Minister can solve the problem.

Later we will return to these two examples because they make up a synthesis of the policy of the OCI in all senses. Here we want to emphasise that in two disputes in which the party took part, in which the boss was the Mitterrand government, the OCI line was not only to prevent the workers from fighting against the boss, whoever he might be but to lead them to trust the boss, Mitterrand.

3. Lambert, adviser to Mitterrand

The line of Lambert-Just of pushing the government to advance through the “anti-capitalist” path produces some “curious” expressions, to say the least, in *Informations Ouvrières*, the organ of the OCI. Because it happens that the government, as Mr Obvious had anticipated, is not moving along the anti-capitalist path, but is behaving like a normal bourgeois government at the time of capitalist crisis; it is taking frankly anti-workers measures, including a plan of austerity.

Faced with this, the OCI is not acting as a “normal” revolutionary party, which would take advantage of this situation to unmask the true character of the popular front government before the masses. What the OCI is doing, in its line of pushing the government to the left (without planting hopes, it is understood!), is to advise the government, even more, to beg it to take the good path. Let’s see.

In *Informations Ouvrières* No 1021 appears a “Declaration of the Political Bureau of the OCI (unified)”, the first statement of the party before the enactment of the austerity plan. There it says: “We, militants of the OCI (u), who have fought unconditionally against the division and in favour of unity, for the SP-PCF [French Communist Party] majority and a SP-PCF unity government without representatives of the bourgeois parties and organisations, we say taking measures part of the implementation of an austerity plan, is a very serious, disastrous mistake.”

And a little further on: “The essential measures taken by the government will strike directly and daily the working masses by leaving hands free to the capitalists and bankers.”

That is, the government takes a series of measures, inscribed in an austerity plan, which leaves hands free to capitalists and bankers and hit the working masses. Does it reveal its bourgeois essence? According to the OCI it does not; it is committing “a very serious, disastrous mistake”, which comprises:

“The entire world sees it; instead of relying on the mobilisation of the working masses and youth [the government] tries to appease the capitalists and bankers.”

What should we do before this “disastrous mistake” of the government, of wanting to “appease” the bourgeoisie instead of relying on the mobilisation of the masses? Show it that there is what the “Declaration” of the Political Bureau calls “the other way”:

“The other way is to break the resistance of high officials who, for example in Education, cynically sabotage the measures taken by the minister. The other way of getting Social Security to represent a direct salary is to not allow the deficit of this to be paid by wage earners (...) but by taxes on profits and perks of capitalists and bankers.”

And after a series of additional tips on what “the other way” means, it says:

“The dilemma is clearly stated: class collaboration with capital or class struggle against capital. This is how the question arises in the face of the serious economic and financial problems. Only anti-capitalist measures can save the working masses and youth.”

We have to acknowledge in Lambert, Just, Fogue, and Favre their Stalinist consequence. The dilemma of the popular front government and the “progressive camp” is, “class collaboration” or “class struggle”. That is, when the popular front takes government, then it can produce the miracle of practicing “class struggle”. After all, this dilemma, like any other, can be resolved in one direction or another.

With this Leninism and Trotskyism collapses, and again the Stalinists are right: the popular front and its government can break with class collaboration and practicing class struggle, because it is “progressive”, popular, above the classes.

Returning to the above, it turns out that the government wants to appease the bourgeoisie with anti-worker measures, but this is a “disastrous” mistake because the masses are living increasingly worse and the bourgeoisie does not allow itself to be appeased. We advise this government to start taking “the other way”; to lean towards “class struggle” and to take anti-capitalist measures.

On 23 October the OCI held a rally in the hall of La Porte de Pantin. The main speech was given by Lambert, who said: “All the difficulties, the two million unemployed and the hundreds of thousands of dismissals already scheduled, the increase in prices, inflation, intimidation measures against the government: all the difficulties can be eliminated; the government has the means to do so.” (*Informations Ouvrières*, No 1023.)

Here we have the reason the government is making a “disastrous” mistake — the bourgeoisie is intimidating it. This is why the dilemma is being resolved in favour of “class collaboration”, that is, the “appeasement of capitalists and bankers”. But all is not lost; the dilemma can still be solved in the other sense, since “the government has the means for it”.

And although later it tries to save face saying that a future “SP-PCF government without representatives of the bourgeoisie would have the means to do so” (although it does not raise the slogan “out with the bourgeois ministers”, neither in that speech nor anywhere else), its policy is for the current government, which “has the means” to practice “class struggle”.

The OCI, a party that considers itself Trotskyist and therefore aspires to lead the masses to defeat of the bourgeoisie and imperialism, the conquest of power and the destruction of the bourgeois regime, considers its mission under the bourgeois popular front government of Mitterrand, as a member of its “progressive camp”, consists in pushing it through the

“way” of “class struggle” and “anti-capitalist measures”, since it has all the “means” for it. If the government deviates from the good path, then it must show it how it can return to it.

In short: under the popular front government, the OCI ceases to be a combat party against the bourgeoisie and its government, to become an abject adviser to it.

4. A strange break with the bourgeoisie

On different occasions, both in the documents and in the newspaper *Informations Ouvrières*, it is argued that the OCI has as its fundamental policy the “rupture with the bourgeoisie”: “This is the concrete situation we must take into account to formulate the fundamental line of our politics: breaking the coalition with the bourgeoisie.” (*Draft Political Report*, p. 4).

Now, the coalition with the bourgeoisie exists just inside the government, since, as the *Draft Report* correctly points out:

“... the Mitterrand-Mauroy government includes Gaullist and Radical party ministers. Their presence has a precise political meaning: the strengthening of ties with the bourgeoisie and more precisely, the government’s intention not to question the Fifth Republic and its institutions, the bourgeois state moulded by bastard Bonapartism.” (Ibid, p. 7.)

Faced with this situation, marked with a correction that exempts us from comments, Leninism and Trotskyism have a traditional tactical line expressed in the slogan “out with the bourgeois ministers from government”. This slogan expresses in accessible form for the masses the Trotskyist tactics of demanding the break of the workers’ parties with the bourgeoisie. However, for the OCI (u) the line of breaking with the bourgeoisie does not go through this slogan:

“The little importance of their ministerial functions [referring to the Gaullist and Radical ministers] and the political force they gather behind them considerably limits the effectiveness of denouncing their participation in government before the masses. In reality, the demand for a break with the bourgeoisie cannot be effective under this single form. (...) Although in our turmoil we have to consider what the presence of Crépeau-Jobert in the government means, given that the CNPF appears clearly as the direct political general staff of the bourgeoisie, the following should be emphasised: Can the demands of the masses be satisfied and at the same time apply the plans of the CNPF? This is the main content of the line of breaking with the bourgeoisie.” (Ibid, p. 7.).

And elsewhere it insists: “The fundamental line of our policy [is] the breaking of the coalition with the bourgeoisie, whose materialisation consists in emphasising the mobilisation against the CNPF.” (Ibid, p. 4.)

That is to say, the line of “breaking with the bourgeoisie” does not mean breaking the popular-front government by dismissing the bourgeois ministers, but the break of the popular front government as a whole, with bourgeois ministers and everything, with the CNPF.

This policy forces the OCI to do strange pirouettes when there are disputes in state companies, which have enormous weight in the French economy. There, the workers do not clash with the CNPF, but against the Mitterrand government itself. Therefore, in a strike in a state enterprise, (say Renault, or Paris airport), “breaking with the bourgeoisie” means breaking with the government — let us demand the Mitterrand government to reinstate the dismissed militants, or increase our wages or whatever.

How does the OCI solve this situation? How does it manage so workers do not break with the government? Let’s go back to the two previous examples, given by the *Draft Report*.

In the case of the CPC [Central Insurance Fund for the Parisian Region], dismantled by government decree: “The CNPF held its plan to dismantle the CPC (...). For the actual defence of our rights and guarantees, for the defence of the social insured, can we accept

that the CNPF keep dictating their law? The CNPF was defeated, together with Giscard-Barre-Barrot." (Ibid, p. 4.)

In the case of the airport, which went on strike against the dismissal of six militants decreed by the government: "What should we have done? Fight for the victory of the strike, formulating a tactic that in its development would bring about a rupture with the bourgeoisie, and specifically, in this case, the revocation of the high officials set by Giscard..." (Ibid, p .5.)

And a third example, the gigantic state company Renault, whose workers went on strike against increases in the pace of work in the production line from mid-September to the end of October. Taking stock of the strike, *Informations Ouvrières* No 1024 says in its editorial: "The men appointed by Giscard to manage Renault, the Vernier-Palliezes and the Hanons, face the mobilisations of the workers and implement the plans of their leaders, the capitalists and bankers."

We need to acknowledge the revisionist ingenuity of Lambert and the editorialist of *Informations Ouvrières*. For this situation without resolution, which leads the workers to break inevitably with the government, they invent the bogeyman of the CNPF (CPC) and of the high Giscardian officials (airport and Renault). These are the "cynical saboteurs" of the good pro-worker intentions of Mitterrand and his ministers.

This line is permanent; repeated issue after issue of *Informations Ouvrières*. For example, the editorial of No 1019, entitled "In what situation is Mitterrand?", says:

"In his press conference, F. Mitterrand enumerated a series of measures taken by the government under his responsibility. Teachers have the full right to ask: what is the use of the measures taken by the national education minister if their application is systematically sabotaged at high administration levels and the rectors?"

It means that, if it were for Mitterrand, the good teachers of France would find themselves in an optimal situation. The problem is that the rectors and officials systematically sabotage these measures.

All these arguments by the OCI are nothing more than resources to advance its fundamental line: to keep intact the camp of the popular front government and to orient that camp as a whole against the bourgeoisie.

This is the exact opposite of what Trotskyism proposes. For example: "From February to October, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who represent a very good parallel to the 'Communists' and Social Democrats [and with Lambertist "Trotskyists", we add], were in the closest alliance and in a permanent coalition with the bourgeois party of the Cadets, together with whom they formed a series of coalition governments. Under the sign of this People's Front stood the whole mass of the people, including the workers', peasants', and soldiers' councils. To be sure, the Bolsheviks participated in the councils. But they did not make the slightest concession to the People's Front. Their demand was to *break* this People's Front, to destroy the alliance with the Cadets, and to create a genuine workers' and peasants' government." ("The Dutch Section and the International", 15-16 July 1936, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36)*, p. 370, emphasis in the original.)

The line that Trotsky points out is directly opposite to the line of the OCI: the axis of our policy is to fight for the political independence of the proletariat, to break the class collaboration of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie at governmental level; to denounce the popular front government before the masses as a counter-revolutionary government of class collaboration; to point out that, against the hopes of the workers, this government can never practice class struggle against the bourgeoisie for class reasons; that for these same reasons of class, it is part of the class struggle of the bourgeoisie and imperialism against the French workers and the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies.

5. Lying to the masses to protect the government

Let's go back to the two examples that synthesise the policy of the OCI: the strike at the airport and the mobilisation against the dismantling of CPC.

The *Draft Political Report* says: "We did not say: 'Minister [of transport] Fiterman is responsible', but we said: the culprit is the Directorate General (of the airport)." (Ibid, p. 4.)

And commenting on that same strike, *Informations Ouvrières* says: "The workers clashed against the wall of high Giscardian officials, determined to apply in the Paris airport the general policy of the capitalists against the workers and to place the new government before the fait accompli of the same (...) The workers knew how to create the best conditions to force the Giscardian leadership to retreat."

And later, in a statement that synthesises everything; "Exhausted the possibilities of negotiating, the workers went on strike against the boss: the top management officials." (*Informations Ouvrières*, No 1009).

It is a most elementary fact that who decrees dismissals in a company is the boss or the management; with a state company, the boss is the government and the general manager is the appropriate minister. But it turns out that the boss is none other than the OCI's camp chief: God forbid us to attack him! Who we must attack is "Giscardian management", that is, the enemy camp. This is our policy, whatever the cost and even if we should deliberately lie to the masses.

Thus, in the document that codifies the policy of the OCI for the entire next period, instructions are given to lying to the masses about who is the boss, to prevent their just hatred from going to the government of Mitterrand and his ministers. And the newspaper, as we see, is the faithful interpreter of that line.

The second example is equally illustrative. Let us recall that the OCI cell in CPC had distributed a flyer that read: "We did not vote for Mitterrand so his Minister Questiaux carries out this policy [to dismantle the CPC]." (Ibid, p.4.) According to the *Draft Report* this line "is completely wrong". Why? Is it not true that Minister Questiaux was applying the policy of a minister of Giscard? And is it not equally true, and crystal clear, that the French workers did not elect Mitterrand to apply Giscard's policy? Yes, it is true, but in his eagerness to protect the head of the camp, Lambert tells his comrades they must lie to the masses:

"What is the correct line, based on the needs of the masses? We must say: we have kicked out Giscard and, voting for Mitterrand, we voted against the CNPF." (Ibid, p.4.)

Truth is the French workers voted not only against the CNPF but also against all bourgeois parties and organisations. Their majority vote for the SP and the PCF reflects the aspiration to elect an anti-bourgeois workers' government, to advance as quickly as possible towards a socialist republic.

Mitterrand has betrayed this mandate and all mandates given to him. He has not taken a single measure against the CNPF and the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the OCI does not limit itself to not denouncing him and concentrating its attacks on the CNPF. They go even further and lie to the masses. At the airport, where the boss is Mitterrand-Fiterman, they say the boss is the Giscardian administration. In the CPC, where the boss is Mitterrand-Questiaux, they say it is the CNPF. With regard to the elections, they say the workers' and popular vote was only against the CNPF. They consider any method fair, even the vilest and most cantankerous of all — to lie to the masses — in order to maintain the "camp" of Mitterrand against the CNPF.

6. Protect the government or fight it?

The above examples — and the hundreds of cases we could quote from *Informations Ouvrières* — clearly show that the OCI's policy is focused on carefully avoiding the workers'

struggles be directed against the government. The function of the OCI is to protect the government and divert the anger of the workers towards other targets. For this, it will resort to any method, even the most abject of all, which is to lie to the masses.

Trotsky has the opposite policy and has already responded to those who have applied the orientation of the OCI. In July 1936, *Révolution*, the newspaper of the Young Revolutionary Socialists, whose leaders were members of the French section, expressed the current line of the OCI, in the following terms: "Under the watchful protection of the French workers, the People's Front government will be able to carry out its program."

Trotsky responded immediately (in a 19 July letter) pointing out the same thing we have said throughout this document — that no bourgeois government, even if it is popular front like that of Blum, can apply an anti-bourgeois policy. And he concluded:

"Our task is not in any way the 'protection' of the coalition government between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (...). We and the People's Front have common enemies. For this reason, we are ready to fight them together with the regular groups of the People's Front, taking no responsibility for that government nor to become the 'protector' of Leon Blum. We consider this government is a lesser evil compared to de la Rocque. But by fighting the greater evil we do not protect the lesser evil." (L. Trotsky, *Œuvres*, Vol. 10, p. 271.)

If the OCI wants to raise its policy to the theoretical level, it will have to say exactly the opposite: "We and the popular front government of Mitterrand have common enemies — the CNPF and the Giscardian officials. We fight them together and we assume a heavy responsibility — we protect the Mitterrand government from the attacks of the working class, by all means, we seek the workers do not hate it but they trust in it, that they never see its true face of bourgeois and imperialist government, agent of the CNPF. This is why we have abandoned the policy of Lenin and Trotsky, which consists in systematically showing the workers the first step in defeating the CNPF and the 'Giscardian' officials is to overthrow this government and implement the workers' and peasants' government."

7. The Lambertist version of the combat popular front

The policy of the "combat popular front" is rejected throughout the *Draft Political Report*:

"Helping the apparatuses against the class struggle [is] the deviation of the 'combat popular front'" (p. 2). "Ignorant doctrinaires (...) will not hesitate to criticise us in the 'revolutionary' line of the combat popular front" (p. 3). "The militants of the OCI (unified) also suffer the pressure of the combat popular front" (p. 3). And so on and so forth: the OCI rejects this policy with horror and disgust.

Let us remember briefly that, for Marceau Pivert, there are two popular fronts. One comprises the leadership of the workers' parties; this front is reformist and agent of the bourgeoisie. The other front is integrated by the ranks of the workers' parties and by all those who want to fight against the bourgeoisie and the regime; this is the combat popular front, whose aim is to push the reformist popular front towards anti-bourgeois positions. Revolutionaries must be part of this popular front.

Now, according to the OCI's *Draft Report*, the entire popular front of Mitterrand carries out "actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie"; therefore, the entire "camp" of that popular front is anti-bourgeois. And the *Draft Report* clearly says, "we are in the Mitterrand camp".

Moreover, Stéphane Just tells us the policy of the OCI tries to drive the Popular Front government to "go as far as possible on the path of the break with the bourgeoisie". It is exactly the same as Pivert said, although with a cynical addition — that the OCI should not "plant hopes".

This is nothing more than a version of the "combat popular front", which the OCI rejects with such disgust... in words. Where Pivert saw two popular fronts, Lambert sees only one, which integrates all, from Mitterrand to the rank and file workers, through the

bourgeois ministers and the leaders of the SP and the PCF. And since it carries out “actions of resistance to the bourgeoisie”, this entire front is a great “combat popular front”, in which the Trotskyists must participate with the central orientation of promoting it so it advances increasingly along the path of breaking with the bourgeoisie.

Lambert and Just reject the tactic of combat popular front with horror, without understanding what it means. Pivert’s crime is to have believed the popular front in any of its variations could practice “class struggle” against the bourgeoisie. Lambert and Just commit exactly the same crime, but in relation to the Mitterrand government. This is the reason why Trotskyism fights Pivert and Lambert-Just.

8. The OCI applies a Stalinist policy

We had previously said the deep differences existing within the bourgeoisie give rise to the emergence of different sectors. These settle their differences in different ways, ranging from electoral and parliamentary, to physical clash and civil war when the situation demands it.

Faced with this reality, the permanent policy of Stalinism is to lead the workers’ movement to the alliance with the “left” bourgeoisie, whether it is in opposition (as it was under Giscard) or in power, as is the case now with the Mitterrand government. In the latter case, Stalinism even seeks to be part of the bourgeois government.

This alliance has taken different names and forms, although its essence of class collaboration is always the same. This is how the “antifascist fronts” are formed with the “democratic” bourgeoisie; the “anti-imperialist fronts” with the “antitrust” or “anti-imperialist” bourgeoisie of the semi-colonial countries, etc. We know them all generically as popular fronts since they respond to the Stalinist policy of the “progressive camp” with the bourgeoisie.

This is the policy the OCI is applying in France. At a time when there is no civil war or immediate prospect of a physical clash between different sectors of the bourgeoisie, or a threat of a fascist coup, the OCI is a political member of Mitterrand’s bourgeois “camp”.

This being the case, the OCI should be consistent. Whenever a sector of the bourgeoisie appears to the “left” of the reactionary government in office (for example, if Chirac is elected at the next elections and Mitterrand returns to opposition together with Radicals and Left Gaullists) the OCI should be part of this “progressive bourgeois camp” and, if consistent with its conceptions, it should apply with respect to it exactly the same policy that is applying regarding the Mitterrand government.

If the OCI (u) had applied this policy with respect to the *Union of La Gauche* [Union of the Left], it would have been already repudiated by the entire Trotskyist movement. This is what will happen in the short term, for betraying the most elementary principles of revolutionary Marxism.

9. A tradition betrayed

If the OCI is consistent with its current policy, then it must self-criticise. The OCI considers a popular front government such as Mitterrand’s is antagonistic to the state apparatus of the Fifth Republic and the bourgeois regime; it permanently performs “actions against the bourgeoisie”; its election alone causes a great crisis in the system of bourgeois domination, to the point of being “incompatible” with it; it has given rise to two camps so antagonistic, that there is a “seed” of civil war between them.

Its policy regarding this “progressive” camp is to push it to fight against the CNPF and the Giscardian officials. Moreover, it tries to “go as far as possible on the path” of the anti-capitalist struggle. This is why it never attacks the government, nor even criticises it;

it limits itself to advising it fraternally and humbly and to pointing out its “errors”, that is, its actual anti-worker measures.

If this policy is correct when the popular front is in power, why is it not when it is in opposition? Why, when the *Union de la Gauche* (UG) was formed, with its electoral slates headed by Mitterrand, did the OCI not raise the same as it says now: “we are in the camp of the UG in its actions of resistance to the Giscard government”; “we orient the workers’ struggles against the CNPF and Giscard, never against the members of these popular-front slates”; “without false hopes, without planting hopes, we try to make the popular front advance as much as possible in the path of struggle against the government of Giscard.”

There can be no moral problem here. If we think the election of a popular front government causes such a disturbance to the regime, and the popular front in government can carry out the struggle against capital, then our policy regarding the popular front in opposition should be to call the masses not only to vote for it but also to trust it.

If we are consistent to the end, we must recognise with complete frankness that Trotskyists have always had a wrong, sectarian policy regarding the popular front. Trotskyism has always repudiated the electoral bloc of the popular front and has qualified the workers’ parties participating in it as traitors and counter-revolutionaries. It has used this qualifier not only for social democracy and Stalinism but also for the Spanish POUM and the French *Gauche Révolutionnaire* (Pivert’s party), whose leaders entered the popular fronts of their respective countries.

This was the policy of the OCI until last 10 May [1981]. It denounced the popular-front and its electoral politics and brutally attacked the workers’ parties that practiced it. But it abandoned this policy when the popular front came to government, then it entered its camp and stopped attacking the SP and the PCF.

The OCI must seriously reconsider this matter and take a resolution. It cannot defend its current policy and at the same time its previous trajectory, which is one of Trotskyism. It either self-criticises for its trajectory and denounces the sectarianism of the Trotskyists or makes an abrupt turn to break with its current policy.

10. The revolution by stages, Lambert version

The *Draft Political Report* says: “It is important to understand that the masses, including those who want their demands to be met, will address the government, the ministers, considering them rather as their allies asking them to support them so they get satisfaction. It is necessary, by our political practice, to clear the way for this political process in which the masses will want to embark on a kind of dialogue with ‘their government’, ‘their ministers’. We also need, even if only embryonically, to promote the first elements of self-organisation of the masses. This is how we prepare the following moments, in which the masses will demand of ‘their government’, ‘their ministers’, to satisfy their aspirations.” (Ibid., p. 8.)

This means: at present, the masses want their demands to be met, but they consider the government and its ministers are its “allies” and will seek dialogue with them. This is the current stage, which, according to the whole document, corresponds to the struggle exclusively against the CNPF and the Giscardian officials.

Then a second stage will come, in which the masses will engage in another type of dialogue with the government; they will make demands on it. When this happens, as it says a little later, “... the revolutionary crisis will open. Certainly, the masses will try to oppose their demands at the governmental level in the middle of the general strike.” (Ibid, p. 8.)

There are, therefore, two clearly defined stages. The first stage is of dialogue with the government, and it will last until the masses become disillusioned with it. Then, the second stage will come, in which the masses will move from “dialogue” to “demand”. For Lambert, the overthrow of the government by the masses and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship are postponed for the third stage in an indeterminate future, but so far away

it is not even mentioned. The next two stages are centred on the bourgeois government of Mitterrand; the first will be negotiation and the second will be of demanding.

Like all revisionists, Lambert confuses a reality, hypothetical in addition, with the political course the Trotskyist party must have. Indeed, there is a possibility that the workers' movement will negotiate with the government at one stage and demand it in the next. We insist it is only a possibility; to us, it seems more likely the negotiations will be combined with struggles and confrontations (as indeed it is happening; as the case of Renault shows).

But assuming that Lambert's hypothesis was correct, we do not transform objective reality into our political line. If the masses believe in a bourgeois government and only negotiate with it, we do not do the same, we do not tail-end the backward masses. We accept this objective reality and we adapt our policy by means of tactics, which is completely different. This is why we reject all stage theories, be it Stalin's or Lambert's.

We consider that Trotsky is right against Lambert and Stalin. Our policy — and this is what we proclaim before the workers' movement and the masses — is that there is only one possibility: to overthrow the bourgeois government in power as soon as possible and establish the workers' government.

The tasks of fighting the CNPF and the Mitterrand government are not separated in time, but intimately combined. Tactically, we may need to focus our fight against a fascist coup or a CNPF offensive. But in the midst of the fight against that coup or that offensive, we keep our policy of confronting and defeating the government. We do not wait for the prior defeat of the CNPF because that defeat is impossible without revolutionary overthrow of the government. Therefore, in our agitation, we show the popular front government as the servant of the bourgeoisie that undermines our struggle against reaction.

We have said Lambert's is a theory of stages, like Stalin's. We must rectify because there is a difference between the two theories. Stalinism promised to fight against Franco and then, once defeated, against Negrin. That is, the second stage was a struggle against the popular front government and for socialism.

Lambert proposes the first stage will be negotiation with the government and fight against the CNPF in alliance with the government. But the second stage will not be to fight against the government but to demand it fight against the bourgeoisie. This is revisionism within revisionism since, for Lambert, the time will never come to fight against the bourgeois government of the popular front and for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

11. The OCI has no government slogan

Obviously, with the stageist conception of the OCI (u) would be absurd to think the organisation raise some slogan of power for the current stage in France. However, in order not to forget the Trotskyist ritual, the *Draft Political Report* does pose the problem, starting from the following apocalyptic prediction foreseen for a very close time.

“The nature of the Mitterrand-Mauroy government — a bourgeois government of class collaboration, a bourgeois government of popular front type — assures that whatever disputes may oppose it to the bourgeoisie, to the bourgeois State apparatus the Fifth Republic has formed, ultimately it can only capitulate to them. At the end of the day, the masses will rise against this type of government. Specifically, they will demand a break with the bourgeoisie, a government without representatives of the bourgeoisie. Then, the revolutionary crisis will open. Certainly, the masses will try to oppose their demands at the governmental level, in the midst of the general strike. And surely, then, the councils, the soviets, will emerge under one form or another.” (*Draft Political Report*, p. 8.)

In other words, as we saw earlier, the struggle will not be of the masses against the government but of the masses demanding the government to break with the bourgeoisie.

For this task, they will employ revolutionary political and organisational methods (although the insurrection does not arise here): the general strike and the soviets.

It is a more than absurd picture. The masses, organised in soviets, carry out a general strike, yet the “Trotskyist” party does not call them to overthrow the bourgeois government but to demand it break with the bourgeoisie. Now let’s see how the question of the government arises:

“In each period, in each stage, in each moment of the class struggle, our policy is determined, according to the current conditions and the current consciousness of the broad strata of the workers, by the way we should raise and respond to the question the power.” (Ibid, p. 6.)

Going a little further, we find the slogan “down with the government”, but to refute it. Following on it says: “it would be absurd to assign the workers the goal of overthrowing the government.” So, for the OCI (u), the “absurd” is not to raise the slogan “down with the government” when the masses trust it (we would prefer the term “ultraleft mistake” instead of “absurd”) but the goal of overthrowing it, which is something very different.

A few lines later we find: “out with the bourgeois ministers”. But, as we have already seen, the OCI is for this task but against agitating this slogan because of the lack of importance the masses give to these ministers. We disagree with this reformist argument. If the masses do not understand the importance of the Gaullist and Radical ministers in the government, our duty as Trotskyists is to make them understand it. This is why we are constantly agitating this slogan of government.

But, well, suppose that “out with the bourgeois ministers” is not the right government slogan at the moment. Then which one is? For the OCI (u) the answer is... **None**. In fact, two government slogans are mentioned to explain why they should not be raised and then no other is given to oppose it to the bourgeois government.

The OCI (u) considers that there is a “pre-revolutionary” situation, with the “seed of civil war”, that the class struggle is already heading towards the emergence of soviets and the general strike. If the lack of a government slogan is a crime at any stage of the class struggle, what can one say about its absence in a stage like the one the OCI paints? And what about the supposedly revolutionary workers’ party that refuses, like the OCI, to raise that slogan? Quite frankly, the thesaurus is not enough to find epithets.

Anyway, the absence of a government slogan is a coherent part of this revisionist totality that is the policy of the OCI (u). If the task of overthrowing the popular front government and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat is not raised at this stage or in the next, then why raise a government slogan? On the contrary, according to the OCI (u), it would be a total mistake to raise this slogan and task. This is why it only poses government slogans to refute them.

