

Nahuel Moreno

*Lora renounces
Trotskyism*



Nahuel Moreno

Lora renounces Trotskyism

1972

(Taken from *Revista de America* #8/9, May-August 1972)

t

English translation: Daniel Iglesias

Cover and interior design: Daniel Iglesias

www.nahuelmoreno.org

www.uit-ci.org

www.izquierdasocialista.org.ar

Copyright by *CEHUS*, Centro de Estudios Humanos y Sociales

Buenos Aires, 2018

cehus2014@gmail.com



Index

Foreword 2018.....1

Lora renounces Trotskyism 2

Lora and <i>Politica Obrera</i> currently fight to “take power and build socialism” in close union with the nationalist bourgeoisie	2
The politics of Lenin and Lora are antagonistic.....	3
Lora vows to march together with Lechín in the union movement.....	4
The principles of picturesque Altamira.....	4
If the policy of Lora and <i>Politica Obrera</i> is correct, be consistent and apply it in Brazil	6
Lora rejects the Trotskyist characterisation of the Bolivian leftist parties	6
Lora confuses bourgeois and petty-bourgeois despair with revolutionary positions.....	7
Lora and Altamira: champions of Pabloism.....	8
Is the Front the Revolutionary Party?	9
Is the FRA the continuation of the Popular Assembly?	9
The Anti-imperialist Front according to Lenin and according to Lora.....	10
Lora and <i>Politica Obrera</i> consciously hide the Front’s strategy.....	12
A weird fascism	12
To build the Trotskyist Party within the mass movement.....	13

Foreword 2018

In Bolivia, a revolutionary workers' and peasants' uprising developed from 1969-70, which led to the emergence of the Popular Assembly in 1970. The military coup attempts of Miranda first and Hugo Banzer later were defeated with the mobilization. Finally, in August 1971, Banzer's second military coup was victorious, establishing a bloody dictatorship. A few months later, from exile in Chile, various political organizations formed the FRA (Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Front).

Revista de America No. 8/9, of May-August 1972, published a letter by Nahuel Moreno arguing with the policy of Bolivian Guillermo Lora and Argentine Jorge Altamira of supporting FRA, which we reproduce in its entirety. In the same edition, the FRA manifesto of November 1971, called "Let's crush the fascist dictatorship and forge the people's government", was published in its entirety.

In www.nahuelmoreno.org the reader can also find Moreno's writings that develop the polemic with the followers of opportunism and the guerrilla deviation of Mandelism, the POR (Combat), which also integrated the FRA. See *Argentina and Bolivia— a Balance Sheet*, chapter II, "The lessons of Bolivia" and also *The Party and the Revolution*, chapter I, "Bolivia, key to the current discussion".

The Editors

September 2018

Lora renounces Trotskyism

Buenos Aires

1 July 1972

Dear comrade,

Your stay among us, as well as our principled agreement about the need to defend, come what may, orthodox Trotskyist principles, knotted a relationship that allows me to send you this open letter.

I would not have done it, nor would I meddle in the arduous problems you face in the process of unification with the “Faction”, if I did not believe those principles, and the Transitional Program, are in danger of being abandoned by some of the comrades and possibly by your organisation as a whole.

In the Latin American Conference sponsored by the Lorists,¹ *Politica Obrera*² [Workers’ Politics], and the Lambertists³ (which unfortunately could not count with Lora’s presence since he, respectful of the Chilean right of asylum and with very good criterion, abstained from all political participation), your delegate played the sad role of caboose of the Lora-*Politica Obrera* faction in favour of the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Front (FRA) and of Lora’s participation in it. The Lambertists, it is fair to admit, defended against Lora and *Politica Obrera* the most elemental revolutionary Marxist principles.

Lora and *Politica Obrera* currently fight to “take power and build socialism” in close union with the nationalist bourgeoisie

The history of Lora’s POR [Revolutionary Workers’ Party] and of *Politica Obrera* is a long list of more or less concealed betrayals to Trotskyism. In this conference, they openly and bluntly

-
- ¹ **Guillermo Lora** (1922-2009) was one of the founders and the main leaders of the POR and later on POR (Masas). He was the most important Latin American leader of a Trotskyist sector that in the 1960s and 1970s was led by Englishman Gerry Healy and Frenchman Pierre Lambert. They had sectarian positions and split with the International Committee headed by the American SWP that fought the opportunistic revisionism of Mandelism. Healy, Lambert, and Lora (and also Altamira and *Politica Obrera*), for example, rejected the triumph of socialist Cuba and defined Fidel Castro as “another Chiang Kai-shek”. They split for differences about Bolivia. Healy accused Lora of having betrayed the Trotskyist principles for his policy in the face of the Bolivian Popular Assembly. Lambert did not approve of Lora’s participation in the FRA although he supported his participation in the Popular Assembly. [Note updated in 2018.]
 - ² ***Política Obrera***, an Argentine Trotskyist organisation that since 1983 is called *Partido Obrero* (Workers’ Party). Jorge Altamira is its main leader. In the 1970s, they joined the current of Healy, Lambert, and Lora. In the mentioned controversy they completely supported Lora and FRA. Years later, in the 1980s, Lora and Altamira broke with each other. [Note updated in 2018.]
 - ³ **Lambertists**: followers of French leader Pierre Lambert when he distanced himself first from Lora and later from Healy. The main organization was the OCI of France, and they had related groups in several Latin American countries, such as Brazil, Peru and Venezuela. [Note updated in 2018.]

abandoned the Trotskyist program and principles. Our concern is that some of you follow the policy of your delegate, capitulator of capitulators. I will stop giving adjectives to go directly to the point.

Lora and *Politica Obrera* are currently fighting to “take power and build socialism” in close union with the nationalist bourgeoisie.

In his latest book, entitled “Bolivia: from the Popular Assembly to the Fascist Coup”, published in April 1972, Lora states categorically that the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Front (FRA), of which the POR (Masas) is part, has been organised “for the seizure of power”, according to its foundation charter. In another part of the book he develops this concept further: “It is easy to conclude that the Popular Assembly is strategically projected in the **FRA which is certainly not an occasional front but a front to seize power and build socialism**, in which the highest political maturity of the masses and particularly of the proletariat matters.” (Our highlighting as long as it is not indicated otherwise.)

Not to say who are part and sign the letter of the FRA, Lora made a crude manoeuvre: he published in a special edition of his newspaper, *Masas*, the manifesto of the Front, but suppressing the signature of two of its members, POR (Combate) and General Torres. Chilean Stalinism was more honest than Lora. According to its official organ, *El Siglo* of 14 November 1971, “this manifesto is signed: Revolutionary Armed Forces (Major Ruben Sanchez Valdivia); Communist Party of Bolivia; National Left Revolutionary Party (PRIN); *Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Masas)*; *Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Combate)*; Movement of the Revolutionary Left; Communist Party of Bolivia (Marxist Leninist); National Liberation Army; Socialist Party of Bolivia; General Juan Jose Torres Gonzalez, former president of Bolivia.”

There is no manoeuvre possible here: Lora, with the blessing of *Politica Obrera*, has made a front with General Torres and his lieutenant, Major Sanchez Valdivia, “to seize power and **build socialism**”. It is not, as Lora himself acknowledges, an “occasional front”, but a front that is projected at least for several decades, perhaps a century or two, to “build socialism”. General Torres and the other members project it for much less time: “to take power”. I insist, comrade, Lora thinks “to take power and build socialism” not only with General Torres but also with the Stalinist and Maoist communist parties, with the bureaucrat Lechín (maximum leader of the PRIN), with the left Christian democracy (MIR), and with the reformists of the Socialist Party.

The politics of Lenin and Lora are antagonistic

The oral argument, a speciality of this international of united charlatans formed by the ineffable Lora and Altamira, is simple: “Did not Lenin and Trotsky propose the seizure of power by the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries for much of the year 1917?” “Were not the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries the grandparents of the Bolivian Communist parties, of Lechín, and of the Socialists?” The conclusion is only one: “Lora and Altamira, like Lenin and Trotsky, support the opportunists and force them to break with the bourgeoisie, ‘take power and build socialism’.”

The least we can ask of these modern “Lenins and Trotskys” is to leave the memories and quotes of Lenin and Trotsky alone: Go ahead! Do whatever you want, keep betraying the Bolivian masses and Marxism, but please leave Marxism, Leninism, and Trotskyism alone.

Between the politics of Lenin and that of Lora, there is a clear, sharp dividing line. Lora has made a front **to go together** with General Torres, the Communist Party, Lechín, etc., to “power and build socialism”. Lenin posed the seizure of power to the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries **to better unmask them before the masses, not to accompany them in power, much less to “build socialism”**.

Trotsky characterised Lenin’s policy thus: “From April to September 1917, the Bolsheviks demanded that the SRs and Mensheviks break with the liberal bourgeoisie and take power into their own hands. Under this provision the Bolshevik Party promised the Mensheviks and the SRs,

as the petty-bourgeois representatives of the workers and peasants, its revolutionary aid against the bourgeoisie; **categorically refusing, however, either to enter into the government of the Mensheviks and SRs or to carry political responsibility for it.**" (Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 93-94.)