12. A clear prediction

According to the *Draft Political Report*, “The political relations existing as of 10 May and 14 and 21 June [1981] show that the Mitterrand-Mauroy government is only the first form of popular front government. Probably, during the next stages, other popular-front governments with other characteristics will succeed it.” (Ibid, p. 8.)

This prediction is very clear. After the current government other popular front governments will come, for years and years. Since each French government lasts seven years, with four popular-front governments (counting the current one) we will have 28 years of popular-fronts in France. However, throughout the document, it is insisted that the current government is unacceptable to the bourgeoisie, that it cannot tolerate it and that it is already doing everything possible to overthrow it (to the point there is already a “seed of civil war”). How is this contradiction resolved? We see two possible answers.

One answer is that here it is implicitly recognised everything the *Draft Report* says before is false, and we are right: that the popular front government is perfectly compatible with the bourgeois regime, that the bourgeoisie perfectly tolerates it, and, what's more, needs it to prevent the workers' rise from overflowing the framework of the regime, to the point of being prepared to accept a succession of popular front governments.

But popular front government means an increasing misery for the masses: increase in unemployment, increase in prices, decrease in real wages, more hours of work, etc. This is not a speculation or a prediction; it is what is happening now in France, as acknowledged by *Informations Ouvrières* as we have quoted elsewhere.

If what the immediate future holds is a succession of popular front governments, this means misery will continue to increase. And here we are talking only about the workers of the imperialist metropolis. Imagine what it will mean for the workers of Guadeloupe, New Caledonia or the African semi-colonies.

This being the case, why is the "goal" of overthrowing the government "absurd"? On the contrary, not only is it not absurd but it is an immediate task, of life or death for the proletariat. If the OCI (u) says that it is "absurd", then it must add all its policy is reformist, by refusing to raise a slogan of government.

This is a possible interpretation of the prediction by the OCI (u), but we see another that is a coherent part of its revisionist policy. If a succession of popular front governments is foreseen for years and years, the absence of a slogan of government ends up taking its full meaning. For the OCI (u), the popular front government, with its bourgeois ministers (otherwise it would not be a popular front) is not a class government, i.e. bourgeois, but an above the classes hybrid, able to orient itself in this or that direction according to the pressures exerted on it. Therefore, it is unnecessary, furthermore, it is a mistake, to agitate the slogan "out with the bourgeois ministers" or any other slogan of government. The correct policy is, "without false hopes, without planting hopes", pressuring the government to advance by the "correct path" of the "class struggle", to "satisfy the demands of the workers", "rule against the bourgeoisie by relying on the masses that overthrew Giscard and in the majority SP-PCF", etc., etc.

In other words, it is about putting pressure on the bourgeois and imperialist government to carry out the tasks that, according to Trotskyism, can only be carried out by the dictatorship of the proletariat. This synthesises all the revisionist policy of the OCI (u).

CHAPTER VI

What if there is a Civil War in France?

The OCI sees an imminent civil war, where only frictions exist, and bases all its policy on it. We believe we have amply shown this assessment does not correspond at all to the actual French situation. But suppose for a moment the OCI were right; for example, that the “reactionary camp” led by the CNPF was preparing a coup supported by the armed forces of the reactionary officers of the French General Staff. In such a case, could we say the policy of the OCI is correct and Trotskyist?

Of course, we answer no; its policy is still revisionist, opportunist, in short, perfectly in line with the theory of “camps”. This is what we will demonstrate in this chapter, but before proceeding, the following observation is required. Let us recall that in the historical analogies quoted by the *Draft Political Report*, it is said the Bolsheviks spoke out against the Kerensky government while fighting in its camp against Kornilov. This is true, although it would have been more precise to say the Bolsheviks fought relentlessly against Kerensky, instead of “they spoke out against” him.

As we will show in this chapter, the OCI remembers to “fight in the camp” of Mitterrand, but completely forgets to “speak out against” it.

1. Civil war between the “camps”

The OCI argues, as we have seen, there is a “seed” of civil war between the “progressive bourgeois camp” of Mitterrand and the reactionary camp of the CNPF and compares this with the situation which existed in Russia in August 1917, with the Kornilov uprising, and other similar ones.

In other words, the civil war will be fought between the camp of the government and the masses and the camp of the bourgeoisie and the backbone of the state apparatus (which includes — we suppose, because the *Draft Report* never mentions it — the staff of the armed forces).

Now, it is quite possible when the civil war breaks out, the masses will continue to trust the government. Or that it will happen like in the Spanish Civil War, when the treacherous Stalinist, Social Democratic, and Anarchist leaders curbed all fight against the government and constantly called the masses to trust it.

What is the policy of the OCI? “The masses, including those who want their demands to be met, will go to the government, to the ministers, considering them rather as their allies, asking them to support them so they can get satisfaction. It is necessary, by our political practice, to clear the way to this political process in which the masses will want to embark, in a kind of dialogue with ‘their government’, ‘their ministers’.” (Ibid, p. 8.)

Then, we start by pointing out a possible fact, that the masses will continue trusting the government and thinking the “dialogue” with Mitterrand and his ministers will be enough to satisfy their demands and break with the bourgeoisie. But this, which is only

a probability, the OCI takes it as true because it is the one that best fits with the theory of “camps”. It does not think of suggesting, even as a hypothesis, that the masses lose all trust in the government and in the treacherous workers’ parties, given the increase in unemployment, the decrease in real wages, etc.

But suppose it will happen as the OCI says: the masses will continue trusting the bourgeois government despite everything. A Trotskyist party must devise a political course to combat the conciliatory attitude of the masses, to show them they should only rely on their own mobilisation and that the path of trust in the bourgeois government leads only to catastrophe (Spain, Chile, etc.).

The OCI does not think so. Driven by the theory of the camps, and the consequent need to keep the unity of the progressive camp at all costs, including to consolidate it, its “political practice” will be to promote the conciliatory attitude of the masses, facilitating their “dialogue” with “their government, their ministers”.

With this, we reach the limit of pro-bourgeois reformism. The OCI does not even raise the need to mobilise the masses against the reaction, without mobilising them against the popular-front government, a policy that could be based on false tactical arguments, but of a certain weight in a civil war. Here the policy opposed to any mobilisation is advocated; the policy of dialogue with the government, that is, with the head of the camp.

2. Civil war without armament of the proletariat

The *Draft Political Report* says:

“Without a doubt, the march of events will demand the slogan of workers’ militias be launched, to respond to the ‘civil war attacks’ that big capital prepares (...). But to decide today, in August of 1981, to launch the slogan of workers’ armament, a slogan we should and we are preparing to launch in the campaign we are doing in *Informations Ouvrières* (...) would be to sin of a most disconcerting ‘doctrinaire’ spirit.” (Ibid, p.5.)

Let’s see. It turns out that “today, in August 1981”, big capital is already preparing its “civil war attacks”. But at the same time, “today, in August 1981”, launching the slogan of workers’ armament would be... to sin of a disconcerting doctrinaire spirit!

In all cases in history in which a “civil war” has been prepared, reformists and opportunists have opposed the armament of the proletariat. For this they use arguments of the “not provoking the reaction”; “not scaring the middle classes”; “not breaking the alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie” type. Or other arguments of apparently different kind, such as “where are we going to get the weapons?”, etc. The OCI, which claims to be Trotskyist, merely states that calling for the armament of the proletariat today would be “a sin of doctrinaire spirit”, therefore it does not raise this slogan.

And that’s it. Throughout the extensive *Draft Political Report*, we find absolutely no other mention of the problem of the workers’ militias and the armament of the proletariat, although there are many references to the civil war.

We do not understand why raising these slogans means showing a “doctrinaire” spirit. On the contrary, the enemy has a powerful army, well trained and expert in fighting the masses of both the metropolis and the semi-colonies. If the civil war is already being prepared, the least that can be said is that the armament of the proletariat is not only a slogan of burning currency, a problem of life or death for the workers, but that it should have been raised for a long time, as soon as they observed the first symptoms of civil war.

According to the *Draft Report*, “we characterise that currently in France there is a pre-revolutionary situation...” (Ibid, p. 8). Perhaps that is why calling the armament of the proletariat is a sin of doctrinaire spirit; we should wait until the situation becomes revolutionary to raise this slogan. The only meaning of this argument is the workers must let themselves be massacred until the situation becomes revolutionary. The workers must not respond to every blow of capital, awaken all the exploited masses with their example

and go on the attack; no, they should allow being hit with impunity. We allow ourselves to remind the OCI of an elementary truth of the class struggle — pre-revolutionary situations can become revolutionary, but also counter-revolutionary. With the OCI's policy of explicitly refusing to call the armament of the proletariat, the latter will happen.

In the quote we transcribed at the beginning, it says "... the slogan of the armament of the workers, slogan that we should and we are preparing to launch in the campaign we are doing in *Informations Ouvrières*...".

In the first place, the time the OCI is taking to "prepare" is extraordinarily long. The *Draft Report* appeared in August. We are writing this document in December, that is, five months have passed. For formal thinking, five months is always five months. For dialectic thinking, five months in a "seed of civil war" situation are opposite to the same calendar period in times of "social peace". If the situation is what Lambert paints, then it is a crime to let a day go by, or rather an hour, without raising the armament of the workers' slogan because in that time the enemy is arming.

Second, "the campaign we are doing in *Informations Ouvrières*". What campaign do they talk about? If we take *Informations Ouvrières* from "today, August 1981" to the present (issues 1011 to 1032), we find absolutely no campaign to prepare the workers and the proletarian vanguard for the civil war.

At most, there are some denunciations. For example, in *Informations Ouvrières* 1029 a fascist attack against the publishing house *Etudes et Documentation Internationales* (EDI), dedicated to the dissemination of Marxist works, is repudiated. These denunciations take up some lines in the section "News of the week in brief ". Where is the campaign for the elucidation of these crimes and, above all, for the formation of even workers' defence pickets (not to speak of militias)? Answer: nowhere, unless it is considered these brief denunciations make up a campaign. In addition, they are denunciations against the fascists, not for the armament of the proletariat and the destruction of the officer corps.

It remains to be asked why a party that claims to be Trotskyist refuses to raise the slogans for the armament and the formation of workers' militias when it considers that there are a pre-revolutionary situation and a seed civil war. The camps theory gives us the answer. The civil war being prepared is between the known "camps", so we must avoid at all costs for it to become a civil war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, as would inevitably happen if the workers armed themselves and formed their militias.

But beware. Whether the workers are armed or not, the civil war will always be between the classes, because the bourgeoisie is armed to defend its class interests against the proletariat. If this is not armed, it will not prevent civil war or the crushing of the exploited classes as a whole.

To finish this point, we clarify we do not believe the armament of the proletariat is a task of immediate urgency since we disagree with Lambert, that France is already on the verge of a civil war and that our policy must now be the one Trotsky had for Spain. What we condemn is the inconsistency of Lambert, at the service of his policy of support for the "progressive bourgeois camp". We must raise these slogans, but to explain them to the workers, not for immediate action.

3. Civil war without destruction of the bourgeois army

It is a law of the class struggle that the proletariat cannot succeed in a civil war against the bourgeoisie, without previously destroying the bourgeois army. To destroy it means to win for the proletarian cause the greater part of that army, and to demoralise or completely neutralise the rest. In other words, that the staff becomes a group of "generals without an army"; that the troops (the workers and peasants who do military service), and also an important section of the corps of non-commissioned officers and low-ranking officers, rebel against the bourgeois high command and cross over to the other side of the barricade.

The struggle for the destruction of the bourgeois army must be a permanent campaign of the revolutionary party. But that struggle goes from the propaganda and pedagogical level to the plane of agitation and action when there is a situation like the one the OCI paints of a seed of civil war.

The OCI's *Draft Political Report* contains no traces of such a campaign. Throughout the document, the high command or the staff of the counter-revolutionary armed forces is never mentioned, nor is a policy designed to destroy them. The only armed body mentioned is the Civic Action Service (SAC), a paramilitary body created by de Gaulle and which the OCI considers a fundamental institution of the Fifth Republic.

“Mitterrand himself is creating the conditions [for the civil war] as the operation against the SAC (...). The great capital prepares itself for civil war starting from the very heart of the institutions of the Fifth Republic — the SAC is one of them, linked to the others — and of the bourgeois State apparatus.” (Ibid. p. 5.).

And the army is it not part of the bourgeois state? Is it not the fundamental piece of the mechanism of the bourgeoisie in the civil war? And if so, why is it never mentioned?

The previous quote gives us the key. The SAC is part of the enemy camp, along with other institutions of the bourgeois state. That is why it is mentioned so many times throughout the document, and there is practically no edition of *Informations Ouvrières* that does not bring an article about it. Because Mitterrand himself is the one who is at the head of the fight against the SAC.

What kind of campaign does the OCI do against the army? We have seen only two; one of them is for the reduction of military service to six months. This campaign begins in *Informations Ouvrières* 1022, on 17 October 1981. We emphasise this date because, in our *Letter to the Central Committee of the POSI*,¹ dated 13 October, we denounced the OCI for failing to carry out this campaign, which comprises demanding that the government fulfil its own electoral promises. It means that the OCI has taken this campaign in response to our criticism.

The other campaign is against the increase of the military budget. *Informations Ouvrières* 1025 denounces that the current military budget is 17 percent higher than last year's (144 billion francs against 123 billion) and which is higher than the budget for education (137 billion francs).

The OCI proposes the military budget should be used to solve the problem of unemployment and also to increase the budget allocated to public education, thus accepting our criticisms. But these are the only two campaigns in *Informations Ouvrières* that have something to do with the army.

In *Informations Ouvrières* 1026 this increase of the military budget is denounced after its approval by the National Assembly. It says: “In going against the aspirations of the young uniformed workers and peasants, in satisfying the wishes of the officer corps, does the government not strengthen the place and the political role of the latter? Placed above the change, that is, of the popular will by the government itself, how can the army not be encouraged, in its arbitrary political will, to act against the change on behalf of the reaction?”

Apart from the whining style of this passage, which agrees so badly with a revolutionary party (and which, by the way, is the one that pervades all issues of *Informations Ouvrières*), the corps of officers is correctly located in the camp of reaction. But since the government is not in the camp of reaction but leads the progressive camp, all this denunciation is reduced to a fraternal appeal to the camp chief not to make the mistake of giving the officers the budget they ask for. There is no call here for the mobilisation of the masses against the military budget.

As for the reduction of military service to six months, there has been so far no other call for mobilisation than the constitution of a delegation to appear at the Ministry of

¹ Available for download from www.nahuelmoreno.org.

Defence with a petition, whose signature is promoted by the OJR, youth organisation politically oriented by the OCI, and a march on the National Assembly the day on which the military budget should be approved.

The slogans of reduction of military service and use of the military budget are correct, but in no way can be considered as a campaign for the destruction of the bourgeois army, and even less in the case of a seed of civil war. Nowhere do we see agitation articles calling on soldiers and non-commissioned officers to rebel against the reactionary command and to refuse to act against the workers. Nor are they called to remove the arms of the barracks and deliver them to the workers' organisations.

After all, what for? It is enough to address respectful calls to the camp chief, the bourgeois government of Mitterrand, to let it know of our aspirations and denounce the malicious machinations of the officer corps; they will take care of solving the problem. Of course, nothing of mobilising for the dismissal of those officers by the workers or proposing the committees of soldiers set up a new officer corps, because that could break the camp.

4. The special virtues of the popular front

The *Draft Political Report* says: "We condemned the Spanish popular front government and yet we were in the 'camp' of that government against Franco. However, when the *coup d'état* of the Algiers Generals against de Gaulle took place in 1961, we refused to join the camp of de Gaulle. In the same way, it is necessary, although the bourgeois State is always the bourgeois State, to know how to discuss the form and the peculiarities of each bourgeois State." (Ibid, p. 7.)

Here we give only the example of de Gaulle, but the OCI has also refused on another occasion to join the "camp" of King Juan Carlos in Spain.

Now, the reality is the Spanish proletariat under the regime of Juan Carlos has achieved much greater conquests than the French under Mitterrand, in relation to the situation that existed before the taking of control by both. Since the death of Franco and the rise of Juan Carlos, the partial elimination of press censorship has been achieved; the realisation of bourgeois democratic elections, with the participation of the parties that Franco had banned, such as the CP, the PSOE and even revolutionary, Trotskyist parties; the right to strike; freedom of association. Nothing comparable has been achieved by the French proletariat under Mitterrand, that is, it has not won almost any right or demand it did not already have under Giscard. So, why would the OCI refuse to defend these conquests against a coup by the Francoists? Or why did it refuse to defend French democracy as it existed under De Gaulle against a coup by the fascist generals of the OAS [Secret Army Organisation]?

For Marxists, on the contrary, it is always necessary to fight militarily in the "camp" of a bourgeois government, when it is threatened by a coup or an uprising of the reaction. A good example of this is given by Trotsky, on the policy of the revolutionaries in case "democratic" England invaded Brazil, ruled by the semi fascist Vargas:

"In Brazil there now reigns a semifascist regime that every revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally-in this case I will be on the side of 'fascist' Brazil against 'democratic' Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil, on the contrary, should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat." ("Anti-Imperialist Struggle Is Key to Liberation – An interview with Mateo Fossa", 23 September 1938, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1938-39)*, p. 35.)

That is to say, for Trotsky, the “semi-fascist” character of the Vargas government is not an impediment to placing himself on his military side in the face of an eventual imperialist invasion, which would colonise Brazil and impose a still more reactionary government.

He held the same, as we see elsewhere, regarding Germany in 1933: the need to fight militarily with the reactionary Bonapartist Brüning and Hindenburg if attacked by Hitler and his Nazis.

We, in Spain, would have fought with Juan Carlos-Calvo Sotelo against Tejero if a civil war had developed between them.

Truly, the popular-front government of Mitterrand must possess very special virtues, to merit Trotskyists fighting in its camp against the reaction, the same Trotskyists who would not fight in the camp of de Gaulle.

With this position, the OCI is showing that opportunism and ultraleftism are basically two sides of the same revisionist coin. It is opportunistic regarding Mitterrand, in whose bourgeois government it sees so many virtues, that it fights in his camp by subordinating itself politically to that leadership. And it is ultraleftist with respect to de Gaulle since it refuses to fight militarily in its camp against the fascist reaction. In both cases, the OCI has a policy directly opposed to that of Trotsky, who argued, as we have seen, that we always fight militarily in the camp of the bourgeois government if it is threatened by fascism or imperialism.

We, who fight all the bourgeois governments and support none, fight with any of them if they enter into a civil war with a reactionary adversary.

5. The three examples of Lambert

We have seen that the *Draft Political Report* brings three historical examples in which physical clashes took place between the government and the bourgeoisie of the reactionary camp: the Kornilov uprising, the Japanese invasion of China, and the Spanish civil war. Precisely these three examples will aid us to show that the policy of the OCI for France (assuming that there really is a seed of civil war), is the opposite of the policy applied by Lenin and Trotsky.

Fight with Kerensky against Kornilov

About a week before Kornilov’s uprising (August 1917), rumours had already spread throughout Russia of a counter-revolutionary uprising against the Kerensky government. Immediately a “defensive” bloc (defence of the government) is formed with the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and apparently a sector of the Bolshevik Party. This was Lenin’s reaction:

“Any Bolshevik who came to terms with the defencists for the purpose of (...) indirectly expressing confidence in the Provisional Government (which is allegedly being defended against the Cossacks), would, of course, be immediately and deservedly expelled from the Party. (...) Our workers and soldiers will fight the counter-revolutionary troops if they start an offensive now against the Provisional Government; they will do so not to defend this government, which called Kaledin and Co. on July 3, but to independently defend the revolution as they pursue their own aim, the aim of securing victory for the workers, for the poor, for the cause of peace, and not for the imperialists, for Kerensky, Avksentyev, Tsereteli, Skobelev and Co.” (“Rumours of a conspiracy”, 18-19 August 1917, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 251-252.)

And when the Kornilov Cossacks advanced on Petrograd: “*Even now* we must not support Kerensky’s government. This is unprincipled. (...) We shall fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, just as Kerensky’s troops do, but we do not support Kerensky. *On the*

contrary, we expose his weakness.” (“To the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.”, 30 August 1917, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 289-290, emphasis on the original.)

As we can see, Lenin’s policy is to fight against Kornilov along with Kerensky’s troops, but without giving him any support; on the contrary, he attacks it constantly and relentlessly. The aim of their struggle is not to defend the bourgeois government, but to guarantee the victory of the proletariat. Lambert’s policy, on the other hand, consists of fighting against the CNPF but in defence of the government, and facilitating the dialogue of the masses with it. We are very much afraid that, with that policy, Lambert would have been “immediately and deservedly expelled” from the Bolshevik party.

The Japanese invasion of China

In July 1937, the Japanese invasion of China began. At that time, Trotsky sent a statement to the bourgeois press where he says:

“If there exists in the world *a just war*, it is the war of the Chinese people against its oppressors. All workers’ organisations, all progressive forces in China, without abandoning their programs or their political independence, will carry out to the end their duty in the war of liberation, regardless of their attitude towards the government of Chiang Kai-shek.” (*Leon Trotsky on China*, op. cit., p. 547.)

This position of Trotsky aroused some doubts in the ranks of the international Trotskyist movement since it is about fighting with the army of Chiang Kai-shek, the same one that had massacred the workers of Shanghai. This is why Trotsky shortly after clarified his position in a series of articles and letters:

“In participating in the legitimate and progressive national war against Japanese invasion, the workers’ organisations must preserve their *full political independence* with respect to the Chiang Kai-shek government.” (Ibid, p. 573, emphasis in the original.)

“We know very well that Chiang Kai-shek is the executioner of the Chinese workers. But Chiang Kai-shek himself is forced to conduct a war that is our war. In this war, our comrades must be the best fighters. Politically they should criticise Chiang Kai-shek not for making it in an ineffective manner, without high taxation of the bourgeois class, without sufficient arming of the workers and peasants, etc. The Chinese worker should say: ‘The Japanese thieves imposed this war of defence on my people. It is my war. But unfortunately, the leadership of the war is in bad hands. We must survey its direction severely, and we must prepare to replace it.’” (Ibid, p. 574 and 575).

That is, even in a polemic with ultra-left sectors that refuse to fight against imperialism, Trotsky does not tire of insisting on the political independence of the workers’ organisations and the need to denounce the government.

The Spanish civil war

Finally, the policy of Trotsky in the Spanish Civil War is also the opposite of the one advocated in the *Draft Report*. In an article published in *Lutte Ouvrière* of 21 May 1937, he said: “It is necessary to openly and boldly mobilise the masses against the Popular Front government.” (“Is Victory Possible in Spain?”, *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, p. 259.)

And shortly thereafter: “We accuse this government of protecting the rich and starving the poor. This government must be smashed. So long as we are not strong enough to replace it, we are fighting under its command. But on every occasion we express openly our non-confidence in it; it is the only possible way to mobilise the masses politically against this government and to prepare its overthrow. Any other politics would be a betrayal of the revolution.” (“Answer to Questions on the Spanish Situation”, 14 September 1937, *ibid*, p. 287.)

“The renunciation of independent agitation and organisation for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois government can, in the best case, only prolong the death agony of bourgeois democracy and more easily prepare the triumph of Fascism.” (Ibid., p. 282.)

And this is also very clear. For Trotsky, it is a duty to fight in the republican ranks against Franco. But we accept Negrin’s military leadership, not his political leadership. On the contrary, we constantly call the masses to distrust the popular front government, to mobilise against it and to prepare for its revolutionary overthrow.

6. True Bolshevik and Trotskyist politics

From these very clear statements by Lenin and Trotsky, the true politics of the revolutionaries emerges when a physical clash occurs between two “camps”. Let’s summarise its main characteristics.

We fight militarily in the popular front camp

When there is a physical clash between two sectors of the bourgeoisie, we cannot remain neutral; we are forced to align ourselves. But we do it by responding to an objective reality, external to us, which forces us to fight in an arena that is not ours. Our arena is the class struggle, of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

It is our duty to fight against fascism or an imperialist invasion, and if the bourgeois government does too, we are in the same camp. But this camp is purely military; never, at no time, do we subordinate ourselves to its political leadership. Our “unyielding opposition” to the government, our political independence with respect to it, is the principled axis of all our politics; the only thing that changes is the way to fight the government, that is, the tactics. For example, we denounce its hesitations and weaknesses against the fascist or imperialist enemy. We demand it arm the workers and peasants and guarantee them a first-class military training, paid by the bosses. We also demand it gets the funds for the war through taxes on the profits of the bourgeoisie. Precisely, war gives us a magnificent opportunity to demonstrate in practice that the popular front government is the one that most favours the victory of fascism and the crushing of the masses.

The military alignment is a tactical episode

But the military subordination to the command of the antifascist front or the popular front government is not a permanent policy. It is only a tactic that responds to a certain relationship of forces: when the traitor workers’ parties and the government of the popular front enjoy the trust of the masses and possess greater strength than the Bolshevik Party. This is why Trotsky says we fight under the banners of Negrin as long as we do not have enough strength to overthrow him.

Transforming the struggle between camps in class struggle

The revolutionary party has a permanent goal, which is not abandoned during the civil war —the political independence of the proletariat.

During civil wars or imperialist invasions, it happens that camps emerge in reality, as shown by the three historical examples given by the OCI’s *Draft Report*. As we have said, revolutionists fight militarily in the most “progressive” camp, but not to capitulate to its bourgeois political leadership as the OCI does. On the contrary, in the midst of this military struggle we fight politically against the bourgeois leadership, we inculcate in the masses an absolute distrust in it and we seek to transform this distrust into class hatred. Our propaganda and agitation unmasks step by step the hesitations and weaknesses of the camp leadership and shows it as the best ally of the enemy camp in our ranks.

Overthrowing the bourgeois government and seizing power

Our policy of class independence and rupture of the bloc of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie aims to our supreme goal of overthrowing the bourgeois government and seizing power. Without the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois government, there can be no victory against fascism, or there can only be a momentary victory. The fascist danger will continue to exist. The misery of the masses will subsist, not as a danger but as a reality.

The current policy of the OCI, of keeping the working class tied to the bandwagon of the popular front government, plays into the "reactionary camp" and is the best way to lead the French proletariat to catastrophe.

CHAPTER VII

The Policy for the Counter-revolutionary Workers' Parties

The rise of counter-revolutionary workers' parties to the government, whether to exercise it directly with the "shadow of the bourgeoisie" (the current case in France) or to participate in a majority cabinet of the bourgeois parties (the first postwar French government, in which Thorez was the minister of labour) is a relatively unusual fact in most capitalist countries, although more frequent in the advanced ones. When it happens, it causes a different kind of reaction in the Marxist movement. Precisely, this reaction is an excellent barometer to know whether the party in question is revisionist or therefore Marxist. In advance of what will be the development of this chapter, let us briefly summarise the differences.

For the revisionists, the rise of counter-revolutionary workers' parties to the government means a favourable change in their characteristics. The fact the masses trust them gives them certain virtues, which turn them from counter-revolutionaries and agents of the bourgeoisie into reformists who are against the bourgeoisie but have the wrong method of class collaboration.

From this, it follows the violent and constant denunciation of them and their leadership must be abandoned, in exchange for a support policy combined with fraternal criticism so they change their erroneous orientation.

The revolutionary Marxists think exactly the opposite. When these parties become part of the bourgeois government, their counter-revolutionary character is stressed to the maximum, because to their usual function as agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement, it is now added the function of rulers, political managers of the capitalist state against the workers. This is the analysis of principles that revolutionary Marxists do: they have become agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement, agents of the bourgeoisie and guarantors of the bourgeois order at the level of society as a whole. We can say they have gone from bourgeois workers' parties to worker bourgeois' parties. Their class character does not change because they enter the bourgeois government, but from then on their function is to apply the policy of the bourgeoisie at the level of the whole society, not only of the workers' movement.

The policy that emerges from this assessment is that our denunciation of the traitor workers' parties if it was virulent before their accession to the government, is now a million times more virulent and consequent. In order not to be too long, let us simply say, when the Mensheviks entered the Provisional Government, Lenin said the policy of the Bolsheviks towards them should be the same as they had regarding the Kadets before February. And when Blum came to power in 1936, Trotsky called him the twin brother of the bourgeois Radical Party.