Lora vows to march together with Lechín in the union movement

The entire world revolutionary movement knows the trajectory of Lechín, the top bureaucrat of the Bolivian workers' movement. Friend and defender of Chiang Kai-shek, he visited Formosa invited by him when he was still in charge of the Bolivian Workers' Centre (COB). No revolutionist will refuse to do so while Lechín has some predicament in the Bolivian workers' movement, to reach precise and detailed agreements to promote some measure of concrete struggle with him or with anyone. The fundamental condition for reaching these agreements is that, more than ever, we denounce the role of Lechín in the mass movement. We must never lose sight of the fact that our obligation is to educate the working class and its vanguard about the true role of this sinister bureaucrat, who in the service of the bourgeoisie and imperialism surrenders the struggles of the Bolivian proletariat.

Lora goes way beyond this possible circumstantial agreement. The FRA resolution "regarding work in the trade union, popular, and student organisations", commits Lora to comply with the following: "3) FRA will act as a **unitary entity** on all fronts of social life (unions, universities, schools, popular organisations, etc.). The Front will present single slates in all kinds of electoral acts, after discussing them widely in its midst." (Official organ of FRA, March 1972). This quote does not need further comments: Lora will be in common slates not only with Lechín but also with the communist and socialist parties, the Christian Democrats and anyone, in the unions, universities, etc. He renounces, thus, until "power is seized and socialism is built" to differentiate himself from Lechín and his followers before the mass movement since he will present to them with the same program and in the same slate.

The principles of picturesque Altamira

Altamira, the highest leader of *Política Obrera*, is a "born man of principles". He opens his mouth and a principle comes out. For years, our party has proposed to *Política Obrera* the need to agree on a common minimum policy in the face of the workers' movement and the bureaucratic leaderships. The response of *Política Obrera* has been cutting: it has demanded four points to reach this agreement or revolutionary front. The most interesting thing is that one of those points to reach an agreement was against all kinds of agreement. Let's recall it: "3) **No agreement but ideological struggle** with the currents existing in the workers' movement."

In another of the points, specifically the second, we were required to criticise ourselves for the critical support we gave Vandor,⁴ the Argentinian Lechín, when he broke with Peron because the workers' movement had to give its own policy and not accept orders from anyone alien to it. While criticising us for critically supporting Vandor when he broke with Peron, *Política Obrera* uncritically supported the bourgeois Peronist candidates, launching the slogan of supporting these candidates in the elections.⁵

4 **Augusto Timoteo Vandor** (1923-1969) was a bureaucrat Secretary General of the Metal Workers' Union (UOM). In the mid-1960s, he tried to do a "Peronism without Peron" that was quickly dismantled by Peron himself. [Editor's note, 2018.]

5 In the elections of early 1965, almost all the revolutionary currents put forward the blank vote to accelerate the crisis of Peronism that had ordered to vote for the candidates of the bourgeois Peronist far right, the Popular Union. We say almost all of them because *Política Obrera* unconditionally supported Peron's order to vote for the Popular Union and the bourgeois candidates, although they criticised Peron and the bureaucracy in their press. The following quote has been taken from the newspaper *Política Obrera*: "We do not expect to forge through a massive vote to Peronism a rise of the proletariat, or a substantial modification in the correlation of forces; we expect, yes, to avoid an electoral

And as if supporting the bourgeois nationalist candidates of Peron unconditionally was not enough, years later, this little known sect until then, came to occupy the attention of the Latin American revolutionary movement: *Granma*, the official organ of the Cuban Communist Party denounced in an editorial that *Política Obrera* had reached a secret agreement for a sociological investigation with... the Ford Foundation! The Argentine student movement had waged a fierce struggle against the investigations sponsored by imperialist foundations, denouncing them correctly as a manoeuvre by the State Department and the Yankee Pentagon. *Política Obrera* authorised one of its top leaders to agree with the Ford Foundation on a sociological investigation. The nature of the questions of the survey and its sponsor made Argentine leftist and anti-imperialist intellectuals suspect it was an investigation at the service of the CIA. ⁶

It was then we really understood what Altamira meant by “no agreement... with the existing currents in the workers’ movement”. We had been stupid: we had not taken his words literally. Altamira had told the truth of all his present and future politics. No agreements with tendencies of the workers’ movement; all kinds of agreements with the national bourgeoisie (support for bourgeois Peronist candidates) and with imperialism (research with Ford).

detachment of the class to help the modification of the correlation of forces. Because the embryonic initiation of a raising phase can only be conceived as a struggle against the main enemy: imperialism and the government. (...) The fact the fight against the government and imperialism, which are the main enemies, has the poor alternative of using on 14 March the ballot of the Popular Union does not prove the position is not correct but that the general situation is narrow. (...) and only for all this, to use the limited margin of struggle we must give to the bourgeoisie and imperialism, we can justify the electoral support for the Popular Union. (...) The reasons that lead to postulate a proletarian regrouping on 14 March against the government, voting for the UP, are based on the need to avoid electoral dispersion of the class and, eventually, to get a victory, which although, on the one hand, it means, formally, Peronist bourgeois deputies, on the other, it can help to modify the current correlation of forces.” (Our emphasis.)
NM

- 6 The following quotes have been taken from the brochure Research on marginality: a case of sociological espionage, Editorial La Verdad, 1969.