These are, broadly speaking, the differences between the revisionists and Marxists in the face of the counter-revolutionary workers' parties in government. How is the OCI (u) policy? Revisionist to the marrow, as we will see below.

1. The OCI does not fight the counter-revolutionary workers' parties

The OCI (u), a party that claims to be Trotskyist, has completely changed the traditional Marxist characterisation of the counter-revolutionary workers' parties and the revolutionary politics regarding them since the SP and the PCF took over the government with Mitterrand.

If we review the *Informations Ouvrières* published in the eight months that have elapsed since the elections, we find the following panorama. There are absolutely no articles against the Socialist Party.

Quite the contrary, *Informations Ouvrières* No 1004 expresses its joy because in the elections the SP won 46 seats from the PCF and says: "The overwhelming defeat of the bourgeois parties is accompanied by a considerable retreat of the PCF." *Informations Ouvrières* No 1024 publishes an article we have already referenced to elsewhere, about the SP congress, with a virulent frontal attack on the Rocard wing, supposed representative of the "reactionary camp" in the ranks of the ruling party.

Regarding the Stalinist party, we have found articles in the following issues of *Informations Ouvrières* (we emphasise the word articles because we do not refer to this or that isolated phrase): 1007, 1014, 1022, 1023, 1027, 1030 and 1032. Two of them (1014 and 1032) do not refer to France but to Poland; they criticise the leadership of the PCF for supporting the Polish and Soviet bureaucracy in their war against the Polish workers. We have thus that, in 33 issues of the newspaper, only seven articles appear against the Stalinist party, and two of them do not refer to their policy in France.

Now, the *Draft Political Report* states: "Its presence [in the government] means that the PCF, the Stalinist apparatus of the CGT, not only covers the entire policy of the government, but it takes charge of holding back and retreating of the masses, the defence of the bourgeoisie, the State, the Fifth Republic and its institutions, endorsing the economic and political demands of the bourgeoisie." (P. 7.)

Excellent statement, if it were not for two small defects. First, why is not the SP included here? This is precisely the most responsible for causing the "holding back and retreating of the masses" and the one in charge of the "defence of the bourgeoisie, the State, the Fifth Republic and its institutions" because they are in charge of the highest institution of the French State, the presidency of the republic.

Second, it is legitimate to believe such a statement in the document that sets the guidelines of the party's policy for the next period should be concretised in a campaign of relentless denunciation at least against the PCF. None of that: only five articles in eight months, not counting two dedicated to the Polish question.

Before last 10 May, the PCF was subject to constant and brutal attacks on *Informations Ouvrières*. So it was also the SP for its counter-revolutionary policy at the service of the bourgeoisie, although to a much lesser extent. In issue after issue of the newspaper, it was attacked for its divisionist policy, which endangered the electoral defeat of Giscard.

Once the new government has been elected, all of this has changed. The few attacks on the SP have completely disappeared, and the constant campaign against the PCF has turned into an article of denunciation now and then.

2. Instead of denunciation, fraternal criticism

The lack of denunciation of the counter-revolutionary crimes of the PCF and mainly of the SP in the current stage has a counterpart in what the OCI (u) does say about them. This positive policy has two aspects we will see separately, although both respond to the same global conception, typical of revisionism — that the SP and the PCF have lost their counter-revolutionary character. The first aspect is the fraternal criticism of the SP and the PCF; the second, which we will see later, consists of calling them to a united front.

The “Statement by the CC of the OCI” (*Informations Ouvrières*, 1030), another of the documents that would be discussed at the 26th Congress of the organisation, refers to the policy of the government and of the workers’ parties within it:

“It is a fact: against the aspirations of the working masses, the government does not take the anti-capitalist measures needed to get the country out of the quagmire. The government and the SP-PCF majority have won, together with that majority, the trust of the working class, the working masses, and the youth. The government and the majority SP-PCF do not stop yielding to the capitalists and bankers. It is a fact: since its establishment, the government and the majority SP-PCF only make concessions and more concessions to the capitalists and bankers.”

It would seem that the conclusion, since it is a supposedly Trotskyist document, is obvious: “It is not by chance that the government, with its majority SP-PCF, acts exclusively for the benefit of the bosses and against the interests of the workers who have elected them and not Giscard. This government cannot act otherwise because it is a bourgeois government, of the bosses. The SP and the PCF cannot act otherwise because they are traitorous parties, which sold themselves to the bosses many years ago. This confirms what we Trotskyists have been saying for years: the workers’ movement and the working masses cannot rely on a bosses’ government, even if it is composed mainly by the SP and the PCF.”

This is what the Trotskyists say, but it is not what the OCI says:

“The true solution is to respond to the demands of the workers and to break with the bourgeoisie. What the workers are asking is for the country to be ruled against the capitalists.”

To whom is this whining call addressed? To the government and the traitor workers’ parties:

“There is the possibility of making a different policy. The existence of an SP-PCF majority in the Assembly clearly shows it (...). The demand of the moment, which comes from below, is clear: we must rule against the capitalists, leaning on the majority. We have to rely on the majority that kicked Giscard out, the majority that chose an SP-PCF majority to end the sabotage of capitalists and bankers.”

That is, instead of taking advantage of the situation to disrupt the wrongful hopes of the workers, showing them in practice the true character of the government, the SP and the PCF, it says the same government and the same parties can take another path, to rule against the capitalists. In passing, it is stated we must continue trusting them because they can do it.

Now that the objective situation allows us Trotskyists to move from propaganda denunciations against the traitorous parties, denunciations we have been making for so many years, to the action and the mass mobilisation against them, the OCI calls the workers to trust them. All their action is limited to criticising them fraternally for ruling in favour of the bosses and calling them to straighten the course. Can there be a greater crime against Trotskyism and against the proletarian revolution?

3. The OCI (u) calls the SP and the PCF to form a united front

The other side of this policy of trusting traitorous parties is expressed thus: “Against the price increase, against the collapse of wages deliberately organised by the bosses, there is only one way to fight: to form the united front of the workers’ organisations to demand precisely from the bosses that rejoice so much: a general increase in wages, automatic blocking of prices.” (*Informations Ouvrières*, No 1007, editorial.)

Here there is a flagrant lie, in the service of protecting the government: the increase in prices and the collapse of wages is demanded by the bosses, but who decrees them is the government of Mitterrand, and so it must be said.

But the lie has an immediate goal: to hide it is the SP and the PCF who apply this policy because here they are called to form a united front to fight against it. That is, the OCI reaches the extreme of idiocy by calling the SP and the PCF to form a united front against the policy... that they themselves apply from the government! The OCI is aware the absurdity of this policy is easily discovered; that's why it lies to hide the true authors of the hunger policy.

It could be objected a mere editorial does not reflect the general and permanent policy of the party. However, there are two categorical statements that show the united front is one axis of the current OCI policy.

In the *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* we said: "When a popular front government appears, the tactic of the united front is over." The fraudulent "general council" summoned by the OCI responds: "The struggle for the workers' united front is a constant." (*Bulletin...*, p. 27.)

The "Statement by the CC" says, quoting a manifesto of the OCI (u): "We say to the workers and young people: You have imposed the unity against the division. Giscard is defeated. Everything possible must be done to maintain and extend the united bloc of workers, their parties and political organisations, which have just inflicted a first defeat on capital."

And a little further on: "Thus, the position of the OCI (u) is clear, and is characterised by a political continuity that, in all circumstances, opposes the bourgeoisie with the unity of the proletarian front..."

Here it is said with a clarity that does not admit doubts, for the OCI (u) the rise of the SP and the PCF to the government does not mean relinquishing the united front because it is the policy to be applied "in all circumstances". Actually, there has been a change. Previously the call to the united front was accompanied by the denunciation of those parties; now, that denunciation has been attenuated in the case of the PCF and completely abandoned in the case of the SP.

The Trotskyists, we believe the opposite: it is an indispensable condition — though not the only one — for the tactic of the united front to be applied that the workers' parties be in opposition, not in government. When the SP and PCF are in government, there is a political alliance between them and the bourgeoisie or important sectors of it. This does not mean that there is no political opposition to the government but within the framework of the institutional regime that shelters both the bourgeois parties and the counter-revolutionary workers' parties.

There exist exceptional moments when most of the bourgeoisie breaks with the popular front government and seeks to overthrow it by means of a *coup d'état*, or counter-revolutionary uprising. In those moments, when the political agreement between the SP-PCF and the bourgeoisie is broken, the tactic of the united front with them may be raised. But those moments are, we insist, exceptional. The general rule is the political agreement of these parties with the bourgeoisie. And in this situation, there cannot be a call to the workers' united front with the political managers of the bourgeois regime.

The reason is very simple. The united front is a tactic that consists of inviting the majority workers' parties and their rank and file to fight against the bourgeoisie and its government around common points, which are the demands most felt by the masses. It is the call to an immediate struggle, now, today.

What are the points in common we Trotskyists currently have with the SP and the PCF in France? The demands most felt by the French masses today are putting an end to unemployment, freezing prices of necessities, and increase in wages. How can we call the SP and the PCF to fight for these demands when they are the ones who apply the government austerity policy, of unemployment, high prices, and miserable salaries? A front with the SP and the PCF against unemployment means fighting for implementing the Mauroy plan, which promises work for 10 percent of the current unemployed by the end of 1984, and for all by the year 1988. This indeed would be a point in common to make a united front, but

a common point of the traitors, of the counter-revolutionary rabble of which the OCI (u) is a part today.

4. A theoretical confusion at the service of betrayal

The answer of the so-called “general council” to our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* says: “All the policy of Lenin and Trotsky in relation to the workers’ parties or parties that represent the masses has as its axis the line of the united front, with the demand, ‘*Break with the bourgeoisie!*’ In France, the demand of an SP-PCF government without bourgeois ministers is one of the highest expressions of the struggle for the workers’ united front.” (*Bulletin...* No 1, p. 26, emphasis in the original.)

In the first place, it is false the line of the united front is the axis of the policy of Lenin and Trotsky with respect to the bourgeois workers’ parties; we will expand on this a little later. Here they are confusing two different tactics: the united front and the workers’ and peasants’ government.

The call to the SP and the PCF to break with the bourgeoisie is, effectively, “one of the highest expressions of the struggle for the workers’ united front” when those parties are in opposition. Here we talk about the SP and the PCF in government, in alliance with the bourgeoisie. The call to break with the bourgeoisie as an expression of the united front tactic is, like all expressions of that tactic, an invitation to fight around common points, felt by the masses to the extent they are willing to mobilise immediately.

The call to “break with the bourgeoisie” when the SP and the PCF are in government is not an invitation to the joint struggle with them, but a demand, destined to encourage them to make up a government without bourgeoisie, a government against the bourgeoisie. In the event a great rise of the masses forced them to do so, the resulting government would not yet be the real dictatorship of the proletariat but an extremely important step towards it. But if they do not break with the bourgeoisie, which is most likely, then their counter-revolutionary essence is laid bare before the masses. This, let’s say once and for all, is the tactic of the workers’ and peasants’ government.

This confusion is not coincidental, but obeys a deep logic, consistent with all the policy of the OCI (u). Because right after passage quoted above, the *Bulletin* says: “Is it necessary to recall once again the *Transitional Program* and that important passage about the workers’ and peasants’ government...?” (Ibid, p.26.)

Let’s say yes, and recall it: “Of all parties and organisations which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name we demand that they break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers’ and peasants’ government. On this road, we promise them full support against capitalist reaction. At the same time, we indefatigably develop agitation around those transitional demands which should in our opinion form the program of the ‘workers’ and peasants’ government’.” (*The Transitional Program*, p. 94-95.)

Here it is said this is a demand on the workers’ parties, not an invitation to fight together with them. But the most important thing here is that “we indefatigably develop agitation around those transitional demands which should in our opinion form the program of the workers’ and peasants’ government”.

What is the only agitation that the OCI does? Support for the “measures” or “progressive steps” of the Mitterrand government against the bourgeoisie and the CNPF; the support to the principles that arise from the Mauroy plan to eliminate unemployment in seven years; the call to the government not to make the mistake of conciliating with the bourgeoisie.

Some examples:

- The great strike of Renault was ignored by the OCI (u) for a month, and finally, it gave an adventurist line destined to paralyse the struggle.

- In Logabax, against the layoffs, it proposed that “the government should be given the time it needs” to solve the problems, and not to consider the nationalisation of the company.

- In the student movement, the UNEF, led by the OCI and the SP, limits itself to “congratulating” the government on each measure it takes.

- Finally, in the Orly dispute against the dismissals, the OCI formed a united front with the union bureaucracy linked to the SP and the PCF to get approved a resolution which adopts as the only measure to prevent the dismissals a meeting with the Minister of Labour.

This is the profound logic of the theoretical confusion between the united front and the workers’ and peasants’ government. The OCI (u) has formed a solid united front with the popular front, bourgeois, imperialist government of Mitterrand and with all the parties that comprise it (including the bourgeois parties). The aim of its fraudulent references to Lenin and Trotsky is to disguise its betrayal of the proletariat and the revolution under a Trotskyist garb.

5. A united front within the united front

We hold, therefore, that the OCI (u) is part of a great united front headed by the Mitterrand government, where the bourgeois and workers’ parties participate. However, it is necessary to nuance this statement, because, within this great front, the OCI (u) promotes another, more reduced front, which obeys the logic of the “progressive camps”. Let’s see:

“The conflict will unfold both inside the government and inside the SP. And in this case, the unified OCI will not remain neutral either.” (*Draft Political Report*, p. 7.)

That is to say, the theory of camps extends here to the Socialist Party, the main party of the government.

Informations Ouvrières No 1024 (31 October 1981) dedicates an important article to the SP Congress, held in October. There it says:

“Before the reactionary rage (of the bosses and the press), many delegates to the congress were much applauded when asking the government to use the means at their disposal to stop the blows launched by the bankers and the scandalous sabotage of the high administration. But this willingness to react and to clearly name the enemy was counteracted on the second day by several members of the government, mainly by minority leaders of the SP: Rocard [Minister of Planning], Chevenement [Minister of Research and Industry], Mauroy [Prime Minister]. Is this not the aim of the new media barrage, this time directed against the Valence congress: to lean on the calls for ‘moderation’ coming from within the SP to redouble the offensive against the workers and the government?”

As clear as day; the government (i.e., Mitterrand) is being attacked from within the Socialist Party itself, by ministers such as Mauroy and Rocard. These are the agents of the “capitalists and bankers” who sabotage the action of the government.

Another article, under the title “Why they prefer Rocard”, points out that this minister is against “provoking a disruption in the productive apparatus”; in other words, it is against nationalisations. Because of these statements and others alike, the newspaper *La Croix*, which expresses the positions of the Catholic hierarchy, has said that Rocard “stands out in the group of the reasonable ones (...) for advocating moderation in salary increases...” (*Informations Ouvrières* 1024).

Informations Ouvrières contrasts these statements by Rocard with those of Minister of Interior, Gaston Defferre: “As for the bankers, it is them or us”, that is, the government is the bankers’ mortal enemy.

Here the sectarian aspect of the opportunistic general orientation of the OCI (u) is revealed — Mauroy and Rocard are excluded from the “progressive bourgeois camp”. The popular front government is progressive, which is why the OCI (u) makes a united front

with it. But within that united front there is an “infiltrated” wing, so to speak, that responds to the enemy, reactionary camp, the camp of the CNPF. This sector prevents the government from advancing on the “good path” of satisfying the demands of the masses and makes it yield to the demands of the capitalists and bankers. Therefore, the OCI (u) forms a united front within the larger united front with Mitterrand and his unconditional supporters, such as Defferre, against Rocard and his supporters.

With this, the SP — and we refer to the SP as a whole, with Mitterrand at the helm — has ceased to be a traitor workers’ party, a bourgeois workers’ party that definitively went over to the side of the counter-revolution almost 70 years ago. Now it is a party that forms part of the two camps, the bourgeois and the anti-bourgeois; the OCI makes a united front with the latter, that is, none other than with Mitterrand.

6. The true politics of Lenin and Trotsky

The Leninist and Trotskyist garb with which the OCI (u) seeks to disguise its betrayal really does not resist criticism. It is enough to see what Lenin and Trotsky really said about the subject that concerns us.

In the first place, the rise of the traitor workers’ parties to government demands a radical change in the characterisation of the same and, therefore, a change in the policy of the revolutionary party. Let us first hear Lenin referring to the Mensheviks when they became part of the provisional government:

“The slightest confidence in the Mensheviks would be as much of a betrayal of the revolution now as confidence in the Cadets would have been between 1905 and 1917.”

And soon after: “The chief guarantee of its success today is for the people to clearly realise the treachery of the Mensheviks and SRs and completely break with them, and for every revolutionary worker to boycott them as completely as they boycotted the Cadets after the experience of 1905.” (“Rumours of a Conspiracy”, 18-19 August 1917, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 252.)

Lenin asserts and insists that, as of their entry into the bourgeois government, the Mensheviks deserve by the proletariat the same treatment the Kadet bourgeois party receives: no confidence, total break, unconditional boycott. Obviously, this characterisation excludes any policy of agreement or deal with them. Lenin says it explicitly: “The Mensheviks have deserted for good to the camp of the proletariat’s enemies. You do not conclude agreements or make blocs with people who have deserted for good to the enemy camp. The prime task of revolutionary Social-Democrats (...) is to isolate them completely from all the more or less revolutionary elements of the working class.” (Ibid. p. 251.)

Trotsky is no less categorical. When Blum arrived at the government, he said: “The party of Blum is a bourgeois party, the younger brother of rotten radicalism.” (*Leon Trotsky On France*, p. 178.)

He insists again on this concept, in the midst of the Spanish Civil War: “It is necessary to open up an implacable campaign against the bloc with the bourgeoisie, and for a socialist program. It is necessary to denounce the Stalinist, Socialist, and Anarchist leaders precisely because of their bloc with the bourgeoisie. It is not a question of articles more or less confined to the columns of *La Batalla* [organ of the POUM]. No. It is a question of marshalling the masses against their leaders, who are leading the revolution to complete destruction.” (“A Strategy for Victory”, 25 February 1937, *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, p. 286.)

That is to say, in the midst of the war against fascism, Trotsky calls to fight the popular front and the traitorous leadership of the SP, the PCE, and the anarchists; the opposite of the united front.

In conclusion, “all the policy of Lenin and Trotsky in relation to the workers’ parties or parties that represent the masses has as its axis” exactly the opposite of what the OCI

claims: no agreement, total break, isolation, marshalling the masses against them when they are part of a bourgeois government.

7. An exceptional tactic for an exceptional circumstance

We said there is an exceptional circumstance in which the tactic of the united front with the treacherous workers' parties when they are in government is raised. This circumstance occurred in August 1917 and lasted exactly fifteen days. In that interval, Lenin and Trotsky raised the united front with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, although they did not stop attacking them. This was explained by Trotsky, years later, in the polemic against the Stalinists of the third period who refused to fight Hitler with the Social Democrats: "[the Bolsheviks] also had a right to say: 'In order to defeat the Korniloviad — we must first defeat the Kerenskiad.' They said this more than once, for it was correct and necessary for all the subsequent propaganda. But that was entirely inadequate for offering resistance to Kornilov on August 26, and on the days that followed, and for preventing him from butchering the Petrograd proletariat. That is why the Bolsheviks did not content themselves with a general appeal to the workers and soldiers to break with the conciliators and to support the red united front of the Bolsheviks. No, the Bolsheviks proposed the united front struggle to the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries and created together with them joint organisations of struggle." ("For a Workers' United Front Against Fascism", 8 December 1931, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, p.136.)

In the face of the counter-revolutionary revolt of Kornilov, the Bolsheviks no longer had as the centre of their agitation the call to "break with the conciliators" and, as an exception, they proposed to the Mensheviks and SRs a joint struggle for an immediate goal: to defeat Kornilov. In other words, until the Kornilov uprising, they applied a tactic directly opposite the united front with the Mensheviks and SRs. Instead, they called for breaking with the conciliators and forming the revolutionary ("red") united front.

Under what circumstances was this agreement proposed? Again, Trotsky speaks: "*The entire bourgeoisie supported Kornilov.* The alliance of the Bolsheviks with the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks was made possible only because the conciliationists *broke with the bourgeoisie temporarily*: they were compelled to, from fear of Kornilov. The representatives of these parties knew that the moment Kornilov was victorious the bourgeoisie would no longer need them, and would allow Kornilov to strangle them." ("What Next?", 27 January 1932, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, p.187, emphasis in original.).

Lenin and Trotsky raised the united front when the bourgeoisie as a whole broke the alliance with the Mensheviks and SRs and went over to Kornilov's side.

The case of Spain was different; only a sector of the bourgeoisie broke with the Republic and rose with Franco. The other sector kept the alliance with the SP, the CP, and the anarchists, and this is why Trotsky never raised the tactic of the united front in the Spanish civil war.

8. The origin of the united front tactic

The united front, tactics of circumstantial application, when the moment demands it, is one of the best that Leninism has elaborated. In the hands of the revisionists of the OCI (u), it has become a principle of universal and permanent application: "The struggle for the workers' united front is a constant."

For our teachers, the united front is a formidable tactic applied at certain times, according to the situation of the class struggle and the degree of strength (or weakness) of the revolutionary Marxist organisation. It was raised for the first time in the Third International, after 1921, in the circumstances explained by Trotsky:

“The counter-revolutionary events of February 1921 showed that it was absolutely impossible to postpone any longer a major adjustment of economic methods of socialist construction to the needs of the peasantry. The revolutionary events in March 1921 in Germany showed that it was absolutely impossible to postpone further a political “retreat”, in the sense of preparing the struggle for winning over the majority of the working class. Both of these retreats, which coincided in point of time, are, as we have seen, most intimately connected. They are retreats in a qualified sense, for what they demonstrated most graphically was the necessity, in Germany as in Russia, of our passing through a certain period of preparation: a new economic course in Russia; a fight for transitional demands and for the united front in the West.” (*The First Five Years of the Communist International*, vol.2, p.267.)

That is, the tactic arises in 1921, when capitalism stabilises and the failure of the Communist International’s plan to displace the social democracy of the workers’ movement through the triumph of the revolution in a Western European country. The defeat of the German revolution means the stabilisation of capitalism and a great offensive against the standard of living of the masses and at the same time the consolidation of social democracy in the workers’ movement. With this, the communist parties, which in some European countries have gained great strength, remain minority regarding social democracy. The tactic of the united front is elaborated from this novel objective and subjective situation, which forces the communist parties to go through a “period of preparation” in which they must win most of the working class.

How is this tactic put forth? Again, Trotsky speaks:

“Today the organised portion of the working class is broken up into three formations.

“One of them, the Communist, strives toward the social revolution and precisely because of this supports concurrently every movement, however partial, of the toilers against the exploiters and against the bourgeois state.

“Another grouping, the reformist, strives toward conciliation with the bourgeoisie. But in order not to lose their influence over the workers reformists are compelled, against the innermost desires of their own leaders, to support the partial movements of the exploited against the exploiters.

“Finally, there is a third grouping, the centrist, which constantly vacillates between the other two, and which has no independent significance.

“The circumstances thus make wholly possible joint action on a whole number of vital issues between the workers united in these three respective organisations and the unorganised masses adhering to them.” (“On the United Front”, 2 March 1922, *ibid.* p. 94.)

In the same document we are quoting, Trotsky says:

“In cases where the Communist Party still remains an organisation of a numerically insignificant minority, the question of its conduct on the mass-struggle front does not assume a decisive practical and organisational significance. In such conditions, mass actions remain under the leadership of the old organisations which by reason of their still powerful traditions continue to play the decisive role.

“Similarly the problem of the united front does not arise in countries where — as in Bulgaria, for example — the Communist Party is the sole leading organisation of the toiling masses.

“But wherever the Communist Party already constitutes a big, organised, political force, but not the decisive magnitude: wherever the party embraces organisationally, let us say, one-fourth, one-third, or even a larger proportion of the organised proletarian vanguard, it is confronted with the question of the united front in all its acuteness.” (*ibid.* p. 92.)

From all this we derive a series of characteristics of the united front tactics, which we can summarise thus:

- It arises when there is a certain relationship of forces between the revolutionary party and the reformist party, the former being weaker than the latter but without making up an insignificant minority of the workers' movement.

- It arises when the workers' movement is fighting to defend itself against a capitalist offensive.

- It is aimed at the opportunist parties with a majority influence in the workers' movement — in the time of Lenin and Trotsky, these were the Social Democrats — when these are forced to support the partial mobilisations of the workers.

- It is an invitation — not a demand — to the joint and immediate struggle around the problems suffered by the workers.

And it follows from this an additional characteristic, on which it is necessary to emphasise even at the risk of being repetitive: since it applies only to circumstances, it is a tactic, in no way a policy for the permanent application. Otherwise, the Third International would have defined it as a strategy, which would require accessory or subordinate tactics to achieve the united front in each stage of the class struggle.

The OCI, with its conception “the struggle for the united front is a constant”, argues just the opposite. In such a case, it must be consistent and state the Third International committed a political error when defining it as a tactic that applies only in special and of the moment circumstances such as those described above. If the OCI is consistent to the end, it must assert that Lenin and Trotsky were wrong in 1917 in Russia because they did not apply this tactic (throughout the year they rejected the agreements with the Mensheviks and SRs), and that they were wrong again in the first two congresses of the Communist International, when many tactics were raised except agreement with social democracy.

In addition, the leaders of the OCI should agree among themselves. In his speech on Angola, Luis Favre raised, as we have seen, that the only slogans that should be agitated are the slogans for immediate action, which is why the OCI does not now raise a government slogan. Suppose for a moment that Favre is right. But the united front is precisely for immediate action: then, why is it a “constant”, i.e., it is posed even when there are no possibilities of achieving it?

9. A contradictory tactic

This tactic, in its application, frequently faced the reality that the social democratic leadership flatly refused to join the struggle. From this reality emerged a discussion, already in the Fourth Congress. The right wing, headed by Radek and Thalheimer, argued that the united front essentially was about the agreement with the social democratic leadership, while the left, led by Zinoviev, stated that unity should be sought with the workers' ranks, whatever their tendency. This is the discussion between the supporters of the united front “from above” and those of the united front “from below” (ignoring the social democratic leadership).

Based on these contradictions, Stalinism later fell into two diametrically opposed deviations. The first was the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee, the united front of the Soviet bureaucracy with the British trade union bureaucracy in 1925. Thanks to that united front, the British bureaucrats could betray and cause the defeat of the formidable British general strike of 1925, taking advantage of the prestige of their alliance with the leadership of the Russian Revolution. The other deviation took place in Germany, when the Stalinists, in their ultraleftist “third period” posed the united front “from the ranks” and ignored the “social fascist” leadership. With this, they sabotaged the unity of the German proletariat and allowed Hitler's rise to power.

Deviations aside, the tactic of the united front is contradictory, due to a real fact: it is about achieving a unitary and immediate mobilisation of the workers, and the struggle is not precisely the arena in which the reformist leaders feel more comfortable. Their theatre

of action is the parliamentary tribune, the writing of the newspaper, the office of the union or the party, not the factory or the barricade on the street. The axis of their activity is the negotiation, not mobilisation.

As for us, Trotsky tells us, “We are interested in dragging the reformists from their asylums and placing them alongside ourselves before the eyes of the struggling masses.” (*The First Five Years...*, Vol 2, op. cit., p. 95.)

Sometimes, when the pressure of the masses is very strong and especially when an offensive of capitalism endangers their privileges, we can “drag the reformists from their asylums” and force them to fight. This situation benefits us as revolutionists since only through the mobilisation our party gets stronger and exposes the true counter-revolutionary face of those leaderships.

But on many occasions, perhaps in the majority, it is impossible to force the reformist bureaucracy to mobilise. In such cases, as long as the revolutionary party has enough strength (and remember this is one condition for applying the united front), there is, in fact, a united front at the ranks. If there is a struggle, then this type of front can also favour us since it unmasks the treacherous leadership.

Be that as it may, the united front is a tactic to mobilise the masses, and that is the only way to consider it. Never to stop a mobilisation as posed by Stalinism in its two contradictory versions, “from above” (in England) and “from the ranks” (in Germany).

10. The united front in our ranks

The tactics of the united front, applied by Trotskyists during Trotsky’s life, went through three clearly defined stages.