Del *Granma*, organ of the Cuban CP, 23 March 1969: The news we will analyse today refers to a survey carried out at present in Argentina by the Ford Foundation of the USA and which has been commented by the Uruguayan magazine Marcha. This news aims once again to face at present the activities carried out for counter-revolutionary purposes by this organisation in Latin America.

“This time, it is a survey among the workers and poor peasants of the Chaco region, an area in which their poverty confers explosive social characteristics.

“The Ford Foundation, with its agents and different sociologists under its contract, has circulated a practically police questionnaire in the area, the text of which has been published in the Uruguayan weekly. The questions address problems related to their political preferences and their opinions on acts of violence motivated by misery. The results of this survey will be disaggregated in American territory and this is how the real work will begin at that moment, which will end with the sending of strategic information to the US government. This kind of activity (is) known under the name of ‘sociological espionage’...”

On 11 December 1963, the Executive Committee of the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (La Verdad)* sent a reserved letter to the leadership and ranks of *Política Obrera*, proposing that “M, a senior *Política Obrera* leader, who had participated in the survey, be tried for having committed a serious error and not for treason against the workers’ movement.” For this purpose we proposed the formation of a revolutionary tribunal with the following characteristics: “We propose this tribunal be set up as follows: your organisation and ours will hand out lists with the names of 30 worker militants belonging to the respective organisations; these comrades must have at least three years of union experience and not be proletarianised. Twenty comrades will be chosen from our list and from your list 21 (for the tie-breaking vote) with which will be made up the tribunal to judge M. Both organisations will allow the members of the court to break with party discipline to pronounce themselves regarding M’s behaviour. We insist and demand: let us form a tribunal of revolutionary honour to judge M since you defend him unconditionally.”

In its reply, dated 15 December 1969, the Directorate of *Política Obrera* emphasised two axes, fundamentally: that it was not a police poll but rather the opposite, to be used by revolutionary and anti-imperialist organisations and second, the participation of M in it was vindicated.

The fundamental point of the defence was: if an intellectual such as Isaac Deutscher can accept a Ford subsidy, or a workers’ state like Cuba supports the investigations carried out by a leftist sociologist in the US, why a militant of a revolutionary organisation in a colonial country cannot work on an investigation with the characteristics pointed out by the editorial of the Cuban leadership? On the other hand, the Ford Foundation would not know the results of the survey, even though it was Ford that subsidised it. This gave the research an exceptional character.

The proposal to constitute the revolutionary court with a majority of militants of the organisation questioned was not accepted by *Política Obrera* or by Altamira. NM

This is the profound reason Altamira now supports unity for life, rather than an agreement, with the Vandor variety of the Bolivian proletariat, Juan Lechín. The secret is that General Torres, his bourgeois representative, and Christian Democracy, a petty-bourgeois group, enter. Thus, they comply with their principle number three: that any agreement with the national bourgeoisie, imperialism, and non-workers sectors is licit, not so with workers sectors. Altamira is not to blame that Lechín comes for free in the agreement with the Bolivian bourgeoisie.

If the policy of Lora and *Política Obrera* is correct, be consistent and apply it in Brazil

In Latin America, the country that is going through a situation more similar to that of Bolivia is your country. Like or worse than Bolivia, the Brazilian people endure an ultra-repressive dictatorship. All the organisations of the left and nationalist bourgeois and petty-bourgeois tendencies are persecuted without mercy. Why do those who agree with Lora not raise an Anti-imperialist Revolutionary Front with Goulart, Brizola, Prestes,⁷ *Vanguardia Popular*, and the guerrilla organisations, together with the union bureaucracy of the Unified Workers' Central (CUT) "for the seizure of power and the construction of socialism"? That would be the political consequence of the agreement with Lora and *Política Obrera*.

We are sure the Brazilian Trotskyist comrades have sufficient revolutionary dignity and faith in orthodox Trotskyist principles, so as not to form a front "for the seizure of power and the construction of socialism" with such parties and characters.

To enter such an agreement would be the same as entering the same fronts and agreements that Stalin formed with Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang, in which the Communist International (Lenin was dead and Trotsky in the Opposition) guaranteed to the mass movement that Chiang was a good revolutionary.

The Brazilian Orthodox Trotskyist comrades will make limited, temporary agreements for a specific and immediate action when and with whomever it is necessary, but, as our program and traditions demand, provided we unmask the bourgeois and opportunist leaders with whom we conceive the agreement. We will never sign an agreement with Prestes "for the seizure of power and the construction of socialism" **because we know this is one more lie from Prestes to better deceive the masses.**

Lora rejects the Trotskyist characterisation of the Bolivian leftist parties

The Marxist-Trotskyist policy is principled, scientific. It is based on class characterisations and dynamics of the phenomena. It does not make an exception with the parties that claim to be of the working class. It also makes a class characterisation of them, before any agreement and as the best way to reach or discard these agreements.

For Trotskyism, the Stalinist and Maoist parties are reformist and bureaucratised workers' parties, at the service of the Kremlin and Peking policies, respectively. In turn, for Trotskyism, the different wings of the officialdom of Latin American armies and their leaders reflect sectors of the national bourgeoisie or of the petty-bourgeoisie, including those of the left, in the best of cases. General Torres is no exception. We have made a precise definition of Christian Democracy: it reflects the petty-bourgeoisie. From this characterisation, we do not draw the conclusion these organisations or currents have a counter-revolutionary position at all times. On the contrary, we study its contradictions and changes, to use its turns in favour of agreements for action against

⁷ **João Goulart** (1918–1976) was a centre left Brazilian politician who assumed the presidency after the resignation of Jânio Quadros. He was deposed by the bloody military coup of 1 April 1964 that resulted in the dictatorship of Castello Branco. **Leonel de Moura Brizola** (1922–2004) was governor of Rio Grande do Sul from 1958 to 1964. He was also deposed by the military coup d'état on 1 April 1964. **Luís Carlos Prestes** (1898–1990) was General Secretary of the Brazilian Communist Party. [Editor's note, 2018.]

imperialism, the oligarchy, and the national bourgeoisie. But these characterisations vaccinate us against the danger of believing the progressive turns of these currents can be permanent because, for deep social reasons, of class, opportunism and revisionism are the constants of these organisations.

On page 147 of the book quoted, Lora changes completely the traditional characterisation of Trotskyism about Stalinism and the national bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, stating they have become “revolutionary”. Thus, he tells us FRA “... is a front of **revolutionary tendencies dominated by Marxism** (among these no one supports the peaceful transformation of the society in which we live)”. Translating this incredible affirmation, it turns out that Torres, Sanchez, the communist and socialist parties, and the Christian Democracy have been transformed into “revolutionary tendencies”. What remains of the Trotskyist characterisations? Absolutely nothing.

There is also, however, a numerical problem. Lora says these revolutionary tendencies are “dominated” on the front “by the Marxists”. As there are nine or eight tendencies, whether we count General Torres or not, we always need five, at least, truly Marxist tendencies to dominate the front. The numerical problem is: what are those five truly Marxist tendencies that control the front? Apparently, it would be the two Communist Parties, the two PORs and the Socialist Party. If not these, Lora has the floor to tell us which are the five front organisations that will guarantee a Marxist leadership.

Lora confuses bourgeois and petty-bourgeois despair with revolutionary positions

What has moved Lora and Altamira, to the degree of baptising as “revolutionary tendencies” from Sanchez to Lechín through the Communist Party, are the small concessions these characters have made in the formulation of the FRA program and in other public statements. We do not believe they have made great concessions but rather very modest ones. The manifesto insists on the “need to build the combat unity of all democratic and progressive revolutionary forces to start the great battle under conditions that offer a real perspective of popular and national power”. This formula, which is theirs, of the petty-bourgeois parties with or without workers’ ranks, is repeated: “FRA is not only the instrument to overthrow the dictatorship but the power itself, with which the people will implant their rights and Bolivia will assert its independent existence.” Up to this point, it is Lora and González⁸ who have made all kinds of theoretical and political concessions in favour of a popular type of government. The great phrase, which has caused tears of emotion in Lora, is: “We propose to implant the government of the Bolivians, under the hegemony of the proletariat, the leading class of the revolutionary process.” This phrase, which the Stalinists around the world have not ceased, on some days of celebration, to proclaim, does not guarantee absolutely anything.

As always, what it is about is to specify the class character of the tendencies that signed the agreement and whether a phrase more or less justifies that we change its characterisation.

All the parties that makeup FRA, with the exception of the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the two PORs, are petty-bourgeois or workers’ bureaucratic parties or tendencies or influenced by the petty-bourgeoisie. ELN is also a petty-bourgeois tendency, like all guerrilla tendencies, but, for us, of a revolutionary nature. It is a petty-bourgeois revolutionary tendency. We do not want to enter into a terminological discussion whether ELN, being petty-bourgeois, may or may not be classified as revolutionary. What we mean, with this terminology that characterises us since the emergence of Castroism, is that we have to make a qualitative differentiation between the petty-bourgeois tendencies that fight for the destruction of the apparatus of repression of the regime, of those that play with the regime.

8 **Hugo González Moscoso** (1922–2010) was the leader of the POR (Combate), a follower of the Pabloite-Mandelist sector after the division of the international, supported the guerrilla deviation approved in the Ninth Congress of 1969. [Editor’s note, 2018.]