The first corresponds to the stage of the Anglo-Russian Committee and to another great united front of that time: of the Chinese Communist Party with the Kuomintang. And within the USSR there is, in fact, a united front of the bureaucracy with the rich peasantry, within the framework of the NEP, as we have seen in a previous chapter.

The axis of Trotsky’s policy at that stage was the break of these three counter-revolutionary united fronts. In England and China, his forecasts were confirmed by the defeat of the general strike in one and the defeat of the revolution of 1925-27 in the other. Within the USSR, the bureaucracy, forced by circumstances that endangered its domination, had to put a bloody end to its front with the kulaks and take the slogans of the Left Opposition for the implementation of a five-year plan and the industrialisation of the country, in an ultimatum and totalitarian form.

The second stage took place between 1928 and 1933. With the advance of Nazism in Germany, the united front becomes the main tactic of Trotskyism. This had all the classic characteristics of the united front, as they were defined by the Third International.

In the first place, it should be borne in mind that Trotskyism, ultra-minority, did not consider itself an independent organisation but a loyal faction of the Comintern and its national parties. Therefore, it fought because the German CP, an organisation with great mass influence but a minority in relation to social democracy, called on the latter to form a united front. In the second place, it was a defensive tactic to unitarily mobilise the masses, against the fascist danger.

The second stage ends in 1933, with the victory of fascism in Germany. From then on, the Trotskyists break with the Comintern, form independent groups and practically abandon the tactics of the united front. That is, not totally: they continue to raise it at a local level around the workers’ demands, but at the national level they only raise it propagandistically, in the sense of “this is what the mass workers’ parties should do”, abandoning it as a tactic for the immediate action of the party itself. The mere mention of the united front disappears from Trotskyist literature after the rise of popular fronts in Spain and France.

The abandonment of the united front obeys a very solid reason: it is a tactic for immediate action. Trotskyism, a very weak and ultra-minority current in the workers' movement, was not in a position to raise it. Hence the remarkable fact the two most important programmatic documents of the founding of the Fourth International — *The Transitional Program* and the manifesto, *Imperialist War and the World Proletarian Revolution* (called "Emergency Manifesto") — do not even mention the tactics of the united front. This shows, on the other hand, it is only a tactic subordinated to the great strategic task of the construction of the revolutionary party of the proletariat.

There may be a circumstance in which the united front can still be raised: at the local, union or oppressed national level. For example, before a strike in a factory, or a mobilisation of immigrant workers, the united front with the union bureaucracy, or the local leadership of the socialist or Stalinist party, may be raised to achieve a victory of the mobilisation. But this is entirely different from the united front at the national level, as originally proposed by the Third International.

When the traitor workers' parties are in government, it is only raised under an absolutely exceptional circumstance like the Kornilov uprising.

11. The tactic of entryism

From 1934-35, Trotsky begins to propose a new tactic: entryism in socialist parties.

The new tactic responds to the following fact: as a consequence of the Stalinist betrayal in Germany and the advance of fascism in Europe, a large sector of youth is attracted to the social democracy and enters its ranks. This produces a double phenomenon: the social democratic parties are strengthened but at the same time a series of left centrist tendencies that confront the treacherous leaders appear.

In the countries where this happens — mainly France, Spain and the United States — Trotsky espouses the line of entryism.

To analyse this tactic, the clearest example, strange as it may seem, is a case in which the united front was apparently raised: France in 1934. Let's see what Trotsky said:

"We have already said that the united front of the Socialist and Communist parties embodies immense possibilities. If only it wants it seriously, it will tomorrow become master in France. But the will must be there. (...) The key to the situation is now in the united front. If [the proletariat] does not use this key, it will play the lamentable role that would have been played by the united front of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries in Russia in 1917 if... the Bolsheviks had not prevented them." (*Leon Trotsky On France*, op. cit., p. 58.)

Is this a call from Trotsky to form the united front? No, it is to recognise this front of the two workers' parties exists in reality and he calls for a policy for it. This policy was one of entryism in the socialist party and was raised precisely when the SP-CP united front was formed.

"The united front is getting under way on the rails of the masses. We want to participate actively. The sole possibility for our organisation to participate in the mass united front under the given circumstances is by entering the Socialist Party." ("The League faced with a decisive turn", June 1934, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1934-35)*, p. 51.)

That is, it was proposed as a tactic so that the small Trotskyist party would not be marginalised from the mass movement. With what goals?

"Several comrades, I among them, accused the leadership of the League and *La Verité* of insufficiency in the struggle against the Social Democratic leadership. At first glance, it might seem as though there lay an irreconcilable contradiction between this criticism, which I still maintain today in its full extent, and the proposal to enter the Social Democratic party. In reality, that is not the case. To exist as an independent organisation and thereby not to demarcate oneself sharply from the Social Democrats means to risk becoming an

appendage of Social Democracy. To enter openly (under the given concrete conditions) the Social Democratic party in order to develop an inexorable struggle against the reformist leadership means to perform a revolutionary act. The critical examination of the policy of Blum and Co. must be the same in both cases.” (Ibid. p. 51.)

Trotsky then criticises the leadership of the French section for the inadequacy of their struggle against the social democratic leadership and proposes that, for that struggle to be more effective (“inexorable”), the League enters the social democratic party. It is the opposite of the united front, which seeks agreement between two organisations around common points for the struggle. Entryism is a tactic for the small revolutionary group to insert itself into the mainstream of the masses and carry on its “inexorable struggle against the reformist leadership”. We have given the example of France, but we insist that the entryist tactic was applied, not due to the existence of the SP-CP front, but to win the leftist currents of the SP, i.e., for the same reasons as in the United States, Spain, Holland, etc., where that united front never emerged.

12. The workers’ and peasants’ government

With the disappearance of the united front among the tactics of Trotskyism, another one emerges, which quickly gains a citizenship card as one of the most important tactics of our movement: the workers’ and peasants’ government.

It is no coincidence that Trotsky did not raise these two tactics at the same time, and that one arose as the other disappeared. As we have said, the united front is a call, made by a revolutionary party with mass influence, to a reformist majority party to the joint struggle, based on common points.

The workers’ and peasants’ government as a tactic against the workers’ parties corresponds to another stage when the Stalinist and social democratic parties have stopped being reformists to become counter-revolutionaries since they have definitively gone over to the bourgeois order. The united front starts from the basis that there is friction between the bourgeoisie and the workers’ parties. The tactic of the workers’ and peasants’ government arises when there is a profound counter-revolutionary unity between them, which is characteristic of the current historical stage.

The united front is the call for the mobilisation of the masses with their reformist leaderships. The workers’ and peasants’ government is not a call but a demand; not to fight together but to have these leaderships break their collaboration and their alliance with the bourgeoisie and take power with a revolutionary program. It is, in short, the call to the masses to break with their treacherous leaderships or force them to break with the bourgeoisie.

For all this, the united front and the workers’ and peasants’ government are opposite tactics, corresponding to entirely different stages of the class struggle.

Let’s say in conclusion that here we have only referred to the workers’ and peasants’ government as a tactic to sweep away the treacherous leaderships of the workers’ movement, and not in the other sense described by the Theses, that is, as a specific type of government.

13. The revolutionary workers’ front

The stage in which the workers’ parties have definitively become counter-revolutionary has produced another phenomenon: of centrist currents, and which in many cases arise in the midst of these parties, which evolve towards revolutionary Trotskyist positions. We call these currents “Trotskyist-like” because they adopt many of our programmatic propositions: the need for workers’ revolution and the destruction of the bourgeois state, the denunciation of the counter-revolutionary workers’ parties, the need to rely on the

revolutionary mobilisation of the masses, the type of State that must be built after the seizure of power, etc.

We need to equip ourselves with a policy towards these currents, to win them over to the Marxist program and the proletarian revolution, and for the construction of the Trotskyist party. This is the policy of the revolutionary united front, already proposed in 1917 as a "red united front". Trotskyism raised it in Spain and France, countries where the revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situation had given rise to these currents in the mass workers' parties, in face of the betrayals of their leaderships. Let's see how it was raised in Spain:

"The immediate task [of the proletariat] is to create, in the course of the struggle itself, a capable leadership, which cannot be other than a new truly revolutionary Marxist party, that is not burdened with old mistakes and old crimes, that is free of all opportunism and all desire for conciliation (...) The elements of that new party already exist. They are among the remnants of the POUM, where a left-wing had formed, criticising very vividly the pusillanimity of the Executive Committee; among the anarchists, especially among the 'Friends of Durruti'; and in the socialist youths, where the comrades revolt against the counter-revolutionary course of the Stalinists."

"To all the revolutionaries who feel close to us, we direct this appeal: come to strengthen our ranks. Let's clarify the points in divergence based on a friendly discussion. United in the fight, we will defeat our common enemy." ("Despite everything, Long Live the Spanish Revolution", 19 July 1936.).

A similar policy was applied in France, with the call for the formation of the revolutionary proletarian front. The newspaper *La Lutte Ouvrière* in its edition of 10 October 1936 publishes an open letter from the Political Bureau of the POI addressed to *Gauche Révolutionnaire* (Pivert's group), Group What To Do? (a small centrist organisation), the Anarchist Union, and the Alliance of Young Socialists of the Seine led by Fred Zeller who had broken with the youth of Blum's party and was approaching the Trotskyists.

After a brief analysis of the situation in Spain and France, the letter says:

"In such a situation, only the resolute struggle for the revolutionary program of the *expropriation of the bourgeoisie* can take the initiative away from the fascists and prepare the workers for the decisive struggle. We propose that the struggle be organised around the following slogans:

"Workers' and peasants' control of production, industry and banking, suppression of commercial secrecy;

"Constitution of elected mass Action Committees of congresses of enterprise delegates;

"Long live the occupation of the factories!"

The call concludes thus:

"The crisis of the popular front expresses the crisis of liberal capitalism in France. The radical bourgeoisie threatens the workers who occupy the factories. To win, the working class must break the 'front' of betrayal, that monstrous association of water and fire.

"The middle classes and the peasantry will listen to the *revolutionary proletarian front* and help it if it expresses the struggle of the exploited classes and is not the fruit of the domestication of the workers by the bourgeoisie. At this moment when the situation demands us to redouble and extend the struggle, we propose joint action on the foundations expressed here." (Emphasis in the original).

"The foundations expressed here" are precisely the slogans that will make up the Transitional Program: workers' control and the creation of soviets ("Action Committees"). A call on these foundations cannot be directed to the traitor leaderships of the workers' movement, but to groups or currents with revolutionary positions or that evolve towards these positions; here nothing less than the expropriation of the bourgeoisie with a revolutionary program is being proposed.

This call was the subject of a real campaign in *La Lutte Ouvrière*. In its 24 October issue, it launches the slogans:

“Proletarian united front against the bourgeoisie, fascism, and imperialist war;

“We must dismiss the Radical ministers from the government.

“Let us group the exploited in the field of the class struggle against capitalism.”

The call to fight for these slogans is repeated in almost all the issues of *La Lutte Ouvrière*, which we do not quote so as not to keep it long.

We must point out that entryism and the revolutionary front are raised in two entirely different stages of the class struggle. The first corresponded to a time when the masses had suffered a defeat, with the rise of Flandin to government and the transformation of the Third French Republic into a Bonapartist state. In the social democratic party of Blum, there were left currents that questioned the treacherous leadership.

The revolutionary united front arises when the masses have resumed the offensive, while the united front SP-CP has become a popular front with the bourgeois Radical Party. This stage requires a tactic to win the currents that we have defined as “Trotskyist-like centrists” (centrists with a positive dynamic, towards the revolution) for the construction of the revolutionary party. This is why the call for a joint struggle with these currents is made based on the Trotskyist program.

14. The only strategy of Trotskyism

From all of the above, it follows that, for Trotskyism, the united front with the reformist parties, the workers’ and peasants’ government (from the point of view we have discussed here) and the revolutionary united front are only tactics. Each corresponds to a particular circumstance of the class struggle and is adopted or discarded for circumstantial convenience.

Trotskyism knows only one strategy in the political-organisational field: The construction of the revolutionary party to overcome the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. Subordinated to this strategy, it applies the different tactics we have just described, in order to destroy, to sweep away from the mass movement the counter-revolutionary Stalinist and social democratic leaderships. Applying one or another form of these tactics will depend on the objective situation (rise or fall of the mass movement, strength or weakness of the ruling class, etc.) and subjective situation (the relationship of forces between the revolutionary group and the counter-revolutionary leaderships, the existence or nonexistence of Trotskyist-like currents).

The revolutionary leadership that turns any of these tactics into a universal strategy of permanent application abandons, in fact, the construction of the revolutionary party and, with it, the struggle for the conquest of power. This is precisely the case of the OCI, for which the “struggle for the united front is a constant”.

The only constant for us is the construction of the Trotskyist party through different and multiple tactics.

This odd habit of the OCI (u) to transform the united front into a supra-historic strategy is a manoeuvre to move Trotskyism away from the leadership of the struggles of the working class and the exploited masses, being satisfied with the call to the treacherous leaderships to lead those struggles.

CHAPTER VIII

The OCI abandons the Transitional Program for a Minimal Program

As we have seen, the OCI has a policy of focusing its attacks exclusively on the CNPF and the top Giscardian officials. Not only does it not attack the government, but it is part of its “camp”. This leads it to argue the mass movement will go through two stages in their attitude towards the government. In the first stage, the masses will see in the government their “ally” against the CNPF and will seek to “dialogue” with it. The task of the OCI at this stage is to “facilitate” this dialogue. In the second stage, which will begin once the CNPF is defeated, the masses will rise but not to overthrow the government but force it to break with the bourgeoisie. We suppose (because the OCI never explicitly tells it) that the slogan “out the bourgeois ministers from government” is relegated to this second stage, that is, for an indeterminate future. The synthesis of this policy is that the OCI does not have or seek to have a government slogan.

The latter means the total abandonment of the Transitional Program, both in the letter and in the method. Because the axis of the Transitional Program is precisely the problem of power: a Trotskyist program is a set of slogans and tasks that aim at the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, that is, of the bourgeois government in power, and the conquest of power by the proletariat.

Now, something quite comical happens with the OCI. All its policy is revisionist, but as it seeks to hide this fact, it quotes Trotsky and the *Transitional Program* at every step. The *Draft Political Report* has a chapter entitled “Applying the method of *The Transitional Program*” and throughout the document, there are abundant quotations from Trotsky (besides some from Lenin and the Third International). This is typical of shameful revisionism: ritually quoting the masters, swearing by them, applying a policy directly contrary to their teachings.

1. The OCI acknowledges it has no program

The *Draft Political Report* states that the OCI does not currently have a transitional program: “... the other transitional slogans that will form the backbone of the action program we will have to write.” (Op. cit., p. 5.)

That is, the transitional slogans and the action program have not yet been written.

Let us clarify that in Trotskyist terminology “action program” is the same as “transitional program”: in 1934 Trotsky wrote an “action program for France”; the transition program of 1938 takes up the same slogans and, above all, maintains the same character and method as the former. Let’s keep going.

The *Draft Report* asks: “We are in the presence of a task we must fulfil: knowing how to elaborate, based on the *Transitional Program* of the Fourth International, an action program that responds to the new political situation among the classes in our country. Can we do it immediately?” (Ibid. p. 5.)

The answer is no: "It is essential that the OCI develop an 'action program' in the coming weeks and in the coming months. However, it is not a question of being ultimatum or abstract." (Ibid. p. 7.)

In this, the OCI behaves exactly the opposite of Trotskyism. A Trotskyist says: "Once the characterisation of a new stage of the class struggle is made, we cannot go a step further without developing a program appropriate to it." The OCI, on the other hand, places everything upside down when stating that the program is necessary, that it must be prepared, but that it can leave this task for later, for the next weeks or months.

2. Trotsky versus Frank-Molinier-Lambert

The conscious refusal to formulate a program is not a casual event. Nor is it new: it happened before in our ranks with the Frank-Molinier faction of the French party. Let's see how it was, and how Trotsky argued in the controversy on that occasion, because history is repeating itself.

In 1935, a wing of the French Trotskyist party, headed by Frank and Molinier, decided to publish a "mass organ" to respond to the new situation created by the formation of the Popular Front of Blum and the growing rise of the masses. This newspaper, called *La Commune*, formulated five slogans: the creation of workers' committees and communes; formation of popular militias and armament of the proletariat; revolutionary defeatism; workers' and peasants' government; and reconstruction of the revolutionary party.

Except for "communes", these slogans seem to be taken from *Whither France?* or some other Trotsky's writing of the time. However, Trotsky called *La Commune's* manifesto of capitulation "to the social-patriotic wave. All the rest is only phrases, worthless in the eyes of a serious Marxist." (*The Crisis of the French Section*, p. 102.) Why? Because *La Commune*, like the OCI today, did not have a program:

"For us, the important thing is a program that corresponds to the objective situation. (...) But in P. Frank's letter, in all his thinking — as in the well-known appeal of *La Commune* — there is no mention whatsoever of a program, and not without reason: program constitutes a major obstacle to the general fraternisation with the petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals, pessimists, skeptics and adventurers; we, for our part, believe that program determines everything." (Ibid., p.106.)

Here Trotsky gives us the key: Frank and Molinier did not raise a program in order to be able to capitulate to the left of the Popular Front: Marceau Pivert and company. Lambert refuses to raise a program to capitulate, not to leftist intellectuals such as Pivert, but even worse: to the bourgeois government of Mitterrand and the most rotten of the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic right of the union apparatus, Bergeron and his consorts.

Lambert says he does not raise a program because "it is not a question of being ultimatum". Frank said exactly the same thing: "No organisational ultimatum whatsoever" (quoted in Ibid. p. 106). Trotsky replies:

"What a revolting distortion of the Leninist formulation! 'No organisational ultimatum whatsoever' in relation to the masses, the trade unions, the workers' movement; but the most intransigent ultimatum in relation to any group that claims to lead the masses. The ultimatum that we are talking about is called the *Marxist program*." (Ibid., p. 106, emphasis in the original.)

And a little later, when Frank and Molinier proposed reunification, Trotsky insisted: "*Program first!* 'Mass newspaper'? Revolutionary action? Regroupment? Communes everywhere? ... Very well, very well... But *program first!*" (Ibid. p.119.)

As we see, history repeats itself; but, as Marx said, what yesterday was tragedy today is repeated as farce. Frank-Molinier raised five slogans and called that a program. Trotsky replied: "'Workers' militia and revolutionary defeatism' does not constitute a program. Everyone accepts now with this or that reservation." (Ibid. p. 107.)

Lambert, however, explicitly refuses to raise a program.

Frank-Molinier rejected “ultimatism” to capitulate to a centrist current of the left, which in turn capitulated to the popular front. Lambert capitulates directly to the bourgeois government of the popular front and the trade union bureaucracy.

3. The tasks and slogans of Pablo and Lambert

The refusal to elaborate and raise a program of action (i.e., transitional) does not mean the OCI does not raise tasks and slogans in the face of government policy. On the contrary, it does present them in the clearest and most categorical way towards the end of the *Draft Political Report*.

The starting point to elaborate the tasks is the following observation, immediately after stating that one should not be “ultimatist or abstract”.

“The Mitterrand-Mauroy government has no alternative than to enter at every moment in conflict with the bourgeois state apparatus, with the bourgeoisie whose interests, however, it defends.” (*Draft Political Report*, p. 7.) Apart from the ritual phrase that the government defends the interests of the bourgeoisie, this assessment gives the tone of the tasks taken upon by the OCI:

1) On the need to break the state apparatus of the Fifth Republic: “The OCI (u) will support any step that the Mitterrand-Mauroy government can take in this regard.” (Ibid, p. 19.).

2) On economic policy and nationalisations with compensation planned by the government: “The OCI (u) will support any step that the Mitterrand-Mauroy government takes in this regard. We consider the measures taken by the government so that the workers of Boussac-Saint Freres keep their jobs until September make up the first step.” (Ibid.)

3) On the repeal of anti-secular laws and the suppression of official funds for private education: “Once again, the OCI supports any progress in this regard.” (Ibid.)

4) On the problem of jobs, price hikes, education, professional training: “It will always be from the same angle that we will have to address them” (Ibid.), that is, the aim is to support the progressive steps of the government.

In summary, the OCI has a very clear and concrete program in the face of unemployment, inflation, anti-secular laws, education, working conditions and professional training, no less than the totality of the most anguishing problems of the French proletariat. It is not a transitional program, directed against the bourgeois government and against capitalist private property: it is the support for the government’s reformist measures. As the *Draft Report* itself says, this is the axis of OCI policy: “it will always be from the same angle we will have to address them.” More clear, impossible; we must acknowledge this virtue in them.

For his part, Pablo has exactly the same program. In the political resolution of the constituent congress of the *Tendance Marxiste Révolutionnaire Internationale*, it is said: “We support each measure favourable to the workers.” (Supplement of *Pour L’Autogestion* No 2.) And in another part:

“We will defend unconditionally (the government of Mitterrand against the attacks of the right) and we will support all the social and political measures that it takes, that will satisfy the demands of the workers.” (*Pour L’Autogestion*, No 1.)

And in summary: “It is a matter of skilfully combining the unity of action, the support for every progressive measure, with the propaganda of the transitional program.” (*Sous le drapeau du socialisme*, 10 May.)

That is to say, like Lambert, Pablo makes the support to the progressive measures of the government the axis of his policy and program. And to complete the coincidences,

the same ritual phrases of rigour among the revisionists appear: “the propaganda of the transitional program”.

Thus, the coincidence between Pablo and Lambert regarding the key problem of the program is total. The only difference between them is terminological because where Pablo speaks of supporting “measures”, Lambert speaks of supporting “steps”. In this, we see an approach between Lambert and... Stalin. As we have seen, Stalin was characterised for supporting the “progressive steps” of the provisional government from the pages of *Pravda*, at the time when that newspaper had, according to Trotsky, a totally opportunistic policy.

4. A policy based on the hopes of the masses

In an effort to justify its capitulation to the popular front camp, the OCI has set up an explanatory scaffolding based on the following consideration: “The Mitterrand-Mauroy government, bourgeois, class-collaborationist, popular front type, is the product of the defeat of the working masses and the youth inflicted on the bourgeoisie: they recognise it and will recognise it during a whole stage as their government. From this observation, made on the basis of rigorously established objective facts (...) is that we must be guided *today* to determine our tasks.” (*Draft Political Report*, page 3, emphasis in the original.)

Actually, two facts are mentioned here, but the two are not “objective”. That the Mitterrand-Mauroy government is “bourgeois, class collaboration, popular front type”, yes, it is an objective fact. But the fact the masses “recognise it and will recognise it during a whole stage as their government” is clearly subjective. It is what the masses think — erroneously, on the other hand — about the character of the government.

The OCI takes into account to determine its tasks only the subjective factor since throughout the document they repeat phrases such as: “to fight the hopes in the field of hopes” taking into account “the workers have not made their experience with the class collaboration policy of the Mitterrand-Mauroy government”. And the very structure of the document confirms what we say: the first chapter is “On the problem of hopes”, that is, on the subjective problem.

It is clearly established, then, that the starting point for the OCI to elaborate its policy is the subjective factor, the hopes of the masses. Now let’s see what this means in practice.

The computer company Logabax had begun a restructuring plan that involved the dismissal of several hundred workers. What was the OCI’s policy towards this desperate problem? “We did not propose immediately the nationalisation [of Logabax] because we took into account the fact the workers, who had just kicked Giscard out, believed the new Mitterrand-Mauroy government it needed time to prepare the nationalisations.” (Ibid., p. 5.)

It cannot be clearer. Against the Trotskyist policy “so that there are no more layoffs, we occupy the factory and demand its expropriation”, the OCI resolves, together with the workers, to give Mitterrand the time he asks for.

5. The Trotskyist policy starts from the objective factor

We hold, with Trotsky, that the OCI’s conception of taking as a starting point of its policy the subjective factor — what the masses believe — is an absolutely revisionist conception, of tail-ending the backwardness of the masses to justify support for Mitterrand. Let’s explain ourselves.

In our article published in *Correspondencia Internacional* No 13,¹ we point out that ultraleftism and opportunism share the methodological flaw of taking a single element of reality. For the opportunists of the OCI, it is the subjective element, the hopes of the masses. But they are so opportunistic that they do not take into account the other subjective

¹ It refers to *The Mitterrand Government, its Perspectives and our Policy*, which in 2018 will be available for download from www.nahuelmoreno.org.

factor – that the masses, as well as hopes, have aspirations. The aspirations of the French masses today are materialised in ending unemployment, as promised by Mitterrand; they are materialised in better salaries, etc. And they are synthesised in a socialist France; this is why they elected Mitterrand. Mitterrand has betrayed absolutely all the aspirations of the masses, but the OCI does not take it into account at all when formulating its policy.

The revolutionary Marxists, we develop our policy and slogans based on all the elements — objective and subjective — that reality gives us, in their organic relationship and their dynamics. But the starting point to develop our policy is always the objective factor, specifically, the needs of the masses: low wages, unemployment, etc. This is why it is not by chance that *The Transitional Program* starts from “the objective prerequisites for a socialist revolution”. Our program is not based on the idea that the masses believe in Stalin, Blum or Jouhaux, but rather on the following: “Mankind’s productive forces stagnate. Already new inventions and improvements fail to raise the level of material wealth. Conjunctural crises under the conditions of the social crisis of the whole capitalist system afflict ever heavier deprivations and sufferings upon the masses.” (*The Transitional Program for the Socialist Revolution*, p. 72.)

However, Trotsky pointed out very clearly that when a new situation arises in the class struggle, we must “in the first line give a clear honest picture of the objective situation, of the historic tasks which flow from this situation irrespective as to whether or not the workers are today ripe for this. Our tasks don’t depend on the mentality of the workers. (...) We must tell the workers the truth, then we will win the best elements.” (“The Political Backwardness of the American Workers”, 19 May 1939, *The Transitional Program*, op. cit., p. 126.)

That is, our policy does not depend on the mentality (hopes) of the workers but on their needs.

Does this mean we do not consider hopes? Not at all. This is precisely the mistake of the ultra-leftists. We take their hopes into account to elaborate our tactics, that is, the way in which we “tell the workers the truth” in such a manner that they understand us and mobilise.

To explain ourselves better, let’s go back to the Logabax example. There is an objective fact — hundreds of workers in danger of losing their jobs — and a subjective fact, those workers believe Mitterrand will solve the problem.

An opportunist says, with the OCI: “Since the workers believe in Mitterrand, we must give him the time he asks for and not demand the factory expropriation.”

An ultraleftist says: “The Logabax dismissals show this bourgeois government will solve nothing, it is the same as Giscard’s. Down with the Mitterrand government.”

We Trotskyists say: “Against the dismissals, we must occupy the factory and demand its immediate expropriation, without payment and under our control. You trust Mitterrand, we do not. We propose an agreement: let’s fight together against the dismissals while negotiating with the government in which you believe.”

Any worker can accept this simple approach, mobilise, fight and at the same time negotiate with the government. Thus, through action and mobilisation, they will understand the mistake of trusting the government.

This brings us to another problem. According to the OCI, it is necessary to “fight hopes in the field of hopes”. False: to place oneself in the field of hopes is to follow them, like the OCI. Hopes can only be fought by mobilisation, and the masses mobilise only from their objective needs.

6. A “confusion” in the character of the slogans

The slogans and tasks the OCI puts forth are all minimal: none targets capitalist private property, which is the *sine qua non* for a slogan to be transitional. A little further

on we will delve into this aspect, the character of the slogans. What we point out here is the lack of transitional slogans among those raised by the OCI (we refer to those they raise systematically, not those that appear in some or other newspaper article in a ritual way) is not accidental: going against capitalist private property means going against the bourgeois government, and this is what the OCI wants to avoid at all costs.

One reason put forward for not raising transitional demands and of government at this stage is given by Comrade Luis Favre in his speech before a joint plenary session of Socialist Convergence and the International Socialist Organisation of Angola. Favre said:

“A comrade said that in order to propose a policy, a government slogan is necessary. Now, does this slogan of government have a character of agitation or propaganda? If the problem of overthrowing the government is on the agenda, the character of this slogan is agitative; it is an immediate call for the action of the masses to overthrow it. If it is a perspective, the OCI stated in several editorials that it declares for a CP-SP government without bourgeois ministers.” (Transcript of the recording made at the meeting.)