For us, the turn of General Torres, as of Lechín and the Communist Parties, to socialist-like, pro-workers and pro-armed struggle formulations obeys a class reason: they are bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, and bureaucratic sectors totally displaced from power, desperate; for this reason they fall into a modest demagogy, which could be much greater, if their obliging allies, Lora and Co., demanded it. General Torres and the Communist Parties did not change. They remain as bourgeois as always the first, as bureaucratic the latter. Circumstances, in this case bureaucratic or bourgeois despair, lead them to make some small verbal concessions to better continue deceiving the masses. Lora, when he defines all these tendencies as “revolutionary” and the majority as “Marxists”, acts as their defence lawyer before the Bolivian mass movement, which must demand a serious accountability.

Lora and Altamira: champions of Pabloism

Our heroes have for years carried out, together with Lambert, a holy crusade against Pablo and Pabloism.⁹ All the evils of Trotskyism are due to Pabloism. Everyone who does not agree with them, even if some are among the first to have fought against Pabloism, like us, is a stubborn Pabloite and deserves Calvary.

But it is not about managing a label; it is about filling it with content. We believe Pabloism existed and still exists in some countries although with a changed name, sometimes even with the name of anti-Pabloite. The essence of the Pabloite position was simple: **the objective situation, combined with our propaganda and pressure, would transform the opportunist organisations into revolutionaries, capable of objectively fighting for the power of the working class.**

The greatest living Pabloites in Latin America, if we stick to this definition of Pabloism, are precisely Lora and Altamira. Let us see some quotes from Lora’s last book, in which it is categorically stated the objective situation transformed the members of the FRA into revolutionary parties or tendencies:

“The great political maturity of the Bolivian revolutionary process is measured by the fact the left concentrated in FRA manages to formulate a unitary approach on the methods to be used in the revolution. (...) It will never be enough to point out the fact that the extreme left has reluctantly submitted to the methods of the proletarian revolution” (page 151, the book already quoted).

“The FRA is a front of political parties that unquestionably are a minority even with respect to the minority working class. This minority command has the mission of getting the masses to stand up and leading them to victory” (p 153, book quoted).

Orthodox Trotskyism grouped together, at the time, precisely to combat formulations like these of Lora here. The *raison d’être* of Trotskyism, as in its time of Bolshevism, is precisely the recognition the objective situation, however revolutionary it may be, does not qualitatively change, nor can it change, the opportunist parties, much less the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois. That is why the revolutionary party must be built because when a revolutionary situation comes, no one, other than the revolutionary party itself, can accomplish its tasks. The opportunist parties will continue being opportunistic parties although they may change, due to the circumstances, their terminology. This is the ABC of Trotskyism. Something that Pablo forgot many years ago and that Lora and Altamira have thrown overboard now.

9 **Pabloism:** Michel Raptis (Pablo) was a Greek resident in France who together with Ernest Mandel took up the reorganisation of Trotskyism in Europe after World War II. From the beginning of the 1950s they drove an opportunist deviation of capitulation to the Stalinist Communist Parties and bourgeois nationalist movements, which led to the division of the Fourth International and the dispersion of the Trotskyist movement. In Latin America, they capitulated to the leaderships of mass nationalist movements (Peronism, MNR in Bolivia, etc.).

Is the Front the Revolutionary Party?

Every political position has a logic that goes beyond the subjective intentions of its protagonists. Old Hegel called this logic “the cunning of reason”. It is possible that many Front participants are not aware that what they have founded is, in fact, a new party. It is the logical conclusion of Lora’s reasoning. If reality has transformed all the integrating tendencies of the front into revolutionary; if most of them are good Marxists; if opportunism has disappeared from Bolivia; if the Communist and Socialist Parties have become revolutionary Marxist; why fall into the stupid sectarianism of keeping organisations independent to face the mass movement?

It was the conclusion drawn, in fact, by the Front itself, if we stick to its official organ of March 1972, whose “resolution regarding work in the trade union, popular and student organisations”, that we have already mentioned, is categorical enough:

“1.- No political party or organisation **shall act against the fundamental line established** in the fundamental and constitutive documents of FRA and which have been subscribed by the representatives of the different entities that integrate it.

“2.- Political parties keep their ideological and organisational independence **but their behaviour is limited by the agreements they have entered into.**

“3.- FRA will act as a **unitary entity in all fronts of social life (unions, universities, schools, popular organisations, etc.). The Front will present single slates in the electoral events of all kinds after discussing them widely in its midst.**

“4.- A trade union-student commission will be in charge of coordinating university union and student work. **The leadership of the FRA is the student-political-union high commission and the political parties and organisations must subordinate themselves to it, in the execution of the line set by the Front.**

“5.- To the university union and student assemblies and of another type, **FRA will carry a previously studied and agreed upon line and it is advisable the official spokespersons be designated in advance.**

“6.- The propaganda spokespersons of FRA must translate their **unitary thinking and not just the partial line of one or some of its components.**”

All the above means simply and plainly that the parties of FRA renounce to go **directly** to the mass movement to become **tendencies**, differentiated nuances of a **great monolithic party, with an iron discipline.** The differences can only be expressed within the Front.