Beginning with Favre’s last statement, it is true in several editorials of *Informations Ouvrières* as well as in the *Draft Political Report*, the OCI declares for an SP-CP government without bourgeois ministers. But it does so in an abstract, ritual way: by refusing to raise “out with the bourgeois ministers”, the slogan for an SP-CP government becomes a banner to raise on the holidays, and a slogan that does not worries the bourgeois government at all.

According to Favre, the only slogans that should be agitated are those that help to mobilise the masses immediately. This is a mistake; agitation and immediate action are not synonymous. Agitative slogans are the three or four fundamental ideas we present to the mass movement in a constant way, independently of whether it is mobilised by them in the immediate future.

The OCI gives us the best example of this. In 1974 it launched its slogan “dismiss Giscard”; the masses electorally dismissed Giscard in 1981. That is, seven years lapsed; but during those seven years, the OCI never ceased to agitate this great demand, embodied in slogans such as “SP-PCF unity to kick Giscard”, “vote for Mitterrand”, etc.

Let’s see other examples. The Venezuelan comrades raise the slogan “for a conference of the workers’ organisations to combat unemployment”. It may be several years before this task can be carried out; however, the Venezuelan comrades do not stop agitating this slogan and we understand it is a good decision they do so.

The PST agitates the slogans “down with the military dictatorship” and “for a Constituent Assembly”. Nobody argues that the masses will rise to overthrow the government immediately. But at the same time, nobody criticises the PST for making the slogan “down with the military dictatorship” the centre of their agitation. On the contrary, our whole world movement considers it is a great political decision of the party.

This “mistake” by the OCI, like all the others, is not accidental. It is a coherent part of its policy of protecting the unity of the “camp” led by Mitterrand and his bourgeois government.

7. The nature of our Transitional Program

The Transitional Program, that program that the OCI explicitly refuses to formulate, has a series of essential characteristics, as we will see briefly below.

Trotskyism does not have two programs, but only one. Social democracy, like the OCI today, had two programs. One, called “minimum”, was composed of reformist demands, that is, those that the capitalist regime could grant without endangering its domination. The other program, “maximum”, included the slogans that attempt against capitalist private property and directly address the problem of power. The agitation of social democracy

centred on the minimum program; the slogans against the capitalist property and for the conquest of power were relegated to the “holidays”, May Day speeches, etc.

Trotskyism has only one program because we do not keep the slogans against the capitalist private property for the holidays, but are its fundamental slogans. Trotskyism considers that the objectives the social democracy relegated to the maximum program — the conquest of power, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat — are urgent, immediate tasks. The crisis of the capitalist system means not only that the bourgeoisie cannot give new concessions, but cannot even maintain existing ones, some of which were conquered decades ago by the workers' movement.

Due to this, maximum and minimum slogans no longer exist. Any workers' claim, however elementary, is revolutionary because it questions capitalist property and, therefore, the political power of the bourgeoisie. Many tasks the workers' movement had set out to carry out within the capitalist system must be resolved by socialism. For example, the problem of employment and the standard of living: capitalism cannot guarantee work and a decent life for the vast majority of mankind. Therefore, these demands require the implementation of the sliding scale of working hours (distribution of existing work among all available labour) and the sliding scale of wages (automatic salary increase according to the increase in the cost of living). These tasks are not reformist but transitional because only the government of the proletariat can carry them out, within the frame of the socialist planning of the economy.

This does not mean the Trotskyist party does not fight for reformist tasks: a small increase in wages, the dismissal of an abusive foreman from a factory, etc. On the contrary, it constantly agitates infinity of slogans such as these, which do not attempt against capitalist property. But the program's method requires such slogans be never raised in isolation: dismissal of the foreman, period. On the contrary, those slogans are very useful to start a mobilisation, but looking for the mobilisation never to stop. Therefore, we combine the “reformist” slogan with others increasingly audacious so the mobilisation does not stop: from the dismissal of the foreman to the dismissal of all foremen, later of the factory owner, expropriation of the factory, the imposition of workers' control.

In short, Trotskyism never poses its slogans in an isolated or anarchic way. Each slogan is part of a system, which can start from a task felt by the masses, but always culminates in the questioning of the entire regime.

Let's go back to the previous Logabax example: there are layoffs, but the workers trust the government. Based on this, the OCI proposes the only task is to negotiate with the government. The Trotskyists are not against negotiating; moreover, since the workers trust the government, refusing to negotiate would be a sterile ultraleft policy. But in no way do we just negotiate. Our policy is: “Negotiate with the government, but in the meantime, we occupy the factory and impose the control of the Enterprise Committee and the distribution of the work available to all. Here there are 1000 workers working eight hours a day. The bosses want to fire 500. We propose that 1000 keep working four hours a day, without reduction of wages.”

This is the essence of the transitional program: the dynamic chaining of slogans, from the most elementary to the anti-capitalist, to originate the permanent mobilisation of the workers against the system and the regime.

8. The axes of the Transitional Program

As a whole, the characteristics mentioned make up one aspect of the Program but do not exhaust it. This method is based on three pillars, distinct but closely linked to each other: the problem of government, the institutions of the State and the overcoming of the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat.

Since the present and immediate goal of Trotskyism is the seizure of power, no program can be considered transitional if it does not include a slogan of government. We refer to the concrete slogan, i.e., which is the worker superstructure that should replace the bourgeois superstructure and the steps to achieve it. This means raising slogans such as “SP and CP governments”, which must be accompanied, in the case of France, with of “out with the bourgeois ministers”. In Afghanistan, to give another example, we propose “out with the military government, immediate call to a Constituent Assembly with freedom for the workers’ parties”. In Spain or England, we would say “down the monarchy”, accompanied by the slogan of the constituent assembly or another that would be appropriate.

Different from the problem of government, which is based on political parties, it is the problem of the bourgeois state, which is based on institutions: presidency, ministries, parliament, and the most important of all is the armed forces. Faced with this structure of the State, Trotskyism always poses a Soviet-type republic, based on grassroots workers’ organisations.

The third pillar, which constitutes the central axis of the program, is the overcoming of the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. This implies the constant and brutal criticism of the counter-revolutionary workers’ parties, agents of capital in the workers’ movement, and the trade union bureaucracies. Simultaneously with the struggle to crush, sweep, massacre the treacherous leaderships, we build the revolutionary party, which can only be a Trotskyist party.

All the activity of the Trotskyist party is based on the method and the axes we mentioned. In other words: we never raise an isolated slogan or an anarchic set of slogans, but a system of slogans that leads the working class to the following conclusions: the solution of all the problems, no matter how minimal, demand an insurrection against the bourgeois government and the seizure of power by the proletariat; this requires the construction of a revolutionary leadership, defeating the treacherous workers’ parties.

9. The reformism of the OCI

For all this, we say the policy of the OCI is absolutely reformist, at the service of the Mitterrand camp.

In the first place, all the slogans and tasks that it raises are the same as those of the bourgeois government, with the addition of some slogans extracted from *The Transitional Program*, which appear in its press in an abstract manner and for purely ritual reasons.

Secondly, since they are not linked to the transitional demands and to the problem of power, they do not make up a program but a sum of anarchic slogans, without hierarchy or link among them. That is, they are all minimal slogans, which do not question capitalist private property or bourgeois power, even though some of them are extracted verbatim from *The Transitional Program*.

Finally, as the example of Logabax shows (and many more examples we do not quote so as not to extend too much), the OCI method is not mobilisation but negotiation. We insist that the Trotskyists do not oppose negotiation. But for us, what is fundamental is the mobilisation of the masses, and in that frame, we negotiate with the bosses or the government at the moment and in the terms in which the relationship of power forces us to do so. For the OCI and all the reformists, instead, what is fundamental is the negotiation, and in this context, the pressure of the masses can force them to call to the mobilisation at one time or another.

As a synthesis of all its opportunist-revisionist politics, the OCI does not have the policy to overcome the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the French proletariat. A “Resolution on the party of 10,000” appears next to the *Draft Political Report*. There is no mention of the SP or the PCF and the need to combat them. On the other hand, if before the elections there was a systematic campaign against the PCF and another, not so brutal,

against the SP, now the attacks against the Stalinists have softened and the attacks on the Social Democrats have completely disappeared.

For this reason, the construction of the “party of 10,000” is another ritual phrase: the whole policy of the OCI directly conspires against the construction of the revolutionary Trotskyist party.

CHAPTER IX

An Opportunistic Program in the Face of the Minimum Needs of the Masses

We said in our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* that one of the fundamental characteristics of Bolshevism and Trotskyism, and at the same time a fundamental aspect of the Transitional Program method, is the constant agitation of slogans that mobilise the proletariat from their most felt needs. Even at the risk of appearing repetitive, it is convenient to dwell on this issue, insufficiently developed in the *Letter*.

The Transitional Program states that our “task lies in the systematic mobilisation of the masses for the proletarian revolution.” (Op. Cit., p. 76.)

The concept of systematic mobilisation is repeated in each of the tasks listed by the program:

- “*Unemployment and high prices*, demand generalised slogans and methods of struggle.” (Ibid.)
- “Against a bounding rise in prices (...) one can fight only under the slogan of a sliding scale of wages.” (Ibid.)
- “The struggle against unemployment is not to be considered without the calling for a broad and bold organisation of public works.” (Ibid., p. 81.)
- And in summary: “‘Realisability’ or ‘un-realisation’ is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle.” (Ibid. p. 77.)

However, the OCI opposes this concept of mobilisation with a rather sophisticated argument in which it is convenient to pause. Let’s see it as proposed in the *Draft Political Report*, through an example.

Among the companies that the government plans to nationalise is Thomson-Brandt, a large multinational of the electrical and electronic industry that produces everything from household appliances to radar and computers. A dispute breaks out in the company when the government announces it will only nationalise headquarters, not its numerous subsidiaries and affiliates. This implies a restructuring of the company, with a large number of layoffs.

The local cell of the OCI publishes a flyer saying: “No to the layoffs, cancellation of the new restructuring plan of the Thomson-Brandt group, full payment of days not worked, full employment for temporary workers, indexation of salaries according to the rise of the cost of living.” (Quoted by the *Draft Political Report*, p. 6.)

Lambert comments: “The political line of that flyer is directly opposite to the line of this report.” (Ibid, p. 6.) Why?

“All the slogans — those listed above — (...) are totally separate, in the Stalinist way, as ‘economic’ slogans, from the political slogan of nationalisation without compensation or right of reacquisition, absent in this enumeration. In other words, our comrade invites the workers to embark on ‘the struggle, the struggle’ for ‘economic’ demands, which, as the slogan of nationalisation is absent, imply that we empty the transitional — political —

content of those claims that, on the other hand, are given to the worker in disorder. Given the nature of some of these claims, this disorder implies that in fact the workers are being offered the struggle... for the general 'demanding' strike." (Ibid, p.6.)

Let's unravel this trap for the unwary. Here it is being said it is incorrect to raise the slogan "against the layoffs" without linking it to the nationalisation without payment. (This, incidentally, is the opposite of what is proposed in Logabax, where the OCI does not propose nationalisation because the workers trust the government. Do the Thomson-Brandt workers not trust the government?) But here something else is said. Since the workers raise "economic" slogans, purely "vindicating" and do not raise the transitional slogan of nationalisation without payment... they should not be called to struggle!

This is a disgusting misrepresentation of *The Transitional Program* and its method. The Trotskyists, we promote all the struggles of the workers, no matter how "vindicating" they may be, and in the course of the struggle we seek to give them a transitional content, through permanent mobilisation. Specifically, in the case of Thomson-Brandt, the OCI says: "It is a mistake to promote this struggle because the workers are not mobilising for the nationalisation without payment of the company."

We Trotskyists say: "Let's go on strike against the layoffs and restructuring. So that there will be no layoffs, nationalisation without payment of Thomson, with workers' control to impose our restructuring, according to our interests and not the interests of the bosses."

The difference between the OCI and the Trotskyists is the difference between not mobilising based on an ultra-revolutionary argument (actually, deeply reformist because of its consequences) and raising an "economic" struggle to the political level by proposing transitional slogans in the mobilisation itself.

Any workers' struggle starts from those demands that the *Draft Report* calls with such contempt "economic". Raising them to the "political" level through transitional slogans is a task for us, the Trotskyists. To abandon the struggle for economic demands, which is the policy of the OCI, is to abandon all struggle. The OCI knows this very well; its attitude of despising "the struggle, the struggle" hides, behind an ultraleftist argument, the abject reformist policy of not mobilising the masses.

Throughout this chapter, we will see how the contempt for "the struggle, the struggle" is translated into the practical militancy of the OCI.

1. The situation of the French proletariat

Let's start by learning a little about the situation of the French proletariat and working masses under the current government. At the beginning of the Mitterrand mandate, we have the following table: increase in the gas rate by 22 percent and electricity by 15 percent; increase in the price of petrol by six cents a litre; increase in housing rents by 10 to 13 percent; increase in public passenger transport rates by 14 percent. On the other hand, the minimum wage increase is 10 percent, and there are 1,800,000 unemployed, besides an undetermined number of underemployed, workers who only get temporary jobs. (All data from *Le Monde*, 1, 2, 7, 10, and 18 July 1981.)

Six months later, the situation is much worse. According to *Informations Ouvrières* No 1025: "the threshold of two million unemployed has been crossed (...). An official figure to which must be added the thousands and thousands of young people in search of their first job, who are not counted as unemployed." In addition, "unemployment continues to rise".

A "Declaration approved by the Central Committee of the OCI", published in *Informations Ouvrières* 1030, synthesises everything:

"Salaries are frozen, prices continue to rise, rents become an increasingly heavy burden, so heavy that the number of unemployed people who cannot afford them increases; working conditions, far from improving, become so intolerable that, in a post office, the workers protested against the 'Giscardian premises' in which they are forced to work,

that is, against the fact of suffering the same working conditions as under Giscard. Not to mention the increase in the pace of work (...) Not to mention the stubborn refusal to reclassify the semi-skilled workers of Renault (...) Not to mention the increase in social security contributions. Not to mention the incredible manoeuvres through which it seeks to make pay the decrease of the workday with Saturday work and even the reduction of wages. Without forgetting the official figure of two million unemployed and the gloomy forecasts for 1982.”

We have, thus, an extraordinarily bleak picture, which has already generated several important struggles of French workers, as in Renault and other companies, as we will see later.

2. The OCI does not fight against the misery of the French proletariat

The Transitional Program, as we saw, raises the need to fight against these plagues of capitalism. And it proposes a series of concrete struggle measures:

Against the increase in prices and the fall in real wages; “a sliding scale of wages. This means that collective agreements should assure an automatic rise in wages in relation to the increase in the price of consumer goods.” (*The Transitional Program*, op. cit., p. 76.)

Against unemployment; “...the time is ripe to advance, along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of a sliding scale of working hours.” (Ibid. p. 77.)

These slogans should be part of “of a general plan, worked out to cover a considerable number of years. (...) From the point of view of the exploited, not the exploiters.” (Ibid. p. 81-82.)

The OCI does not have a plan to fight against the misery of the proletariat; it simply denounces it. When we say plan, we refer to a campaign of systematic agitation, with “generalised slogans and methods of struggle” as *The Transitional Program* states (p. 76). Here and there slogans appear: increase of salaries and pensions in relation to the cost of living in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1005; freezing of prices in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1014; sliding scale of working hours in issue No 1020. The aforementioned “Declaration of the CC” (*Informations Ouvrières* No 1030) brings a list of slogans, which we quote below, interspersing some comments. “For a true price control (applied by whom? It is not said). For a general increase in wages in relation to the increase in prices. For the reduction of work hours without compensation and respecting the legislation of 1936. For the urgent measure of compulsory employment for the unemployed (and why is the slogan ‘public works plan’ not raised? We reply: because it would be a demand to be formulated to the government, something that the OCI avoids by all means). For the satisfaction of immigrant workers claims (what are these claims? Who must satisfy them and how do we force them to satisfy them?). For the nationalisation, without compensation or right of reacquisition, of the large capitalist groups (and workers’ control? Without the latter, for the workers “nationalisation” means a mere change of boss). For a production plan which does not respond to the needs of the law of profits or to the demands of the capitalists, but to the needs of the workers.” (*Informations Ouvrières* No 1030).

If this last slogan is the “general plan, worked out to cover a considerable number of years” mentioned in the *Transitional Program*, where are the “methods of struggle” to impose it? We reply: they are not in *Informations Ouvrières* or in the *Draft Political Report*, or in the “Declaration of the CC”. And we add; it is not accidental because any mobilisation will ultimately be directed against the government of Mitterrand, head of the “progressive” camp.

This is clearly explained by Stephane Just, in the document of the Political Bureau that will also be discussed at the 26th Congress of the OCI:

“At the present time, we must express what the masses expect from the government, which does not mean that all demands must be made in the direction of the government: the general rule is that we should formulate them towards the bosses, and not necessarily in terms of immediate action.” (*La Lettre d'Informations Ouvrières*, No 11).

Here is the theoretical justification for the OCI's refusal to mobilise. The aspirations of the masses are deposited in the government, and the implicit conclusion of this is they will mobilise against the government when those aspirations are betrayed. The task (or “general rule”) of the OCI is to divert the demands towards the bosses; when they are directed against the government, the OCI will formulate them (as in the “Declaration of the CC”) but not in “terms of immediate action”, hence the absence of methods of struggle in said declaration and in all OCI literature.

When it is said not all demands should be formulated in terms of immediate action, we could agree with Just, but under two conditions. The first is to specify which slogans are not for immediate action. For example, “when we have enough strength we will overturn the bourgeois government of Mitterrand”, or even “out with the bourgeois ministers”. The masses will not mobilise for these tasks as long as they trust the government. But in a situation such as that experienced by the French proletariat, “increase in wages”, or slogans to end unemployment are indeed “for immediate action” since they are life or death problems.

The second condition is to clarify that “agitation” and “immediate action” are not synonymous. If the working class trusts the government, the slogans referring to the bourgeois character of the government and the need to overthrow it obviously are not for immediate action. But this does not mean we do not agitate them. On the contrary; we apply Lenin's famous phrase of “patiently explaining”, which for us means constantly and pedagogically.

For Just, however, if a certain slogan is not “for immediate action”, then it should not be raised, nor agitated, but only raised from time to time, on the holidays, and in an abstract manner.

The slogans listed in the “Declaration of the CC” are all for immediate action, given the situation in which the masses of France find themselves. However, the OCI mentions no measure of struggle, because all these claims are directed against the government, and that goes against the “general rule” of Just. That is why we reaffirm what has been said above; the OCI denounces the problems of the French masses but does not fight them.

Let's look at some of those problems more closely.

3. Unemployment

When Prime Minister Mauroy delivered his programmatic address to the National Assembly on 8 July, there were one 1,800,000 unemployed in France; that number has already exceeded 2,000,000. Mauroy presented the following plan, nicknamed “war against unemployment” (*guerre au chômage*):

“The government will propose to you in December the approval of a two-year plan (...) that will organise a relentless struggle against unemployment. It will allow initiating a deep transformation of our society in 1984. Then a more ambitious five-year plan will be presented.” (*Le Monde*, 10 July 1981.) And in another part of the speech he says the aim of the first plan is the creation of 200,000 jobs by the end of 1984.

The OCI not only does not propose any concrete fight against unemployment but, in the commentary on Mauroy's speech, it says: “No worker cannot support the principle of such plans.”

What is this but a cruel joke? The unemployed worker knows that, according to Mauroy's plan, for 1984 there will be work for 10 percent of the currently unemployed (who knows how many will be by then), and then there will be a five-year plan. Therefore,

he will have to wait seven years to see if bourgeois plans can eliminate the problem of unemployment. And the OCI tells you that you have to approve that plan! And even more, as the example of Logabax shows, you must be patient and give the government the time it needs to carry it out.

The problem is aggravated by the existence of “*intérimaires*”, workers who obtain temporary jobs through employment agencies. This is one of the most exploited sectors of the working class since instability in the workplace makes them particularly vulnerable to bosses’ attacks.

The OCI attributes, correctly, great importance to this issue. But when it comes to going from denunciations to proposals for action, the only thing it proposes is the holding of a congress of temporary workers to elect a delegation to present itself to the ministry of labour with a petition.

Well, the delegation was formed and went to the ministry. The result of the interview, published in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1029, is a hymn to impotence. The official who received the delegation made some vague promises, but when asked why the SP’s electoral promise does not apply, to force the agencies to pay the temporary worker a salary in the interval between one job and another, in the perspective of abolishing temporary work, the official responded: “We have not resolved that, because it would cause the immediate disappearance of temporary employment agencies. We do not want it. Undoubtedly, we will reach that result, but not immediately.” He added that the government would formulate a three-year plan to end temporary work.

The delegation left crying: “Therefore, the government is in fact oriented towards a law that will keep temporary work for three years, at least... How does this reconcile with the interests of democracy and with those of the most affected, the super-exploited temp workers?”

Period; end of the article. What else did they expect? Did they think a delegation to the Ministry of Labour, without being accompanied by some measure of struggle, would solve the problem?

Applying the method of *The Transitional Program* to the problem of unemployment (including temporary jobs), we would have a program like this:

“Fellow workers, there are over 2,000,000 unemployed in our country, a figure that is constantly increasing and does not include temp workers or young people seeking their first job. The government asks us for seven years to solve the problem. The government’s plan only considers the interests of the bosses; it is a mockery of our aspirations and the reasons why we elected it. Let’s reject it!

“That the enterprise committees convene a congress of delegates to draw up an economic plan that includes work for all and approves the necessary measures of struggle to impose it. In this congress the OCI will propose the following emergency measures:

- “• Immediate increase in taxes on employer profits.
- “• Cancellation of the defence budget.
- “• That this money be used for a public works plan that guarantees work for all the unemployed, with salaries set by the unions.
- “• Reinstatement of those dismissed to their former jobs,
- “• That the accounting books of companies in the process of laying off workers or closing their doors be made available to the congress of delegates. A commission appointed by the congress will study those books and based on its report the congress will rule; companies that can reinstate those dismissed will be forced to do so; those that cannot will be expropriated immediately, without compensation and under the control of its workers.
- “• Temporary employment agencies will be closed and placed outside the law.
- “• The OCI alerts: the bosses and the government cannot accept this plan because it is based on our needs, not on the profits of the bosses; it is a plan opposed to Mauroy’s.

This requires that the congress adopt the necessary measures of struggle. We are convinced we will only bend the bosses and the government through a general strike with factory occupation, and we propose that we start preparing it now with the creation of strike committees by the factory and a national strike committee.”

This program is just an example, which needs to be better adapted to the specific situation. We only want to point out the OCI does not raise any suchlike transitional program. The OCI is happy with the ultra-minimal measure of demanding the government to comply with their miserable bourgeois plan and their electoral promises and to cry when the government says it cannot do it. In short, the OCI has given up fighting against unemployment because it has given up fighting against the bourgeoisie and the Mitterrand government.

4. Support for government nationalisations

We said in our Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI that the OCI (u) supports Mauroy's plan to nationalise a series of companies in crisis.

The OCI has responded partially to our criticism, saying we have misrepresented the editorial of *Informations Ouvrières* by not quoting, among others, the following sentences:

“This example is significant in another sense. Is it correct to ‘reimburse’ or ‘compensate’ Agache-Willot? How many thousands and thousands of millions of francs have benefited the large steel industry groups and the electrical, electronic and chemical industries?” (*Bulletin* No 1, p. 31.)

With this they want to show we have misrepresented the editorial line: “In this editorial, it is clearly highlighted, in opposition to the nationalisation plan of the government, the claim of ‘no compensation’, the requisition of any company that lays off, etc.” (Ibid.)

So, let's quote our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, to see who misrepresents:

“Instead of making invocations to the suppression and collectivisation of private property, and therefore being ‘in favour of... the nationalisations’ that the Mitterrand government will carry out, the *Transitional Program* tells us that we must ‘warn the masses against demagogues of the People's Front’, as they are ‘agents of capital’ and to ‘rely only upon their own revolutionary strength’, i.e. not to trust the government of charlatans. Trotsky would have said that Mauroy is a charlatan in the service of capitalism; that we must not rely at all on him and only in the revolutionary strength of the masses, and to expropriate without compensation and to fight for ‘the seizure of power by the workers and peasants’.

“The program of the OCI (unified) is transformed into a minimum program, which is ‘in favour’ of an ultra-bourgeois measure, which does not solve absolutely any problem and does not attack the bourgeoisie at all. And there are parallel occasional references in the newspaper, very, very exceptional, sometimes through questions and others implicitly, to the convenience of not paying the bourgeois who are expropriated. But the positive line, the editorial line, has been the support, a priori, of the government's nationalisation plan.” (*Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, p. 29.)

We believe that our criticism was perfectly clear and does not distort the OCI's editorial and line in any way. We hold that the OCI policy is to support Mauroy's plan since it says that all progress in this direction (of application of the nationalisation plan) “can only be positive”, and that one should be “in favour, a priori, of nationalisation”.

And ritually, occasionally, the OCI says the ideal would be to not compensate the expropriated capitalists. Exactly the same thing said by Pablo, the CP and all the reformists in the world ever! That the nationalisations of the bourgeois government are progressive, that we should support them. And in passing, we tell the government that it would be better not to compensate the capitalists.

If Lambert and Just say we have misrepresented them, then they can tell us where it is said in *Informations Ouvrières* or in any of the documents of the OCI (u): “The Mauroy plan is a bourgeois plan that consists of nationalising companies in crisis and compensating their owners with the money they earn by exploiting the workers. With this plan, Mauroy and Mitterrand are shown as what they are, abject servants of the capitalists. The nationalisation we want is the expropriation without pay and under workers’ control of all the capitalist companies and imposing workers’ control of those already nationalised. This is the only ‘nationalisation’ in favour of the workers, and it can only be achieved by a government of workers and peasants. That’s why we reject Mauroy’s plan.”

Let Lambert and Just show us where there is a systematic and brutal campaign with the slogan “Down with Mauroy’s bourgeois plan; for nationalisation without payment”.

We have not found it. The only thing we have found is, as we said, the approval of the Mauroy plan “on principle and a priori”, and the timid suggestion of not compensating. Therefore, we say Lambert and Just are charlatans in the service of Mauroy, who in turn is a charlatan in the service of capital.

5. Education

The problem of public education has assumed great importance in recent times, due to the closure, under Giscard, of several thousand public schools. This forces many working families to send their children to paid Catholic schools. The problem then lies in what Catholic teaching means as diffusion of an arch-reactionary ideology, and also in the decrease of the worker’s income.

This situation demands from the Trotskyist party a policy for the immediate reopening of the closed schools and in the face of the government’s inevitable response, that “there are no funds for it”, the demand the budget be increased for education at the expense, for example, of the military budget.

That is one aspect of the problem. The other aspect is that education is a social fact and that the entire educational system should be in the hands of society, not in the capricious hands of any group capable of self-financing, as is the Church.

The OCI campaign, which is permanently expressed in all issues of the newspaper from No 1000 to 1020, is synthesised in the slogan “public funds to the public school, private funds to the private school”. From issue 1021, and as if it were a response to this criticism made in the *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, this claim appears slightly modified: “only one school must be financed by the taxpayers: the public school open to all children.” (*Informations Ouvrières* 1025.)

This alters nothing: the OCI campaigns around the old demand of Freemasons, liberals and bourgeois socialists: that the State should provide funds only to the public school, but the private and confessional school has the right to coexist with it as long as it can self-finance. We will refer later to this aspect of the problem and its deeply reactionary implications. Now we see what is said in *Informations Ouvrières* about the reform of education:

“Who better than teachers, parents of students and young people to define the direction in which the school should be reformed, express the needs and propose measures? To break the resistance of the capitalists, should we not rely on teachers and parents and young people and mobilise them.” (*Informations Ouvrières* 1018.) This is a bourgeois liberal position, which forgets the fact “parents and young people” are divided into bourgeois, petty bourgeois, and proletarian. The Trotskyist position, of class, is the expropriation of private schools and the nationalisation of the entire educational system, under the control of the workers’ movement, and with a single curriculum, developed by education professionals and subject to approval by the workers’ organisations. Along with this, we demand a series of guarantees for students: a salary that frees them from any obligation

other than studying; the right to higher education for all young people; the right to work at the end of studies.