Is the FRA the continuation of the Popular Assembly?

Lora, while pointing out that there are differences, considers he can “assert ... that (FRA) is nothing more than a prolongation of the People’s Assembly” (p 145, book quoted). This concept, reiterated, leads him to title a subchapter “Continuity of the Assembly in FRA” (page 155, book quoted). “In summary: for what is stated below, FRA is nothing more than the projection of the Popular Assembly. There is a strategic continuity: the workers’ government to build socialism. In both organisations, the hegemonic role of the proletariat is clearly established. These two entities make effective the unity of the parties of the Bolivian left and of the majority sectors of the country (unions, universities, etc.) committed to crush the *gorilismo*¹⁰ and give themselves a single leadership in the combat within the only guidelines it can get if we do not want to end in defeat or surrender: the anti-imperialist revolutionary front led by the proletariat” (p 159, book quoted).

To cover up his dirty abandonment of the Trotskyist program, Lora wants us to believe FRA is the continuation of the Popular Assembly. As Lora himself acknowledges, the Popular Assembly was an organism of the Bolivian mass movement, whether or not it had Soviet characteristics, in which

¹⁰ **Gorilismo:** Spanish colloquial expression to designate supporters of the far right.

the trade union and political organisations that claimed to be of the working class and the people took part. It was a mass organisation. For revolutionary Marxists, it is a matter of principles to be active in mass organisations, whatever their circumstantial leadership. Therefore our obligation in Bolivia was to be fully active in the Popular Assembly.

But revolutionaries never confuse mass organisations with their leaderships. We had to enter the Popular Assembly to fight from within the opportunist parties and leaderships: Lechín, the Moscow and Beijing Communist Parties, Christian Democracy, and socialism as the agents of Torres. Lora tells us otherwise, that the leadership and program of the Popular Assembly were revolutionary and this is the reason why FRA is the continuation of the Assembly. Lora here, without wanting to, acknowledges that his current opportunist policy is a continuation of his previous policy of capitulation to the leaders and parties that made up the Popular Assembly.

Lora himself acknowledges that the difference between the Popular Assembly and FRA is in the fact the determining factor in the Assembly was given by the mass organisations, the unions, in opposition to FRA where the unions do not, in fact, play any role. Said in a less sophisticated way: the Assembly was a mass organism; FRA is not, it is limited to being a merger of parties in exile.

Here, too, Lora's policy clashes with Lenin's. After the year 1905, when the Soviets went into decline, Lenin did not call to make a united front with the parties that were part of and directed the Soviet, but on the contrary, he initiated a more intransigent than ever struggle against the other Soviet parties, for their opportunist policy during the 1905 revolution and for the years that followed. This did not prevent him from reaching electoral or organisational agreements with the parties and tendencies he criticised, the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, but never at the price of stopping his principled criticism and building the own Bolshevik party, without confusing the banners.

Both during the Popular Assembly and after the defeat of it, what had to be done, what must be done, is to work fully in the mass organisations, at whatever level they are, to lead an all-out struggle against the two Communist Parties, the ultra-left guerrillaist, the Lechinism, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois variations of General Torres or Christian Democracy, as the only way to build a true Bolshevik party, consequently revolutionary and intimately linked to the mass movement.

The Anti-imperialist Front according to Lenin and according to Lora

“The anti-imperialist front we put into practice has nothing to do with anti-imperialist fronts steered by bourgeois nationalist or petty-bourgeois leaderships and which, in fact, end up subordinating the workers to social classes that are foreign to them”, says Lora. p. 157 of the book quoted. He continues: “For us, the antecedent of the anti-imperialist united front, that is, what we are doing now, is in the first congresses of the Communist International and whose basic documents were written, analysed in the discussions, and defended by Lenin and Trotsky (the programmatic foundations of the Fourth International are made up not only by the Transitional Program but by the theses and resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International).”

For Lora or Altamira to say something and for the reader to have the certainty that the thing is the other way around is a single impression, having been repeated so often. Lenin and Trotsky in all their political life, including their outstanding performance during the first four congresses of the Communist International, never trumpeted or fought for a policy like this one of Lora but precisely for the opposite.

Lora has made a front with all the opportunist parties of Bolivia for life and he says this was what Lenin and Trotsky advised in the first congresses of the Third International. Precisely the line they gave was one of a unity of action with all the parties with mass influence, the reformist workers' parties in the advanced countries (also in the backward countries), and the nationalist parties or movements in the backward countries. This policy in favour of the unity of action with these parties was called the united workers' or anti-imperialist front. **But the condition in all cases of this united**

front should be the most total political independence of the revolutionary Marxist party to denounce and contest the leadership of the mass movement to the opportunist parties. Every front then has two dangers: one, sectarian, not to take part squarely in the actions of the common masses because opportunist organisations (workers' or nationalists) take part in it; another, opportunist, not delimiting ourselves with all clarity, not leading a fierce and uncompromising struggle, without weakening the unity of action, against the opportunist parties that form part of the front to dispute the leadership.