However, we had already made this criticism in our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, and the OCI has answered us. In *Informations Ouvrières* No 1028 it criticises the “curious method of discussion” of Moreno, since in the aforementioned article of *Informations Ouvrières* 1018, following the sentences quoted by us (and which are the same as those that appear a little further up), it says:

“Should we not convene a national conference of teachers’ and parents’ delegates, with the workers’ organisations, prepared in all the municipalities of France, to discuss how the nationalisation of education is organised and the measures to be taken to guarantee the actual right to education and training for all?”

In our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, we said: “We are referring not to the mere mention, in two or three lost phrases in some issues of the newspaper, of the most elementary tasks, but the permanent campaign and systematic agitation in all issues of the slogans...”

This is precisely the case: we have only found the call to a national conference of parents and teachers with the workers’ organisations in two issues of the newspaper, a special supplement on education in No 1017 and the aforementioned in No 1018. Therefore, our criticism is valid; it is effectively “two or three phrases lost in some issues of newspaper”, in no way a campaign as we Trotskyists understand them. It is about the ritual repetition of some phrases of the Trotskyist lexicon, nothing else.

Around the problem of education, the OCI carries out two systematic campaigns. One is of “public funds to the public school”; the other, regarding university, refers to the repeal of certain Giscardian laws. We will refer to both later when we see what OCI does, not what it does not do.

Anyway, we disagree with the call to the national conference made in those terms. The workers’ organisations appear there as one more participant, together with the parents (without class differentiation) and the teachers. We think, as we said above, that the workers’ organisations are the ones that should control and direct such a conference and have the final vote on any plan or program elaborated there.

Second, the “secular nationalisation of education” is completely opposed to the slogan on the destination of public and private funds, which acknowledges the right to existence of the confessional school. The slogan systematically agitated is the latter.

Third, the conference should resolve on “measures to take to guarantee”, etc., etc. Why does the OCI conceal the measures in its opinion should be taken? A Trotskyist party would say: “The conference should discuss the measures to be taken. We propose the following so the workers’ movement and the education workers begin to discuss them...”

Finally, the criticisms of the OCI to our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* began to appear months before the French version of the letter. Therefore, French readers did not know we criticised the lack of a consistent campaign, not this or that phrase in isolation. “Curious method of discussion” is yours, gentlemen of the OCI!

6. Immigrant workers

We devote a separate heading to immigrants, since they make up about a quarter of manual workers in France, and are their most exploited sector. The problems affecting all workers — wages, cost of living, unemployment, housing, etc. — are exacerbated to the maximum in the case of immigrants due to racial discrimination. In addition, they are banned from organising themselves in unions and from participating in the political life of the country. Those who are in a worse situation are the undocumented (“*sans-papiers*”): they are approximately 300,000, according to recent figures, and are subject to immediate expulsion from the country.

On 26 May, shortly after assuming the new government, the Minister of the Interior suspended the expulsions of immigrants, pending the new laws that regulate their situation. The OCI applauded the measure. In *Informations Ouvrières* No 1002 it said the suspension “is an important first step in satisfying the demands of immigrant workers after the fall of Giscard–Bonnet–Soléru. Second, it points out the path forward to dismantle the repressive apparatus perfected by Giscard–Poniatowsky–Peyrefitte (...) The measure of provisional suspension, pending debate in the National Assembly, has stopped that machine that disturbed their lives in the name of the Giscardian laws.”

Thence, according to the OCI, immigrant workers should not distrust the bourgeois, social-chauvinist government, or organise themselves to fight for their rights. Why, if the government satisfies its demands? But let’s see how was the “debate in the National Assembly” and the “new laws”.

According to *Informations Ouvrières* No 1020, the laws presented to regularise the situation of immigrants “are far from responding to the needs of equality and justice claimed by them”. Indeed, those who wish to enjoy the new laws must have 20 years of residence in the country and “present irrefutable proof of it”. It also approved a project presented by the socialist senator M. Roujas, which suppresses the right of immigrant organisations with over five years of existence to “fight against discrimination” and to exercise “before the justice the rights reserved to the civil party”.

Informations Ouvrières No 1025 again refers to this problem when it reports immigrant workers from nine companies in the Paris region went on strike and occupied the factories due to a new decree: undocumented workers have until the end of this year to present the authorities a contract or at least a promise of work; those who cannot produce it will be expelled. The occupants of the factories were expelled “brutally by the joint force of a bosses’ militia and the police”. The same *Informations Ouvrières* denounces that it is “a real hoax because the regularisation of their situation of ‘undocumented’ depends solely on the goodwill of the bosses”.

What is proposed to remedy the situation? “The militants of the OCI unified submit to the discussion (of the affected immigrants) the proposal to form a delegation of the affected companies that comes to the ministry to demand the withdrawal of the police forces, the expulsion of the bosses’ militias, the immediate and unconditional regularisation of the situation of the undocumented and the intervention of the government to force the bosses to give each employed worker a work contract according to the law.”

In summary, the government gave “an important first step” towards the satisfaction of the claims, for which the OCI called the immigrants to trust it. Later this “first step” became a stomp on the rights of immigrants, and the OCI continues to call on them to trust the government. The only measure proposed is that a delegation be formed to attend the ministry. And in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1030, it declares its support for a demonstration called for 12 December by the *Maison des Travailleurs Inmigrés* [House of Immigrant Workers].

We are not against a delegation to the ministry. But this cannot be the only measure, especially because the workers are in struggle. The ways of negotiating are important, but the measures of struggle are fundamental. If immigrant workers from nine companies are on strike led by an “undocumented coordinating committee”, there are certain tasks that arise almost automatically, to extend the struggle and ensure its success: that the coordinating committee extend its radius of action to include all immigrants, undocumented and documented. Thus, what started as a small ad hoc body can become a powerful single organisation of all immigrants in France, and with a leadership independent from the union bureaucracy, which immigrants rightly hate for their racism.

This organisation could lead the fight for all immigrants’ rights (rights that so far the OCI has not even deigned to mention). For example, in the electoral campaign, the SP had promised them the right to vote. Once in the government, the SP announced that they could only vote at the municipal level. And it ended up denying them that miserable right. They

could fight for their rights to get the same wages as the French workers. They could fight for their national rights: to have bilingual schools and preserve their languages, customs, and culture.

All that could be done if there were a revolutionary party that raised it. The OCI is not that party. Their few articles on immigrant workers are limited to supporting their struggles without offering them any revolutionary perspective. On the contrary, the only thing it proposes is a delegation to the ministry, that is, in the last instance, to trust that the government which has decreed the expulsion will solve their problems.

7. The class problem in this discussion

These shortcomings of the OCI (u) and Lambert regarding immigrant workers (which, on the other hand, are not even mentioned in the *Draft Political Report*) do not obey casual oblivion. Behind Lambert's revisionism and its adaptation to social democracy there is a class problem.

The OCI (u) is an organisation formed by sectors of the workers' aristocracy and "white collar" workers. It is a party of 5,000 militants, of which between 500 and 1,000 are teachers, professors, and professionals. In contrast, in a factory like Renault, it has a cell of only two militants (until recently there were three, but one was expelled for supporting our criticism in this debate). This is why its united front with Bergeron and *Force Ouvrière*, which is precisely the union organisation of white-collar workers, is not accidental.

In the organisational arena, the OCI (u) also adapts to social democracy and the privileged salaried strata. Taken by the hand by Lambert, the OCI has abandoned the organisation of the party by companies, guild or union in favour of the neighbourhood organisation, like the SP.

As much for its policy as for its organisation, the OCI (u) moves increasingly away from the social sector to which it should be directed for a base for of its militancy and leadership: the industrial proletariat and its most exploited sector, the immigrant workers. The scarce work it does in this medium, as it is reflected in *Informations Ouvrières*, is not centred on the factories but on the "foyers", that is, the places of residence.

The French party not oriented towards the industrial workers and the black, Arab, Antillean and Mediterranean workers and the working women is not Trotskyist. Only these sectors, the most exploited, can be consistent Trotskyists because they are anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist. The sectors which the OCI (u) addresses are "anti-capitalist" in a narrow sense since they never denounce or mobilise against French imperialism, the ultimate expression of capitalism.

Therefore, there is no Trotskyist leadership in France, if it is not an organisation full of black, Arabs and working women comrades.

Out from the leadership of the OCI (u) the corrupt bureaucrats of the UNEF and the CGT (*Force Ouvrière*), paid directly or indirectly by Bergeron! For an orientation towards immigrant, industrial and women workers!

Let's fill the OCI (u) with the most exploited workers, displacing the workers' aristocracy and the bureaucrats of UNEF and *Force Ouvrière*!

CHAPTER X

A Minimal Program for the State and the Church

A vital problem for the revolutionary party is to equip itself with a program for the destruction of the institutions through which the bourgeoisie exercises its domination. We refer to all the mechanism of ministries, secretaries of State, hierarchies of officials, armed forces, which we commonly call “state apparatus”, crowned in the case of France by the presidency of the republic.

When a new government comes to power, it is very common to make superficial changes, from the replacement of senior officials of the previous government by its supporters up to constitutional reform. The Mitterrand government is no exception: it has repealed the death penalty; has enacted an amnesty law (very limited, by the way), is studying a so-called “law of decentralisation”, which limits the powers of the prefects of the departments while increasing those of the municipal councils.

For Marxists, the goal of such “reforms” is no secret: it is about abolishing some institutions or laws that are particularly irritating to the masses while altering essentially nothing. That is, “to change something so everything remains the same”.

We consider that at each stage of the class struggle, the Trotskyist party must have a program for the destruction of the bourgeois state and its institutions while raising the type of institutions that should replace them: soviets, people’s election of public officials with immediate revocability, etcetera. And in the case of a Bonapartist State such as the Fifth French Republic, one of our permanent slogans should be “abolition of the presidency”.

In our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, we criticised the OCI for lacking a program for the destruction of the Fifth Republic. In the present document, we have seen this is because the OCI has transferred its theory of “camps” to the heart of the state apparatus and considers the election of Mitterrand is “incompatible” with the existence of the Fifth Republic.

The OCI has responded to our criticism by saying that it does have a program for the destruction of the bourgeois State of the Fifth Republic. Program expressed, according to them, in the following passage of the *Draft Political Report*.

“It is impossible to respect the will expressed by the masses on 10 May and 14 and 21 June, while respecting the Fifth Republic, the Constitution, and its anti-democratic institutions. The state apparatus (which is a bourgeois state apparatus) of the Fifth Republic is a Bonapartist state apparatus. It is necessary to break it. The OCI unified will support any step that the Mitterrand-Mauroy government can take on this path, without taking into account its policy.” (Quoted in “On the problem of the popular front and the policy of the OCI unified”, *Bulletin intérieur de information et de discussion internationale*, No 1, 30 November 1981.)

This does only confirm our criticism: the only program the OCI has for the destruction of the bourgeois state is the support for “every step” that the bourgeois government of Mitterrand can give in this sense. It does neither say what should be done in the event the

government takes no step in that direction (which is, of course, what is happening) nor does it oppose workers' institutions to those of the bourgeois state.

And as if to reaffirm even more what we say, in the "Declaration of the CC" published in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1030 there is a list of slogans, some of which have to do with the problem of the State. These are:

“• For the repeal of all anti-secular laws, suppression of public funds to free and confessional school and the full delivery of these to the public school;

“• For the immediate revocation of the high officials imposed by Giscard and remaining in office, and who organise the sabotage;

“• For the immediate reduction of military service to six months.”

Let's see what this "program" means, both for what it says and for what it omits.

1. First omission: the Fifth Republic

We can say until 10 May last, the OCI had a policy that makes up a chair of Trotskyism in terms of principles. It constantly denounced its Bonapartist character, which grants almost unlimited powers to the presidency, while nullifying those of parliament. It always pointed out the anti-democratic character of the state apparatus, as a step backwards from the conquests of bourgeois democracy itself. This policy of the OCI was expressed in the agitation of the claim "Down with the Fifth Republic", materialised in slogans for action such as: "Out with Giscard to overthrow the Fifth Republic", "united front of the workers' parties against the parties and institutions of the Fifth Republic", and so on. The attack on the Bonapartist state apparatus was the axis of the political campaigns of the OCI, centred on the governments that exercised the state functions. Hence the fierce struggle against the successive governments of De Gaulle, Pompidou and Giscard.

Since Mitterrand rose to the government, the claim "Down with the Fifth Republic" has completely disappeared from the agitation and propaganda of the OCI, as the list of slogans reproduced above shows.

Obviously, the slogan "Out with Mitterrand to destroy the Fifth Republic" cannot be agitated for the moment. This would be a sterile ultraleftist policy since the masses still trust the new government. But this does not mean that the slogan "Down with the Fifth Republic" should disappear from the agitation of the revolutionary party, even momentarily. Quite the opposite; now that the rise of the mass movement begins, we need to agitate it more than ever, not only because the workers' and popular mobilisation can be channelled towards the destruction of the bourgeois state, but also because in this process the government of Mitterrand can be unmasked as a staunch defender of the Fifth Republic. The only thing that changes with respect to the previous stage is the tactical formulation of the slogans. For example:

"In order to respect the victory of the masses, it is necessary to dismantle the RPR-UDF [Rally for the Republic–Union for French Democracy] state, to end the Fifth Republic, its institutions, and its Constitution. We have elected Mitterrand against the Fifth Republic, but he says the institutions are well done (see his interview in *Le Monde* on 2 July), so far he has changed nothing nor does he intend to do so in the future."

"That's why we should trust only in our strengths. Only our independent mobilisation can finish the Fifth Republic! Call to a National Assembly to assume full executive and legislative powers to endow France with a new Constitution! That their members be elected in local assemblies and be revoked when, in the opinion of the electors, they betray their mandates!"

"In this assembly, the Trotskyists, we will propose a new state structure, based on local workers' councils that elect delegates to a central workers' council, which would concentrate all the powers of the State and mainly the armed force."

2. Second omission: the Presidency of the Republic

The institution that crowns the entire Bonapartist state mechanism is the presidency of the republic. In France this phenomenon is especially pronounced; the Gaullist Constitution grants the president almost unlimited powers; for example, it is he who determines the agenda that parliament should discuss. This institution, which plays an almost decorative role, has no powers to oppose the president. The presidency may even issue decrees (“*ordonnances*”) with force of law, which are not subject to approval by the legislative branch.

For all this, the slogans for the abolition of the presidency and its replacement by a workers’ organism must be part of the constant agitation of the revolutionary party against the Fifth Republic. But as in the previous case, the OCI has “forgotten” this since 10 May. Although it never explained the reason for this absence, we believe it is easily deduced from its entire policy. The OCI considers that Mitterrand’s mere election is incompatible with the existence of the Fifth Republic; hence its entire program in this area is reduced to promote the “steps” Mitterrand takes in this regard. But to take “steps” you must have the necessary powers, and there is no institution in France that possesses them to a greater degree than the presidency.

Our conclusion is not based on an explicit statement by the OCI but is the logical consequence of its entire policy. The OCI is against raising the slogans for the abolition of the presidency because it considers this institution, in the hands of the “bourgeois anti-bourgeois” Mitterrand, is the tool to destroy the Fifth Republic from within.

Is this statement wrong? In any case, nobody can brand it as risky or speculative, since it is based on the rigorously proven facts we expose above. The OCI can only convince us we are wrong if it shows us, newspaper issue by newspaper issue, the slogans it has raised against the presidency as of 10 May.

3. Third omission: the bourgeois Armed Forces

One slogan in the “program” of the “Declaration of the CC” is “for the immediate reduction of military service to six months”.

It was perhaps thinking of this slogan that Francois Forgue said, in his response article to Capa in *Correspondencia Internacional* No 13; “Can there be anyone who truly has the audacity to pretend (...) that the OCI supports the armed forces of its imperialism?”

Yes, we assert this, and not with audacity (in the sense of being speculative or inventing facts) but strictly based on reality. Immediately before the quoted phrase, Forgue says “different moments of the situation should not be confused” and he clarifies:

“The concrete form of the struggle of the masses against the bourgeois state, the link that at this moment the masses can take to mobilise against it is the sectors of the State apparatus such as the police, the ‘institutionalised’ parallel police, and the high administration that has all the control levers of the State.” (Ibid.) And based on this, he affirms that the OCI cannot be accused of supporting the imperialist armed forces.

Expressed in terms of the document, we have: Given that the masses at this moment do not pay attention to the problem of the armed forces and considering that only the slogans that serve for the immediate mobilisation must be agitated, the OCI resolves.... to abandon the fight against the armed forces! And only someone with “audacity” can think this constitutes a form of support to the armed forces of French imperialism.

We, with the audacity that our firm support on the Marxist method gives us, affirm that the OCI is supporting the armed forces of French imperialism, but in a shameful, negative way, by explicitly refusing to fight them. We consider that if there is a good time to move from propaganda to agitation for the destruction of the armed forces, that moment is the present when the masses are rising and aspire to liquidate that eternal enemy that is

the bourgeois army. If the hopes of the masses make them believe Mitterrand will do it then we must combat those hopes in the arena of government's denunciation and mobilisation.

The slogan "for the reduction of military service to six months" deserves a separate paragraph. What does this slogan mean in isolation, as expressed by the OCI (u)? Let's clarify that we can tactically agree with it since it is an unfulfilled electoral promise by the government, and a demand for which the youth are mobilising massively. But in the first place, the OCI does not focus its attacks on the government for not fulfilling its promises, but in the PCF for publicly accepting the current duration of military service (one year).

Second, the reduction of military service is a minimal, reformist slogan that does not attack the bourgeois armed forces if it is not linked to a program of transitional slogans to that effect. Let's see what Trotsky said:

"We can't oppose compulsory military training by the bourgeois state just as we can't oppose compulsory education by the bourgeois state. Military training in our eyes is a part of education." ("On Conscription", 9 July 1940, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40)*, p. 321.) And he clarifies:

"We are absolutely in favor of compulsory military training and in the same way for conscription. Conscription? Yes. By the bourgeois state? No. We cannot entrust this work, as any other, to the state of the exploiters. In our propaganda and agitation, we must very strongly differentiate these two questions. That is, not to fight against the necessity of the workers being good soldiers and of building up an army based on discipline, science, strong bodies and so on, including conscription, but against the capitalist state which abuses the army for the advantage of the exploiting class." (Ibid., p. 320.) And soon after:

"Our comrades should be the best soldiers and the best officers and at the same time the best class militants. They should provoke in the workers a mistrust of the old tradition, the military plans of the bourgeois class and officers, and should insist upon the necessity of educating workers' officers, who will be absolutely loyal to the proletariat." ("American Problems", 7 August 1940, *ibid*, p. 332.)

From these concepts of Trotsky a whole transitional program follows:

- Control of conscription by workers' organisations;
- Use of the armed forces solely to repel external aggression; not to attack other countries; immediate dismantling of all foreign bases and withdrawal of troops stationed there;
- Prohibition of using the armed forces to repress the workers' movement;
- Minimum industrial wage for soldiers, paid by their bosses;
- Legality for the soldiers' committees; that they join unions and workers' centrals;
- That said committees elect the officers and non-commissioned officers, under the control of the workers' organisations; that they guarantee a good training in the use of the most modern weapons for all the soldiers; we do not want to be cannon fodder! Up to reach the goal set by *The Transitional Program*: "Substitution for the standing army of a people's militia, indissolubly linked up with factories, mines, farms, etc." (Op. cit., p. 91.)

The OCI, with its single slogan (which, we insist, would only serve tactically to denounce the government) has the opposite "program": that the workers must be worse soldiers than before and always remain under the command of their bourgeois officers, in service of the exploiters.

4. The OCI abandons the fight against the Church

One criticism made in our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* concerned the use by the OCI of the slogan "public funds to the public school, private funds to the private school", because it means respecting the right of the Catholic Church to keep its schools and spread its putrefying ideology, provided it is self-financing.

Our criticism has not caused the slightest response from the OCI. Now, *Informations Ouvrières* (for example, in issues 1019 and 1020) has devoted a lot of space to explaining how Catholic schools disseminate their ideology in the service of exploitation. As a denunciation, it is fine; but the funny thing (rather, the disgusting thing) is that the OCI continues to defend the right of the Catholic school to exist and contaminate children's minds: their only claim is still not to grant public credit to private schools, that is, the old motto of Freemasonry, liberals and bourgeois socialism.

If we consider that the Catholic Church, besides a colossal apparatus at the service of the counter-revolution, is an economic power (the Pope is right now the first shareholder of the New York Stock Exchange), the cutting of public funds would be a hard blow for it, but would not make it disappear from the scene. This is why for revolutionists, it is a supreme duty to employ the methods of the most implacable class struggle to deprive the Church of the means it has for its counter-revolutionary action. This means, in other words, expropriating their schools, clubs, hospitals, and all their means of self-financing: factories, land, and so on. It means forcing the priests to work, and to exercise the rites outside working hours, just as the worker goes to mass only in his free time. It means, in short, to raise a transitional program against the Church:

- Out priests and nuns from schools, unions, hospitals, and sporting and cultural associations, of any activity not strictly of the cult!
- Immediate expropriation without payment of all Church property!
- That the priests earn their lives working, not spreading their putrid ideology at the service of exploitation!
- Public funds to the public school, private funds... as well!

5. The theory of camps in the governmental apparatus

The OCI not only considers that two antagonistic camps have emerged at a society level, but it has transferred this theory to the bosom of the government itself and the state apparatus. According to the *Draft Political Report*, there is not a single governmental apparatus at the service of the bourgeoisie, but the two well-known camps. The anti-bourgeois camp comprises President Mitterrand, the senior officials appointed by him and most of the ministers. The other, for now much more powerful, is the bourgeois camp of the Giscardian officials and also some ministers.

Let's see examples of the application of this policy. In July there was a strike at the Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport, for the reinstatement of six dismissed trade unionists. This airport is, of course, a state-owned company; therefore, the State is the boss against whom the strike is waged, and specifically the government of Mitterrand. But the OCI does not understand it like this:

"What should we have done? Fight for the victory of the strike, formulating a tactic that in its development would bring about a rupture with the bourgeoisie, and in this case, the revocation of the high-ranking officials put in place by Giscard, who remain in their posts." (*Draft Political Report*, p. 5.)

It turns out then the boss is not the government but the high officials, and not just any official but those who come from the previous administration, who for some reason (perhaps due to lack of time) the government has not removed.

A few lines above, it says: "We did not say: Minister Fiterman is responsible (for the dismissals), but we said: the culprit is the general directorate (of the airport)." (Ibid, p. 4.)

Therefore, the workers of this state company are fighting only against the airport administration, which comes from the time of Giscard; not against Minister for Transport Fiterman (who is a member of the PCF, and of whom we learned in passing he is part of the Mitterrandist camp), nor against the supreme boss of the state companies, the President of the Republic. In other words, according to the OCI, when the boss is the government, the

workers must not fight against it but against the representatives of the enemy camp who are in its bosom.

There are very many examples like this one, and we will see them when we go deeper into the OCI's policy for the current stage. We pointed out the example of Roissy to show how it fits a general conception, the one of "camps", transferred to the bosom of the state apparatus. The *Draft Political Report* raises the line applied in Roissy to the level of a general policy for the period:

"We must explain to the working masses that (...) to respect the democracy that threw Giscard out, we have to throw out those high (Giscardians) officials; revoke them." (Ibid, p. 3.)

We said some ministers of the current government belong to the enemy camp. The *Draft Political Report* specifically mentions four ministers: the left Gaullist Jobert, the Radical Crépeau and the Socialists Delors and Rocard. "Although Radicals and Gaullists of the 'left' are totally marginalised, their presence in the government is highly significant. But the most important fact is that faced with the defeat of its political representation, the bourgeoisie had to take directly into its own hands the political fight against the Mitterrand government." (Ibid, p. 4.)

Jobert and Crépeau are then members of the enemy camp in government; however, their weakness, because of the defeat of their parties in the elections, makes them insufficient. The *Draft Report* continues: "For the time being, the CNPF took charge of this political fight against this bourgeois government, which it cannot consider as its own. (...) The CNPF had to take charge of both the reorganisation of the political representation of the bourgeoisie like the fact of blowing up the SP, relying in the first place on Delors and Rocard."

Therefore, ministers Delors and Rocard, although Socialists, are also members of the enemy camp, and have more importance than Jobert and Crépeau: for something the bosses rely on them.

This business of moving the camps to the bosom of the government has a clear goal, which we will expand on when dealing with OCI policy. That goal is to preserve the camp, not to do or say anything that could bother our camp allies and fundamentally the head of the same, President Mitterrand.

6. How to dismantle the state apparatus, according to the OCI

We have seen in this document that, in several labour disputes, especially in public companies, the OCI proposes the mobilisation should be directed against the "high Giscardian officials who remain in their positions". In those cases, this slogan fulfils the role of exculpating the government from workers' problems and preventing these from mobilising against it.

But this slogan, at a programmatic level, fulfils another role, even more ominous. The list of slogans in the "Declaration of the CC" includes the "revocation of senior officials". The *Draft Political Report* clarifies its meaning:

"We must explain to the working masses that (...) to respect the democracy that threw Giscard out, those high officials must be dismissed; revoked. Isn't this a policy of principles at the level of the main task that the working masses must resolve: to destroy the bourgeois state by dismantling the reactionary institutions of the Republic?" (*Draft Political Report*, p. 3.)

We have, therefore, that the "main task" the masses must resolve is the "destruction of the bourgeois state", and for that, they must "dismantle the reactionary institutions of the Fifth Republic". And the "principled" way to do it is to revoke the high Giscardian officials, i.e., replace them with socialist officials.

Let's say to start, this policy has nothing new. Under the Russian Provisional Government, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries raised the slogan "for a ministry of the majority parties in the soviets". To which Lenin replied:

"A 'Cabinet of the parties of the Soviet majority' means a change of individual ministers, with the entire old government apparatus left intact — a thoroughly bureaucratic and thoroughly undemocratic apparatus incapable of carrying out serious reforms, such as are contained even in the S.R. and Menshevik programmes.

"(...) Even in those ministries which were in the hands of socialist Ministers (...), the entire administrative apparatus had remained unchanged and hampered work.

"This is quite understandable", concludes Lenin. "The entire history of the bourgeois-parliamentary (...) countries shows that a change of ministers means very little, for the real work of administration is in the hands of an enormous army of officials. (...) This army is bound by servility to rank, by certain privileges of "Civil" Service; the upper ranks of this army are, through the medium of shares and banks, entirely enslaved by finance capital, being to a certain extent its agent and a vehicle of its interests and influence." ("One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution", 27 September 1917, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 376-377.)

Thus, for Lenin, replacing bourgeois officials with those of the Soviet parties (or the Giscardians by Mitterrandist socialists) means leaving the state apparatus intact. And even more, it means deceiving the masses by making them believe the old institutions in the hands of socialist officials can satisfy their needs.

The revolutionary workers' movement has a tradition, which goes back to the Paris Commune, against the bureaucracy of public officials. This is summarised in the slogans:

- That the workers' organisations take charge of the state functions;
- Election of officials by the workers' movement;
- That these remain in office for limited periods, they can be revoked at any time by their constituents, and they receive the same salary as an average worker.

With this issue of public officials, the opportunistic policy of the OCI regarding the state institutions is completed. The slogans "Down with the Fifth Republic" and "Abolition of the presidency" are abandoned. The struggle for the destruction of the bourgeois armed forces and their replacement by the workers' militia is abandoned in favour of the minimal slogan of "reduction of military service". Respect for an arch-reactionary institution such as the Church is raised, with the only requirement that it be self-financing. As a finishing touch, it proposes to dismantle the bourgeois state apparatus by simply replacing the Giscardian officials with social-democratic officials.

CHAPTER XI

Lambert and Pablo Support the Government

Earlier, we have seen that aside from some or other ritual phrase such as “for an SP-PCF government”, the OCI does not have a specific slogan of government. The OCI justifies this position for several reasons, all of them false; we have already seen what they are, but it is convenient to recount them briefly.

The slogan “Out with the bourgeois ministers” is traditional in Bolshevism and in the Trotskyist movement; we raise it when a popular-front or bourgeois-worker government is in power. Lenin raised it under the government of Kerensky, and Trotsky under the governments of Blum and Negrin.

The OCI invokes the opposite tradition, the tradition of reformism. It does not raise this slogan due to the “little importance of the ministerial functions and the bourgeois forces that support” the bourgeois ministers. That is, the same argument put forward by the Mensheviks and their disciples, the Stalinists. The Bolsheviks-Trotskyists say: if the SP and the PCF, with their electoral and parliamentary majority, include in their government the shadow of the bourgeoisie, then we must relentlessly denounce them by calling the masses to throw the bourgeois ministers out of the government.

Luis Favre gives us another reason not to raise this or any other slogan of government: that the only slogans we must agitate are those that mobilise the masses immediately. This confuses agitation with immediate action, but also contradicts all the previous policy of the OCI, which during the seven years of Giscard raised the slogan “Out with the government of Giscard, for a government of the SP and the PCF”, without, at least until very recently, any possibility existing of carrying it out.

Another reason, which is repeated countless times in the document is that “the masses consider the Mitterrand-Mauroy government is their government”, that is, they trust him.

The above reasons, all of a tactical nature, could make us think by changing the circumstances (for example, the masses stop trusting the government) the OCI will begin to raise slogans of government. But the *Draft Political Report* wields an additional reason, of a theoretical nature, where it tells us, in fact, it will never raise a slogan of government while the popular front is still there.

“It would be absurd to assign the workers the goal of overthrowing the government. The line we must develop is that of breaking with the bourgeoisie.” (Op. cit., p. 7.)

First of all, we do not understand how to break with the bourgeoisie without breaking with the bourgeois government. But what is most serious is that here the axis of *The Transitional Program* is completely abandoned:

“It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today’s conditions and from today’s consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to

one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.” (*The Transitional Program*, op. cit., p. 75..)

Trotsky insists on the same thing throughout the document: “The old ‘minimal program’ is superseded by the transitional program, the task of which lies in the systematic mobilisation of the masses for the proletarian revolution.” (Ibid, p. 76.)

“By means of this struggle [for wages and against unemployment], (...) the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery. (Ibid, p. 77.)

“However, the statisation of the banks will produce these favourable results only if the state power itself passes completely from the hands of the exploiters into the hands of the toilers.” (Ibid, p. 84.)

And in summary: “Each of the transitional demands should, therefore, lead to one and the same political conclusion: the workers need to break with all traditional parties of the bourgeoisie in order, jointly with the peasants, to establish their own power.” (Ibid, p. 95.)

Then, the objective of overthrowing the bourgeois government not only is not “absurd”, but must be the “one and the same political conclusion” of each slogan we raise.

This is the most general program of Trotskyism, but what happens under the popular front government? In July 1936, the International Preconference of the Fourth International approved the document “The New Revolutionary Upsurge and the Tasks of the Fourth International”, referring to the situation of Belgium, France, and Spain, the latter countries where popular fronts ruled.

Thesis 9 states: “A serious, profound, and lasting union of the proletariat with the petty-bourgeois masses, as opposed to a parliamentary combination with the Radical exploiters of the petty bourgeoisie, is possible only on the basis of *a revolutionary program*, i.e., the seizure of power by the proletariat and a revolution in property relations in the interests of all the toilers. The ‘People’s Front’, as a coalition with the bourgeoisie, is a brake on the revolution and a safety valve for imperialism.”

And thesis 10 insists: “The first step to an alliance with the petty bourgeoisie is the breaking up of the bloc with the bourgeois Radicals in France and Spain, the bloc with the Catholics and Liberals in Belgium, etc. It is necessary to explain this truth, on the basis of experience, to every Socialist and Communist worker. Such is the central task of the moment. The struggle against reformism and Stalinism is at the present stage a struggle above all against a bloc with the bourgeoisie. For the honest unity of the workers, against dishonest unity with the exploiters! Out with the bourgeoisie from the People’s Front! Down with the capitalist ministers!” (*Documents of the Fourth International*, p. 87).

Both in France and in Spain, where there were Popular Front governments, the “central task of the moment” for Trotsky was the proletarian revolution and the seizure of power. This is logical; if we bear in mind the stage of popular-front government corresponds to a weakening of bourgeois power and at the same time to a moment when the proletariat has anti-capitalist and socialist aspirations. It is the stage in which the revolutionary crisis is on the agenda, and therefore it is necessary to develop the aspirations and needs of the proletariat and the masses towards a single goal: the overthrow of the government and the seizure of power.

When the OCI affirms that the goal of overthrowing the popular front government is “absurd”, it gives us, amidst a tangle of false reasons, the real reason not to raise slogans of government: the OCI supports the bourgeois government. And in this Lambert and Pablo fully agree.

1. How the support for the government is expressed

We make clear at the outset we are not comparing the respective trajectories of Lambert and Pablo, which are antinomian. We assert that on this precise point of support for the bourgeois government of Mitterrand, there is an essential identity between them.

We have already quoted the essential passages of the documents of both of them where they express their support for the progressive measures (or steps) of the government. The OCI affirms that “it will support any step that the government takes in this regard” (it refers to the nationalisations announced by Mauroy). And it adds that “it will always be from the same angle that we will have to address” practically all the most felt problems of the proletariat and youth (*Draft Political Report*, p. 7). While the Pabloite organ says, “we will support all the social and political measures that (the government) takes, that will satisfy the demands of the workers.” (*Pour L'autogestion*, No 1).

Now, both Pablo and Lambert say they do not support the government:

“We will not support the government as we would support a true workers’ government.” (*Pour L'autogestion*, No 1).

“Therefore, we should not support the bourgeois government of Mitterrand-Mauroy. That would be abandoning the principles.” (*Draft Political Report*, p. 3.)

The question is: is it possible to support the progressive steps or measures of a bourgeois government and not to support the government? We believe with Trotsky it is not possible: to support the “steps/measures” of a bourgeois government is to stand in solidarity politically with the same. It is something qualitatively different from fighting in the “physical” or “military camp” of the popular front government when it is attacked by the most reactionary sector (Kornilov against Kerensky, etc.). The reformists have always concealed their support for the popular front bourgeois government behind the mask of support for “progressive measures/steps”.

2. Are some bourgeois governments more progressive than others?

The OCI and its disciples of the Spanish POSI have a policy with which we fully agree on the principles (although we disagree as to their tactical application). It is the policy of rejecting all measures of the Juan Carlos-Suarez government, no matter how “progressive” they may seem. The measures of this government have been 20 times more “progressive” than those of Mitterrand-Mauroy. It is enough to mention one: the right to vote for all Spaniards and the legality of workers’ parties and unions. The OCI has never declared its support for such measures/steps and with good reason because it meant supporting the overall policy of the monarchy to save the essential part of the Francoist state apparatus by modifying some secondary aspects. In other words, for the OCI and the POSI, supporting a measure/step by the government of Juan Carlos Suárez is equivalent to providing means to strengthen its overall policy. We consider that this correct policy is the one the revolutionary parties must apply to all the bourgeois governments, of whatever kind.

The OCI does not think this way. Just as the OCI rejects Juan Carlos’ measures, it considers its duty to support the “progressive steps” of Mitterrand, infinitely pettier than the former, and thereby the OCI provides the means to the French popular-front government to deceive the workers.

The OCI does not have a policy of principles regarding bourgeois governments: it approves the steps of one and rejects those of another. It does not see them both as a Trotskyist would: as class enemies, both worthy of our repudiation.

For us, there is only one explanation for the OCI’s policy: it considers that Mitterrand’s is a sui generis bourgeois government, anti-bourgeois, whose “progressive steps” we must support. And this is because Mitterrand enjoys the support of the masses; these consider it their government, as it is repeated insistently throughout the *Draft Report*.

Therefore, there are two types of bourgeois governments: progressive and reactionary. The difference between the two lies in the support or lack of support the masses provide. Based on this, the revolutionary party must support or reject its “progressive steps/measures”.

This is reflected in the aforementioned statement of the *Draft Political Report*: “when the *coup d'état* of the Algiers Generals against de Gaulle took place in 1961, we refused to join the camp of de Gaulle.” (Op. cit., p. 7.) In other words, de Gaulle’s government is qualitatively different from Mitterrand’s, and for Marxists qualitatively different means the difference is class.

The opportunistic to the marrow policy of supporting the Mitterrand government is based on the bourgeois “anti-bourgeois” character of that government.

This policy has its sectarian and ultraleftist counterpart: since the Gaullist government does not have the “anti-bourgeois virtues” of the Mitterrandist government, the OCI is not in its “camp” against the putsch of the fascist colonels of Algiers. It is exactly the opposite of what Trotsky asserts that when a physical struggle takes place between a bourgeois government and a fascist coup, we take part militarily in the camp of government, without ever stopping fighting against it.

This sectarian policy extends to another terrain, as it is clearly seen in the case of Spain. There, the government of Juan Carlos Suárez granted elections and legality for all parties. The obligation of the revolutionaries was to denounce the counter-revolutionary content of these measures, which the POSI did. But at the same time, it had a revolutionary obligation to use those measures, and the POSI did not. Until recently it had not fought to achieve its legality and participate in elections to the Cortes.

3. The position of the Trotskyists

Trotsky and we, his disciples, have a policy opposed to that of the OCI in all these areas. We start from a fact, which is an elementary truth of the class struggle: that all bourgeois governments have the same counter-revolutionary essence. We do not put an equal sign between all governments: only an idiot could say Mitterrand’s government is the same as the government of Marshal Pétain. But both have in common their bourgeois, counter-revolutionary character; both seek in different ways to maintain the bourgeois regime. Therefore, there is no qualitative difference between them.

Marxism is a science that defines governments by their class character, and from there it looks for the differences that may exist between them. The OCI, instead, applies an unscientific criterion, to define governments based on the hopes of the masses, more specifically of their more backward sectors. If it is consistent until the end, the day the masses lose their hopes, the OCI will say that Mitterrand’s has become a “normal” bourgeois government.

We Trotskyists do not make this kind of difference; we do not consider we should support the steps/measures of the “progressive” bourgeois governments to push them to break with the bourgeoisie. Quite the opposite; our attitude towards Mitterrand’s steps/measures is the same as towards Juan Carlos Suárez: we denounce the counter-revolutionary nature of both governments and all their measures.

The fact of not seeing any special “anti-capitalist virtue” in any bourgeois government, even if it is a popular front, means we are also consistent in another area: our political line when the bourgeois government is attacked by a more reactionary sector, which seeks to impose a Bonapartist or fascist regime. Let’s see first what Trotsky says:

“Brüning’s struggle against Hitler I compared with Kerensky’s struggle against Kornilov; the struggle of the Bolsheviks against Kornilov I compared with the struggle of the German Communist Party against Hitler.” (*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, p. 186.)

That is to say, for Trotsky, there is no qualitative difference between the Kerenskyist popular front and the reactionary Bonapartist Brüning; and when the threat of Kornilov-Hitler arises, its policy is the same; fight militarily in the Kerensky-Brüning camp.

And elsewhere Trotsky clarifies: “The civil war between Negrin and Franco does not signify the same thing as the electoral competition of Hindenburg and Hitler. If Hindenburg

had entered into an open military fight against Hitler, then Hindenburg would have been a 'lesser evil'. We do not choose the 'greater evil', we choose the 'lesser evil'. But Hindenburg was not the 'lesser evil' — he did not go into open warfare against Hitler." ("Answer to Questions on the Spanish Situation", 14 September 1937, *The Spanish Revolution (1921-39)*, p. 287.)

Therefore, what is qualitative for Trotsky is whether there is a "military struggle". This is why it is right to align in the military camp of the Republic against Franco, not in the Hindenburg camp against Hitler because this "military struggle" did not happen.

As for the "steps/measures", we never support them, but we do have the obligation to use them, regardless of the character of the bourgeois government granting them. This led to a great discussion between the Argentine PST and Mandel. When Lanusse's military dictatorship called for elections and granted legality to all the parties, including the workers' parties, the PST (A) did not support the measure but constantly proclaimed to the four winds that it was a conquest snatched from the dictatorship by the workers' struggles since the Cordobazo. The PST (A) said that the government was trying to divert the mass rise towards the democratic bourgeois parliamentary channels. But against the ultraleft and against Mandel, who attacked us as reformists, we said it was our obligation to use these gains of the workers' movement. For this reason, we carry out an arduous campaign for our legalisation and later we participated in the elections. Thanks to this, the PST became, in the words of Pierre Lambert, a great national party.

To summarise, our differences with the OCI in this area are:

- We judge a government for what it is (i.e., for its class character), not for what the masses think of it.
- We do not find qualitative differences between bourgeois governments: they are all absolutely counter-revolutionary.
- We support none of its progressive measures or steps, but we do take advantage of them for our purposes.
- When a bourgeois government is attacked by a more regressive sector, we fight in its military camp while continuing to attack it politically. This, whenever there is a military struggle.

4. A gross misrepresentation of our position

In his aforementioned speech in Angola, Luis Favre said, in response to a comrade who had argued the need to denounce all measures of Mitterrand's government: "For example, if the government decides it will pay the salary for September to all workers dismissed from Boussac-Saint Freres, we say, 'It's okay, but it is not enough because there is no guarantee of employment'. The comrades [referring to us] would say something else: 'It's wrong; you do not have to collect your wages, that's wrong.' Now, what worker would understand such a thing?" (Recorded proceedings. Where it says "collect", Favre says "pay" in the original recording, but we assume it is an involuntary error.)

This is the exact reverse of our true position, expressed in the article by Miguel Capa in *Correspondencia Internacional* No 13: "The 'progressive' measures of a bourgeois government, be it popular front or not, we use them; we never support them. And we defend them when they are attacked."

Applying this position to the case of Bousiac-Saint Freres, we have a position which is neither the opportunist-revisionist of Favre, nor the ultraleftist he attributes to us, but the following:

"The government gives us this salary so we do not fight for the guarantee of permanent employment; under this government the number of unemployed increases constantly. Therefore, we should collect this salary to be able to continue the struggle, the only guarantee the government will not leave us unemployed as it has already done with

hundreds of thousands of comrades throughout the country.” We believe any worker would understand this, our true position, perfectly well.

Favre’s position, to support this “first step” of the government, is totally opportunistic because it fosters the trust of the working class in the government, thereby conspiring against the only way to conquer permanent employment: the mobilisation of the workers. The difference between opportunism and Trotskyism is exactly what Favre expresses. The opportunists of the OCI say that what the government does “is ok”. This demobilises the class, making them think the government acts in their favour.

We Trotskyists want to instil in the working class that the government is their maximum political enemy, and if it makes any concessions is to deceive and demobilise them. This is why we reject or denounce the measure in thus: “The government offers us wages for September and hunger for later. If this is not the case, let them show us: let it dismiss the bosses and not us; leave us in control of the factory to guarantee there will not be a single dismissal. But as of now, we warn: it will do none of this because it is a government of agreement between a sector of the bourgeoisie and the traitor workers’ parties. Therefore, we must this salary and immediately occupy the factory and appeal to the solidarity of the workers’ movement. Otherwise, they will pay us September and maybe October, but then we will be unemployed and in poverty.”

In another part of his speech, Favre says: “The auxiliary sectors [of education] always fought for tenure; this year, as in all others, they requested the government to guarantee them employment. The government made a statement saying it would guarantee employment. It seemed to us it was a first step towards satisfying the demands. Now the government declared it does not have jobs for all, and said those who do not go to work will receive a salary anyway. And we, not happy with that — imagine how the auxiliary teachers were, they would receive a salary without working — we vindicated that the classes be divided with up to 25 students, and thus that everyone could work. We launched a full fight to impose the demands. The comrade [again, the one who agrees with our positions] would have to say: ‘We have to denounce the government for this measure, deciding to pay salaries to auxiliary teachers despite not working’.” (Recorded proceedings.)

Indeed, we believe we should denounce the government, for not fulfilling its promises. According to Favre: “The government made a statement saying it would guarantee employment. (...) Now the government declared it has no jobs for all and said those who do not go to work will receive a salary anyway.” Then, according to him, the teachers are very happy and the OCI tells them this joy is very good, there has been “the first step”, and we have time to negotiate the distribution of 25 students per class so that there is work for everyone.

The Trotskyists, we say: “The government promised us work, and of course it did not comply because it is a bourgeois government where the SP and the CP take part, the parties that have betrayed us. Now, to make us happy, the government offers us a free salary. But we do not want alms: we do not want to be unemployed with salaries but salaried workers. What the government wants is to demoralise and divide us; thus, when it suspends our free salary, we will not have a way to fight. Therefore, we collect this salary but without suspending for a moment our struggle for full employment.”

And next, we would propose concrete measures and transitional slogans that give the struggle a revolutionary perspective, for example:

“Under the government of Giscard, thousands of public schools were closed. We should reopen, occupy them, and hold a congress of teachers to distribute the available work. At the same time, we must demand that the school budget be administered by teachers and the workers’ movement. In this way, there will be work for all new teachers, as they complete their studies.” This is a transitional program to mobilise teachers against their boss, the government.

Favre's program, in contrast, is complicit to the government's manoeuvre; destined to gain the confidence of the teachers, demobilise them, lumpenise them and finally take away their alms when they are no longer in a position to fight.

Our position does not imply teachers should not collect the salary, but quite the opposite: they should collect it and also demand that all new teachers be given equal treatment, while the struggle for employment continues.

5. A key discussion

All our discussion with the OCI revolves around two key points: one is that of the camps, of knowing whether revolutionaries should be a political part of Mitterrand's bourgeois "progressive camp" or not. The other point, as we have seen in this chapter, is whether to support the supposedly "progressive" measures of the government. The OCI says yes, we say no. But before moving forwards we must define what is understood (or what we understand) by "progressive measure".

In the imperialist epoch, in which the bourgeoisie and all bourgeois governments are absolutely counter-revolutionary, "progressive" is any step or measure that accelerates the course of the socialist revolution, i.e., every anti-capitalist step. The measures of the bourgeois governments, their concessions to the mass movement, are counter-revolutionary because they meet three goals: to stop the class struggle and the revolutionary rise; to increase the prestige of the government and the parties, both bourgeois and bourgeois workers, in the eyes of the masses; and to consolidate or save the capitalist regime.

As revolutionary Marxists, we cannot judge each measure of a government separately — "this is good, I support it; this is bad, I reject it" — but within the frame of its overall policy. If a government is bourgeois, its overall policy is counter-revolutionary, and therefore so are all its measures, however "progressive" they may seem.

In short, we judge each measure of a government within the frame of its general policy and in relation to the class struggle, never in isolation.

Based on this Marxist method of appreciating phenomena as a whole and in their dynamics, we state: at this stage of the class struggle there is no single bourgeois government on planet Earth capable of taking a progressive "measure" or "step", that is, that tends to the destruction of the bourgeois regime, the establishment of socialism and the abolition of exploitation.

None of this means we will not fight for reformist measures, but always understanding these are a by-product of the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class. Let's see an example.

Suppose a bourgeois government grants an increase in wages due to a general strike. Our policy against this "measure" will depend on the moment of the class struggle. If the government decreed the increase because it does not want the strike to be extended, but the workers are not in a position to continue fighting, we will say: "let's take what we have won and return to work", because we see that there is no possibility at the moment to carry the strike to the end, to overthrow the bourgeois government and establish a government of the workers and peasants. What we will never do is say, with the OCI: "it is good that the government has granted the increase; we support that measure", because in that case, we are supporting the government, collaborating with its policy of gaining prestige in front of the masses and stopping the struggle. If we act like this, the worker who listens to us will say: "My hopes in this government are justified, because it adopts progressive, anti-capitalist measures. It already took a first step, now we must have patience and other steps will come."

We make it clear the previous example refers to a general strike against the government, but we would apply the same policy if it were a partial strike against an individual boss or against the bosses of an industry branch. Let's keep going.

If the increase in wages results from a strike, this fact has to help us to denounce the government, to show it took this measure against their and the bosses will, forced by our struggle. Specifically, we would say:

“Our struggle has just achieved a win, by forcing the government to increase wages. New advances will demand new struggles. But we must say that Mitterrand has betrayed us. We elected him against Giscard to guarantee work and good wages for all and look: to keep our standard of living (let alone improve it) we are forced to fight, face the police, go hungry and risk being out of work, as it happened before. We thought this was over, but it is clear we cannot trust the government or the SP and the CP: nothing will be achieved if we do not fight.”

The OCI, with its revisionist policy, does exactly the opposite: not only does it support the measures, which constitutes an act of political solidarity with the government, but carried by the logic of its position supports the government directly. Thus, it refuses to demand the nationalisation of Logabax to give Mitterrand the time it needs.

APPENDIX

In reply to some criticisms

Our criticisms of the OCI, formulated in the article by Capa in *Correspondencia Internacional* No 13 and in the *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, of 13 October last, have been partially and sometimes indirectly answered in certain documents of the OCI: article by Francois Forgue in *Correspondencia Internacional* No 13, the documents published in the *Bulletin Interieur d'Information et de Discussion Internationales* No 1, Luis Favre's speech in a joint plenary of the two Angolan parties, and fundamentally in a "Declaration of the CC of the OCI", submitted to the discussion at the 36th Congress and published in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1030.

In this last document, and as an indirect response to our affirmation that the OCI does not have an "action program", i.e., transitional, for France, the following list of slogans appears:

- "For a true control of prices;
- "For a general increase in wages in relation to the increase in prices;
- "For to the reduction of work hours without compensation, respecting the 1936 legislation;
- "For the adoption of the emergency measure of compulsory employment for the unemployed;
- "For the satisfaction of the claims of immigrant workers;
- "For the nationalisation without compensation or right to reacquisition ("*rachat*") of the large capitalist groups;
- "For a production plan that does not respond to the needs of the law of profit and to the demands of the capitalists, but responds to the needs of the popular masses;
- "For the repeal of anti-secular laws, the suppression of public credits to the free and confessional school and the granting of said credits entirely to the public school;
- "For the immediate revocation of the high-ranking officials appointed by Giscard and who remain in office and organise the sabotage;
- "For the respect of the statute of the public servant;
- "For the immediate reduction of military service to six months;
- "For the repeal of restrictions on studies and the Faure law in the University."

This "program", or rather, this summation of slogans, reaffirms to the millimetre the axis of our criticisms. There is no government slogan here, nothing to show that only a workers' government can meet these claims or how to reach such a government (raising, for example, "To carry out this program it is necessary first of all to expel the bourgeois ministers, Jobert and Crépeau, of the government"). Therefore, we must conclude that, rather than slogans (in spite of the form), they are requests addressed to the Mitterrand government, which is consistent with the entire orientation of the OCI. Indeed, who has to

elaborate and apply a “plan of production based on the needs of the popular masses, not the capitalists”? What are the demands of immigrant workers, who and how should they be satisfied? Who should control prices and determine the rate of increase in prices to fix the increase in wages? The answer is the Mitterrand government; the task of the OCI is to pressure it so it does not yield to the “demands of the capitalists”.

For this indirect “response” to our proposals and others that we analyse in the following pages, we assert that our criticisms are still standing and have been confirmed and expanded.

1. The OCI (u) at the rearguard of the first wave

In June of 1936, a great wave of strikes with factory occupation took place in France, culminating in a general strike. This is the process that Trotsky called the “first wave” and that resulted in a series of conquests by the French proletariat, such as the “Law of 40 hours”, which establishes a maximum working week of 40 hours, and the hours worked over and above these are paid as overtime work.

This great movement of the French proletariat was preceded by a series of local and factory disputes, “economic strikes” or “corporate strikes”, as the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders of that time called them, and by Blum’s electoral victory.

We believe France is experiencing the first ripples of a similar situation; the rise of the masses has not yet reached the same degree as on the months before May-June 1936, but it points in this direction. Workers’ struggles take place all over the country: against dismissals, for wage increases, and so on. This means that the masses, while trusting Mitterrand and his popular front government, do not merely wait passively for him to solve their problems, but they fight for them.

The policy of the OCI (u), as we have seen it, is to carefully avoid the masses fighting against the government. Hence, its strenuous efforts to direct the struggles against the “bankers and capitalists” in the case of private companies and against “high Giscardian officials” when the dispute affects a public or nationalised company or it is a student struggle.

The fact of deflecting or curbing the confrontation of the masses with the government not only is a violation of the most sacred principles of Trotskyism but has another consequence: the OCI does not have the policy to take the lead in the struggles of the workers and of the masses movement.

In our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* we said the OCI (u) does not have a policy of solidarity with the struggles of the workers’ movement, of doing propaganda about them, of defending them, let alone extending them and putting themselves at the head to give them a revolutionary perspective through appropriate transitional slogans. Now we reassert that accusation: the OCI says nothing, for example, of the Paris-Saint Lazare railway strike, started on 10 December, and which has paralysed the circulation of a large sector of the Parisian “*banlieue*” [suburbs]. We have learned about the existence of this struggle through *Le Monde* (11 December 1981), not through *Informations Ouvrières*. On the other hand, the “program” of the “Declaration of the CC” already mentioned, says nothing about solidarity with the workers’ struggles in progress.

Nor has the OCI said anything about the struggles of the peasants. In the same *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, we accused the OCI (u) of lack of solidarity with the peasant struggles, and of a policy to unite them to the struggles of the workers’ movement. This situation has not changed: in the answers (still partial) to our letter, nothing was said about it and, worse still, if we were to be guided by the “Declaration of the CC”, in France there are no peasants.

Right now, we cannot predict whether these preliminary struggles of the workers’ and mass movement will lead to a “first wave” like that of 1936, or whether the government

will be able to abort the process. The objective dynamic point towards the first, since the material situation of the working people is getting worse by the day. We assert the Trotskyist party has the duty to apply a policy to extend, unify and strengthen the partial struggles and to place itself at the head of the first wave when it explodes. The OCI (u), on the other hand, has the policy to stop it. Therefore, when it happens, it will break on the head of the OCI (u) and sweep it from its path along with the other obstacles.

A. The platform of Orly Airport: capitulation to the bureaucracy

It must be acknowledged that the OCI (u) has formulated a policy for some (very few) workers' disputes. We have already seen two: Logobax, where it refused to raise the slogan of "nationalisation to stop the layoffs", because the government "needs time to solve the problems"; and Bousasc-Saint Freres, where it argued the government's measure to guarantee the employment for three months of several hundred workers dismissed was "a step forward". Now let's see two other cases.

As reported in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1026, on 12 November the conference of Orly airport workers was held, to decide on the measures to be taken in response to the threat of dismissal of several workers. It says it was "an authentic workers' meet to organise the fight against dismissals, against unemployment", and "this conference is a success".

It is worth stopping in the first instance in the speech of a delegate from *Force Ouvrière*, the workers' central, which the article by *Informations Ouvrières* quotes extensively and without any criticism: "For *Force Ouvrière*, the only ones responsible before 10 May are the clique of Horffel and company, who deliberately organised the dismantling of the platform of Orly Airport. Therefore, it was not the new government. But the new government must respond to the aspirations of the workers: it means it should not accept these plans. Giscard was not thrown out so that his plans could be applied."

Of course, why should it criticise this speech by a union bureaucrat, if it agrees to the millimetre with the position of the OCI (u): the fault of all lies on the previous government, it is only about warning Mitterrand not to apply those plans.

But the worst (or better, according to the Lambertist perspective) came later when it was approved "unanimously minus four abstentions" a statement prepared by the trade unions present, which establishes the measures to be taken against possible dismissals:

"The conference assigns to the coordinating committee constituted here the goal of meeting with Mr Fiterman (the Minister of Transport) to discuss these problems (...) and resolves that if the negotiations with the transport minister fail, they will carry out identical procedures before the Prime Minister and then before the President of the Republic." (Quoted in *Informations Ouvrières* 1026.)

Courageous measures! Meet with the Minister of Transport, then with the Prime Minister, then with the President, and then... nothing, because the declaration ends there. And if there are layoffs, the fault lies with Giscard.

We assume that the four abstentions (not votes against the treason, but abstentions) are not from the OCI (u) because *Informations Ouvrières* does not criticise the statement: it merely reports on it and says "the conference is a success" because it approved a measure of "fighting against dismissals".

We are not against making representations to the ministers, and Mitterrand and Mitterrand's grandmother. But this is not a measure of struggle but of negotiation and in addition to impotent negotiation. It seems elementary for a party that claims to be Trotskyist to propose, for example: "Yes, let's make representations to Fiterman, Mauroy, and Mitterrand, but in the meantime, we will stop work and occupy the platform. This way we will avoid layoffs." If the relationship of forces is unfavourable we will propose less radical measures of struggle. But if a decision like that of Orly is made, we will have to say: "We will respect the decision taken but the conference was a total failure because the traitorous policy of the trade union bureaucracy was imposed, of trusting the government

and holding meetings with the ministers. Let it be known right away it is a disastrous decision because it inevitably leads to defeat, to the dismissals happening.”

None of that: the OCI (u) has completely capitulated to the treacherous trade union bureaucracy.

B. Renault, the second betrayal

At the beginning of September, a strike breaks out at Renault, the most important of the nationalised factories. The company employs about 40,000 workers and has plants throughout the country.

The dispute begins in the plants Sandouville (Seine-Maritime) and Boulogne-Billacourt (Parisian region). The main demands are a reduction of the work rate in the production line and repeal of a decree of the administration which establishes the *chômage technique* [technical unemployment], the suspension of work for five days “to adapt the production to the market.” (Reports collected from *Le Monde*, 25 September 1981.)

What was the policy of the OCI (u)?

First, total silence. *Le Monde* says that the dispute broke out “in the first days of September”. The first news *Informations Ouvrières* gives us appears in issue 1021, of 10 October, i.e., with a month of delay, and it is a note of one third of a page.

No 1022 (17 October) dedicates the editorial, under the title “Renault: first clash between classes after 10 May “. There it is said: “The workers wonder, what does the government do? Where is it placed in the face of the bosses provocations?” Here is the first confusion, since in a nationalised factory the boss, the author of these “provocations”, is the Mitterrand government.

The editorial answers to the question asked by the workers: “The task of the OCI (u) consists of explaining the contradiction between maintaining, in the management of Renault, Hanon and other high officials dedicated to defending the interests of capitalists and bankers, and the realisation of the will of the working masses, expressed in the massive vote to the SP and the PCF.”

As a tactical formulation, it could be fine, if next it were said the Mitterrand government is betraying the aspirations of the Renault workers by applying the same policy as Giscard. But this is not what *Informations Ouvrières* says since in an article on the same issue (1022) it states: “The workers know the government cannot decide everything everywhere. Then it should decide, to respect the will of the working masses, to revoke all of Renault’s management, all the high officials who, as everyone knows, represent the capitalists and bankers.”

Then, there is a “contradiction” between the boss (the Mitterrand government) and the management, appointed by Giscard. But since the boss “cannot do everything everywhere”, we suggest that you revoke management and appoint a new one: that will solve all the problems.

We have a workers’ dispute in a large nationalised factory, where the boss is the government. Through mobilisation, the workers are becoming conscious, on the one hand, that their greatest enemy is the bourgeois government in which they erroneously trust; on the other, the true meaning of bourgeois “nationalisation”, which only implies a change of boss.

The OCI considers its duty to prevent this acquisition of conscience. It diverts the fight against the government channelling it towards the “Giscardian management”. On the other hand, it never occurs to them to raise the slogan for the workers’ control of Renault, which is materialised in a very simple way: to ignore the bourgeois management, the election of a new management by a General Assembly of the workers and accountable to it.

Now, the OCI (u), as the “Trotskyist” left leg of the Mitterrandist camp, has to give a “red” collaboration to Mitterrand’s policy of preventing mobilisation. It achieves this through the agitation of the slogan “Unitary total strike of all the factories”.

Let’s see what “total strike” means as a method of struggle. Renault is a multinational colossus that has over 10 manufacturing plants and 40,000 workers in France. Therefore, the “total strike” demands methods and slogans of struggle; what we could call “accessory” at the service of the strike: strike pickets; general assemblies per plant to elect local strike committees and that they choose a central strike committee to lead the struggle at the national level; formation of commissions to organise solidarity actions; regular convening of general plant assemblies to report on the progress of the dispute and to submit to discussion and voting the measures to be taken; etc.

In the context of the general orientation of the OCI (u), the call only to “total strike” is not a mistake, but a conscious policy: launching an adventurer and sterile slogan to paralyse the struggle.

The second aspect refers to the perspective given to the struggle. The OCI (u) limits itself to raising the demands of the workers: for the decrease in the pace of work and against temporary closures. A Trotskyist party cannot stop there, but it must raise:

“To satisfy our demands permanently we must impose the workers’ control of Renault, which means:

- “• Overthrow the current bourgeois management;
- “• Election of a workers’ management by general assembly of the workers; accept no manager sent by the government;
- “• The new management will prepare the production plans, pace of work, wages, etc., and submit them for the approval by the general assembly;
- “• Management will report periodically to the general assembly;
- “• The managers will have the following characteristics: They are elected by the general assembly and can be revoked by it at any time; their term of office lasts two years at most, with no possibility of re-election; at the end of their term, they return to the workplace; they get the same salary as a skilled worker.”

This is a transitional program for Renault because starts from the demands for which the workers are already struggling (pace of work and temporary closures) and directs that struggle in an anti-capitalist, revolutionary perspective while exposing the real character of the Mitterrand government before the workers.

C. Awaiting the political maturity of the masses

The document by Stéphane Just published in the *Lettre d’Informations Ouvrières* No 11 gives us the theoretical key to understanding why the OCI (u) does not promote workers’ struggles:

“The preparation of the great struggles that will come, perhaps from the general strike, depends essentially on the political maturity and, therefore, on the response we give to the political problems.” (Op. cit. p. 5.)

This statement is false for several reasons. First, there can be no “political maturity” of the masses if it is not through the struggle. Precisely, the political maturity necessary for the great struggles and general strikes being prepared is being forged in the current wave of local disputes.

But the struggle is not enough if there is no Trotskyist party that presents a revolutionary perspective. This means that the party must take part in all the partial struggles of the proletariat and the masses, linking their demands to transitional slogans and to the problem of power.

If the party with the revolutionary program is missing, the partial struggles of the masses and even the great explosions such as the French May dissipate, and the will to fight of the masses gives way to confusion and apathy.

Moreover, the party that does not take part in the workers' struggles and sits waiting for political maturity to happen, abandons any possibility of putting itself at the head of the proletariat.

For all this, the orientation of the OCI (u) objectively curbs the political maturity of the masses and the development of the only true expression of this maturity, the revolutionary, Trotskyist party.

2. The OCI (u) violates elementary principles of the workers' movement

Our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* formulated against the OCI (u) a series of very serious accusations in certain principles of the workers' movement. Our fundamental accusation was that faced with the joint plan of Mitterrand and Calvo Sotelo to repress the ETA militants refugees in France, the OCI (u) did not campaign for the freedom of these militants when they were arrested by French police. Let us recall that Mitterrand has a rather subtle policy, destined to save his prestige before the masses and at the same time maintain his good relations with the Spanish monarchy: not agreeing on the extradition of the Basque militants, but at the same time keeping them imprisoned in France. At present, he locks them up in the island-prison of Yeu.

According to *Le Monde* on 22 September, several ETA militants imprisoned on the island are on a hunger strike in protest against their imprisonment, since they have committed no violation of French laws. True to its line, the OCI (u) has not said a word about it, neither to show solidarity with the hunger strike nor to demand the freedom of these militants.

We must point out that, on the contrary, *Informations Ouvrières* carries out a permanent campaign of solidarity with the hunger strikers of the Irish IRA. The fact is easily explained: the IRA prisoners question the Thatcher regime, not Mitterrand's.

Nor has a campaign appeared in *Informations Ouvrières* in solidarity with the Breton, Basque, and Corsican fighters, or those of the French colonies. The "Declaration of the CC" in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1030 does not include slogans addressed to these sectors; it does not even mention them.

A. Luis Favre's shameful explanations

Yes, there has been, by the OCI (u), a partial response to these accusations. In his aforementioned speech in the plenary of the Angolan parties, Luis Favre explained the position of the OCI (u) regarding the prisoners of ETA and IRA. Let's see their arguments based on the recorded transcript of the meeting.

Favre: "We launched a campaign against extradition, it must be said when the question was raised."

First problem: Is the question no longer raised? Are there no ETA prisoners on the island of Yeu?

Second problem: Favre is lying; there is no campaign in *Informations Ouvrières* for the ETA prisoners. There is only one article, the one mentioned in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1010, but its goal is the defence of Minister Defferre, as we said in the letter to POSI. It could be replied that the campaign was carried out through leaflets and brochures, not through the newspaper. We do not accept this explanation. The party can publish all the flyers it wants, but we only consider as partisan campaigns those realised through the official organ, the face of the party before the masses.

Favre: “The government, gave in to what? To this campaign against extradition.”

Assuming there was a campaign, what does it mean the government “gave in”? Is giving in confining the Basques on the island of Yeu instead of extraditing them? Truly, the OCI (u) is content with very little...

Favre: “Who is the lawyer defending the Basques? Ives Deschafer, member of the International Committee against repression.”

Well, we congratulate Mr Deschafer and his committee. But we still do not know where the OCI (u) campaign is? Is the OCI (u) a member of the Committee? We do not know because *Informations Ouvrières* never mentions it.

Favre: “ETA asked to campaign against extradition because they thought the situation of their prisoners in France would not be the same as in Spain. One thing that has nothing to do with Marxism, only with common sense: it is preferable to be imprisoned than with a bullet in the head; it is even preferable to be condemned — something I’m opposed to — than to be released to be killed.”

Let the reader see what happens when one substitutes Marxism for “common sense” — the most vulgar of vulgar thought. It turns out that when the ETA fighters are persecuted by the police of two countries, Favre says: “Please, let him be imprisoned by the French cops so the Spanish Civil Guard does not kill him.”

Favre says “ETA asked to campaign against extradition”. Leaving aside that the OCI (u) did not make this campaign or any other we must remember we are not ETA, a bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist party. We are Trotskyists, the party of the proletariat for the socialist revolution. We do not silence our slogans even if ETA does not raise them. If a front of the unity of action is formed exclusively against extradition, we will participate in it, but observing our golden rule: we preserve our political independence and we agitate our slogans.

ETA may have valid reasons to negotiate “imprisonment” in exchange for “non-extradition” if the relationship of forces is unfavourable. But that does not mean the French Trotskyists must go out on the street to shout “Yes, yes, let them be imprisoned”, as our champion of “common sense” proposes. On the contrary, they must redouble their campaign for:

- Total freedom for ETA fighters;
- That they be granted asylum, work and full freedom of political action;
- That they be allowed to cross the border, in both directions, as many times as they wish.

Favre: “The comrades speak in their resolution about IRA prisoners in France. Do you know any names of IRA prisoners in France? It turns out there are none.”

Yes, we do know the names of two: Denis Donaldson and Billy Kelly. According to *Le Monde* of 29 August, page 3, under the title “Two IRA members arrested in Orly”, Donaldson and Kelly were arrested at the airport for using false passports. The next day’s edition clarifies that they are actually members of Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Irish republican movement and that they will be tried by the Créteil court.

We in Latin America knew of this; the OCI (u) in France was not? Impossible: Favre is lying, he is pretending he does not know the existence of the Irish republican prisoners in France to win an argument; such is the typically petty-bourgeois method he employs in a discussion of vital importance to the future of world Trotskyism.

The OCI (u) campaigns for the prisoners in Ireland but refuses to do it for the prisoners in France to avoid friction with the Mitterrand government. Let it be borne in mind by the heroic fighters for the independence of Ireland: the OCI (u) defends them against British imperialism, not against their great ally, French imperialism. This shows their entire campaign of solidarity with the hunger strikers is nothing more than hollow phraseology.

3. Mitterrand is part of the world counter-revolutionary apparatus

We think it unnecessary to reiterate the role of the Mitterrand government as a faithful servant of the interests of the French imperialist bourgeoisie, and as an integral part of the counter-revolutionary apparatus led by Yankee imperialism. A role that was recognised by Reagan when he stated to the *New York Times* (23 July 1981) after the summit conference of the seven imperialist powers in Ottawa:

“Mitterrand broke the ice in Ottawa. While we were having lunch, he said France will absolutely respect all its commitments with the Atlantic Alliance. His statements against the Soviet threat could have been made by me or by any of us.”

Our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* denounced the events that led Reagan to make such a statement and to invite Mitterrand to a state visit shortly before the North-South Conference in Cancun.

We also denounced the OCI (u) for not conducting a campaign against the Mitterrand government: for its role in Ottawa, for its arms plans and, on the other hand, for keeping French troops in Africa. Now we are forced to reaffirm these accusations.

A. The OCI (u) does not attack French imperialism

Our letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI was based mainly on the reading of *Informations Ouvrières*, since until then, we had not had time to make an exhaustive study of the *Draft Political Report* and other documents. Now, that study done, we must affirm: in all the document that will set the general policy of the OCI (u) until its next congress, the term French imperialism never appears; therefore, the OCI (u) does not have the policy to fight it.

There is only an isolated mention in the “Declaration of the CC” in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1030: “The PCI (name the OCI (u) will take after the next Congress) will fight for the right of the oppressed peoples to dispose of themselves, in particular of those who are oppressed by French Imperialism.”

It’s a quite stingy mention, to say the least. In addition, it is not accompanied by any slogan, not to mention a program, faced with specific issues such as the presence of French troops in Africa: the list of slogans does not have a single one about it.

A person who was completely unaware of the facts and wanted to find out through *Informations Ouvrières* would not know the French bourgeoisie and government are imperialists, unless they had the good fortune of tripping over the three lines mentioned above, or with an article in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1029 on the recent visit of Mitterrand to Algeria. Reading this last one, he would find out, for example, that “the links between French imperialism and Algeria are very old”, but not what these links consist of, nor how Mitterrand seeks to strengthen them, nor what the revolutionaries must do to break them.

Nor would he know that French multinational Pechiney Ugine Kuhlman owns the bauxite deposits in Cameroon and deposits of lead, tin, cobalt, and manganese in Zaire and Gabon. Nor that the government of Mitterrand maintains special army corps (the so-called “paras”) there to “protect our citizens if they are threatened or bothered” (as the defence minister said in an interview), that is, to defend PUK’s installations if the people of Cameroon, Zaire or Gabon resolve to recover their natural wealth.

In the *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, we quoted a communiqué from the Armed Group for the Liberation of Guadeloupe that says: “The French government (...) adopts regarding its own colonies backward attitudes, for which they will be accountable to history.”

We add that the OCI (u) will be on the same bench as accomplices.

B. OCI (u) lies about its policy

Our accusations to the OCI (u) included failing to denounce the role of Mitterrand as a firm ally of Reagan and a key element of the counter-revolutionary plan; it did not denounce, for example, Mitterrand's role in the summit conference in Ottawa.

This affirmation of ours deserved the following indignant response by Francois Forgue in his article in *Correspondencia Internacional* No 13:

“What to say on ‘nothing is said’ about what the government does in Ottawa: whoever follows, however little, the policy of the OCI (u), knows that not only *Informations Ouvrières* devoted an international editorial to this question, but that its leadership collaborated in the elaboration of an article on the same subject for *Correspondencia Internacional*.”

We are not interested in what the OCI (u) leadership writes for *Correspondencia Internacional*, an international theoretical and informative magazine, but what appears in *Informations Ouvrières*, the press organ that reflects its official policy. Anyone who follows the OCI's policy through *Informations Ouvrières*, as we did, will know that Forgue is lying: there is not a single national or international editorial in *Informations Ouvrières*, nor a single article dedicated to the Ottawa conference, nor it is even mentioned it.

Again, as in the case of the IRA, a conscious lie is used to confuse the unsuspecting reader or reader who does not have access to the OCI (u) press in order to win a discussion.

C. An editorial in six months

In *Informations Ouvrières* No 1024 (which appeared a month after Forgue's article) there is an international editorial on the North-South conference in Cancun, the only thing we have seen in *Informations Ouvrières* on the matter. There it is said, by contrasting the statements of Reagan and Mitterrand:

“But as much in a case as in the other, it is about maintaining and defending the imperialist system and keeping in their positions the purchasing governments that rule in most of the economically backward countries because of their exploitation by imperialism.” And the editorial concludes:

“We must end with imperialism, the capital, and all the exploiting classes and layers and their governments. The only way is socialism. In any case, it is intolerable that a government brought to power by the popular masses against Giscard, take charge of the imperialist policy of the latter.”

When it says “we must end with imperialism (...) and their governments”, is the Mitterrand government included? If so, why does the organ of French party not say it clearly? For example: “The Mitterrand government is a key piece in the imperialist structure that exploits the backward countries, as shown by its entire policy, and its participation in Ottawa and Cancun. The French workers must fight against this government. The most elementary class solidarity with our African brothers demands we fight for the withdrawal of the French troops from Africa, for the expropriation of the multinationals and the return of their natural wealth to the peoples of Cameroon, Zaire, Gabon, Morocco, Algeria, etc.”

None of this: the only international editorial in six months, dedicated to French imperialism, is limited to saying that it is “intolerable” that Mitterrand applies the policy of Giscard, without adding that besides being intolerable is logical since it is a bourgeois government.

Let's say to conclude this gives a new dimension to Francois Forgue's lie. This editorial we commented on not only had not appeared when Forgue wrote his article, but it is the only one in six months. Who can believe the OCI (u) is campaigning to denounce the counter-revolutionary role of Mitterrand internationally?

4. Union policy of the OCI (U) for the workers' movement

We have seen in our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* what is, broadly speaking, the trade union policy of the OCI (u), and fundamentally that it does not have a policy of constant and systematic denunciation of the betrayals of the trade union bureaucracy. Quite the contrary, as we showed in the platform of Orly case, the OCI adopts the proposals of the treacherous leaderships. That is, it does not act as a revolutionary party, which complies with a decision it considers wrong but at the same time denounces it.

We do not want to repeat those arguments here, but rather to go into two aspects we only saw in passing in the aforementioned letter: union apoliticism and the lack of slogans for the unity of the workers' movement.

A. Apoliticism: bourgeois politics

The militancy of Trotskyists in the unions has a very precise meaning. We go to these mass organisations to raise our revolutionary program and win the proletarian vanguard for it, that is, for our party. Of course, we adapt our formulations in a way understandable to all workers, even the most backward. In each guild, we formulate a specific political program with slogans for action.

The orientation of not doing politics in the unions plays into the hands of the yellow trade unionism and the bureaucracy, which seeks that the trade union organisations leave the activity in the hands of the parties separated from the masses.

The political slogans shine by their absence in the union articles of *Informations Ouvrières* in the present stage. It is very shocking the contrast with the newspaper before 10 May 1981. Then, the OCI (u) carried out a political campaign in the workers' movement for the election of Mitterrand. There was almost no trade union article in *Informations Ouvrières* that did not end with the political slogans of the party: "Out with Giscard"; "Down with the Fifth Republic"; "Vote for Mitterrand and a PS-PCF majority", etcetera. This gave a political perspective to the workers' demands.

This is now missing in *Informations Ouvrières*. Moreover, as we pointed out in our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, the UNEF leadership explicitly opposed the newly created secondary school union voting a political position to vote for Mitterrand in the elections.

Let's see what our teachers said about it. The Third International approved in its Fourth Congress a "Theses on Communist Work in the Trade Unions". One of them is dedicated precisely to the problem of trade union neutralism:

"The influence of the bourgeoisie on the proletariat is reflected in the theory of the neutrality of the trade-union movement. The implication of this theory is that the trade unions should restrict themselves to purely craft and economic matters, and should not try to put forward any general class aims. Neutrality has always been a bourgeois theory, and revolutionary Marxism has resolutely opposed it. Trade unions which have no general class aims, i.e., aims directed at the overthrow of the capitalist system, are, despite their proletarian composition, the best defenders of the bourgeois order and bourgeois society." ("Theses on Communist Work in the Trade Unions", www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/4th-congress/trade-unions.htm.)

Keep in mind that this programmatic thesis was designed to arm the Communists, a minority current at that time, in the struggle against the reformist current in the unions. This is precisely the situation of the OCI (u). It is trying to gain strength in the trade union movement by hiding its political program, capitulating in this way to "the best defenders of the bourgeois order and bourgeois society".

B. Trade union unity

The aforementioned thesis of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International holds: "The interests of the bourgeoisie require a split in the trade-union movement." (Ibid.) And a little further on: "In countries which have two parallel trade-union organisations (Spain, France, Czechoslovakia, etc.), Communists must begin a systematic fight for their unification. (...)

"In countries where there are two trade union federations (Spain France, Czechoslovakia, etc.) communists must fight for the fusion of the dual organisations. (...) The preservation, as well as the restoration, of trade-union unity, is possible only if the Communists have a practical action programme that can be applied in each individual country and in every branch of production." (Ibid.)

In France, the trade union movement is divided into several confederations: CGT, CFDT, CGT-FO, etc. The OCI (u) has shown that the Fifth Republic remains standing and its agony is prolonged by the absence of a unified action that causes its final collapse.

That being the case, why does it not propose union unity, the affiliation of all workers to unions by industrial branch and the organisation of a single confederation? This should be a campaign of permanent agitation in the workers' movement. If unity is a claim so felt by the French workers, what rank and file worker (not an apparatus bureaucrat) would be against this proposal? The orientation of the OCI (u), of not demanding union unity, plays into the hands of the bourgeoisie and the apparatuses in their eagerness to maintain the division of the workers' movement.

5. Union policy of the OCI (U) for the student movement

Our letter to the POSI devoted a chapter to the OCI (u) policy for the student movement, the policy applied through the UNEF Independent and Democratic union. Let us recall this body is led jointly by socialist militants and the OCI (u). Its president, Jean-Cristophe Cambadélis, is a member of the Central Committee of the OCI (u).

We said the UNEF, called Independent and Democratic to differentiate from the Stalinists of *Renouveau* [Renewal], considers its role is to "inform the authorities of all claims and aspirations of the students" (*Informations Ouvrières* No 1000), in response to Prime Minister Mauroy's announcement the government's policy for universities would result from "concertation and negotiation" with the student movement.

This policy of the UNEF has been emphasised to a monstrous degree, as evidenced by a statement from the student union published in *Informations Ouvrières* No 1025, which states:

"The Independent and Democratic UNEF and the Federation of National Education (FEN, university lecturers union, led by socialists) have studied the situation of the university and congratulate themselves for:

- "1) The definitive repeal of the Sauvage Law resolved on 2 October (by the parliament);
- "2) The decision of the government to present in November 1982 a report for a new university policy."

Thus, besides merely informing the authorities and agreeing with the government on solutions to student problems, the UNEF, under the leadership of the OCI (u), congratulates the government for the announcement that, within a year, it will publish a report on the university situation. The OCI has reached such abjection that not only the "progressive" measures taken by the government are supported, but it anticipates its future measures will also be "progressive".

Our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* qualified the OCI policy (u) in the student area of "opportunist". Given these new facts, we cannot less than change our appreciation; it is a policy of direct and conscious betrayal of the student movement.

This policy obeys, as we have discovered later, very deep reasons. We must say we already suspected those reasons, but now they are confirmed by certain data that have been made public.

A. Favre replies to Nahuel Moreno

First of all, let's see a partial reply the OCI (u) has given to the criticisms made in the *Letter*. The author of the reply is the ineffable Luis Favre, in his speech to the plenary of the Angolan parties. He did not deign to respond to our central argument, that the UEF had become a transmission belt of the bourgeois government in the student body. He limited himself to replying to the policy of "concertation and negotiation" of the UNEF, and in the meantime, he grossly misrepresented our position.

Favre begins by clarifying, with a pedantry totally out of place in a serious discussion among Trotskyists, that he read "a little book that is neither Lenin's, nor Mao's, nor Engels's, nor Trotsky's, I took a little book that in my country is called dictionary, which is for those who have difficulty knowing the meaning of a word. Concertation means to discuss, negotiate."

And it concludes in an ironic tone: "It turns out that the Mitterrand government, it's not our fault, opened negotiations with the student union, and the student unions said: 'Repeal of the orientation law'. Are the comrades against the unions negotiating with the government and the employers? That's absurd!"

We are going to recommend to this champion of "common sense" to put aside the dictionary and dedicate himself to read a little of Lenin, Marx, Engels, and Trotsky. He will discover that, indeed, our teachers do not oppose "concertation" (as synonymous with negotiation) of the unions with the employers and the government ("with the devil and his grandmother", according to Trotsky's well-known phrase). But, against the corrupt union bureaucracy, transmission belt of the bosses' interests, they are adamantly opposed to making negotiation/concertation the axis of the union's activity, as it is for the UNEF, the OCI (u), and Favre.

The task of the union is to mobilise its members for their demands. In the case of the student movement, for greater university budget, better facilities, jobs for graduates according to their level of training, and so on. The negotiation/concertation is a tactic within this central task, a tactic that depends on the relationship of forces.

For example: suppose that the student movement is mobilising for an increase in the university budget. If the students are strong, if they have the solidarity of the workers' movement and are in a position to carry out a real struggle, we will propose radical measures such as university occupation, demonstrations, etc., and we will negotiate the end of the struggle in exchange for the satisfaction of that claim. But since we are Trotskyists, we will link the "economic" claim to transitional slogans: for example, control of the university and the budget by the unions of the students, the lecturers, and of the University workers.

If on the contrary, the students are fighting alone, the workers' movement is ebbing, and so on, our measures of struggle must adapt to this situation and be limited to petitions, open letters, and suchlike. We could possibly negotiate the cessation of the struggle in exchange for no expelled students, leaving the claim of the budget for a more favourable moment.

Finally, if the government is so strong that it imposes "normality" in the classrooms granting no claim, then we will dedicate ourselves to patiently prepare future struggles for when a more favourable relationship of forces arises.

The UNEF and the OCI (u) argue the opposite; it is enough for the government to receive the union's delegates and tell them 'We will take your demands into account' for the UNEF to congratulate it publicly for its attitude.

In short, for the union bureaucracy and the UNF, the axis of the union's activity is "concertation" with the counter-revolutionary imperialist government of Mitterrand. In the language of the dictionary, so dear to Favre, this means "negotiate". In the Marxist language, it means delivering the student movement tied hands and feet to the bourgeois government.

For the Trotskyists, the axis of the activity is to mobilise the students against the government, and to negotiate with them as and when the relationship of forces imposes it on us.

B. The true reasons behind a policy

When studying the politics of the UNEF and the OCI (u) for the student movement, we wondered with astonishment the profound reasons for it. Did they truly believe in the revolutionary virtues of the Mitterrand government? No; the real reasons came to light shortly after our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI* was sent.

In *UNEF Inform* (organ of the student union) of 7 October, there is a letter from Minister of National Education Alain Savary, dated 30 September, which states:

"It is necessary (...) to recognise the representativeness of the student organisations and provide them with the means to assume that representativeness in the best conditions of democratic life. It is to this need that responded the search, particularly difficult, of the supplementary financial means that will be delivered constantly to the associations in the form of grants."

And *Le Monde* of 10 December reports that UNEF Independent and Democratic is receiving an annual subsidy of 200,000 francs, or US\$35,000 at the current exchange rate.

Thirty-five thousand dollars besides the "supplementary financial means" that will be delivered "constantly" to the... UNEF, this is the true cause of the putrefying policy of "concertation"!

We already know the bourgeoisie has two alternative policies against the trade union organisations: destroy them, and when it is not possible, corrupt their leaders with money and perks.

Cambadélis, a member of the CC of the OCI (u) and president of UNEF, has become one more member of the brotherhood of traitors such as Maire, Bergeron, and Seguy. He is not an opportunist, or he is secondarily. He is a traitor, a corrupt bureaucrat who has sold the student movement to the bourgeoisie in exchange for 35,000 dollars plus the "supplementary financial means".

From now on, the French Trotskyists have a campaign in the student movement: "Out with Judas Cambadélis from the UNEF leadership!"

Final note: When we were putting the finishing touches to this document, we received the French version of our *Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI*, published in the *Bulletin Intérieur d'Information et de Discussion International*, together with a response from Francois Forgeue.

We have not yet been able to read Forgeue's response to our letter, but we must note the following: our letter to the POSI is dated 13 October. The "general council" convened by the OCI (u) met in November. This bulletin with the French version of our letter is dated 20 December. The Congress of the OCI (u) is convened for 26 December.

This means the members of this so-called "general council" did not know our letter, and the delegates to the OCI (u) congress knew it only six days in advance. On the other hand, they did know, a month in advance, the partial criticisms of our letter.

This is how the leadership of the OCI (u) discusses. §

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