“A resolute struggle must be waged against the attempt to clothe the revolutionary liberation movements in the backward countries which are not genuinely communist in communist colours. The Communist International has the duty of supporting the revolutionary movement in the colonies and backward countries only with the object of rallying the constituent elements of the future proletarian parties — which will be truly communist and not only in name — in all the backward countries and educating them to a consciousness of their special task, namely, that of fighting against the bourgeois-democratic trend in their own nation. The Communist International should collaborate provisionally with the revolutionary movement of the colonies and backward countries, and even form an alliance with it, but it must not amalgamate with it; it must unconditionally maintain the independence of the proletarian movement, even if it is only in an embryonic stage.” (“Theses on the National and Colonial Question Adopted by the Second Comintern Congress”, July 1920, *The Communist International 1919–1943 Documents, Volume 1: 1919–1923*, Edited by Jane Degras, p. 143-144.

While Lora merges for life and does, he clarifies it, neither temporary unions or relations, nor denounce or fight his allies, the Communist International in its Second Congress insists on the temporary nature of relations and fundamentally goes on and on on the need to fight against those who try to use the “communist colours” and to preserve the independent character of the Communist Party and the proletarian movement.

For the Fourth Congress, where the famous line of the Anti-Imperialist United Front is launched, it insists on the same.

“In the conditions prevailing in the West, where the transitional period is characterised by an organised gathering of forces, the slogan put forward is that of the proletarian united front, but in the colonial East the slogan that must be emphasised at the present time is that of the anti-imperialist united front. The expediency of this slogan follows from the prospect of a prolonged and protracted struggle with world imperialism which demands the mobilisation of all revolutionary elements. This mobilisation is the more necessary as the indigenous ruling classes are inclined to effect compromises with foreign capital directed against the vital interests of the masses of the people. And just as in the West the slogan of the proletarian united front has helped and is still helping to expose socialdemocratic betrayal of proletarian interests, so the slogan of the anti-imperialist united front will help to expose the vacillation of various bourgeois-nationalist groups. This slogan will also promote the development of the revolutionary will and the clarification of the class consciousness of the working masses and put them in the front ranks of those who are fighting not only against imperialism but also against the survivals of feudalism.

“The workers’ movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must first of all win for itself the position of an independent revolutionary factor in the anti-imperialist front as a whole. Only when its importance as an independent factor is recognised and its political independence secured, are temporary agreements with bourgeois democracy permissible and necessary. [...]

“The working class acknowledges that it is permissible and necessary to make partial and temporary compromises in order to win a breathing space in the revolutionary struggle for liberation against imperialism, [...].” (Thesis VI: United Anti-Imperialist Front of the “Theses on the Eastern Question Adopted by the Fourth Comintern Congress”, November 1922, *The Communist International 1919–1943 Documents, Vol. 1*, op. cit., p. 390, 391.)

While the Fourth Congress insists that the Anti-Imperialist Front is a “temporary agreement” or a “partial commitment”, Lora tires us that his FRA “is certainly not an occasional front”. While the Communist International tells us the front will help “to expose the vacillation of various bourgeois-nationalist groups”, Lora does not tire of pointing out it will show they are formed by “revolutionary tendencies” and “Marxists”, consistent, with correct positions and he commits to march for life united in the face of the mass movement having nothing to denounce.

And, finally, while the famous Thesis on the United Anti-Imperialist Front insists on the need that “the workers’ movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must first win for itself the position of an independent revolutionary factor in the anti-imperialist front as a whole”, Lora accepts the total unity achieved between all the forces and the lack of autonomy of each of them.

Lora and *Politica Obrera* consciously hide the Front’s strategy

The secret of such a heterogeneous front — unlike what Lora wants us to believe — is not that all the parties and personalities of the left have turned to revolutionary, Marxist positions. The secret is that the entire opportunist wing of the Popular Assembly — the Muscovite CP, General Torres, Lora, Lechín, the Pekingese, the Socialists and Christian Democrats — went body and soul to the guerrilla position of ELN and POR (Combate). Once again, ultra-leftism is the other side of opportunism. This explains the curious unity of tendencies that until yesterday fought without quarters, attacking each other with all kinds of insults and now commit to standing together for life in every union or university election.

Lora, in his book, in a shameful way, acknowledges it. “FRA, for example, does not ignore nor reject in principle commando actions or **guerrilla warfare** but subordinates them to the needs created by a certain political moment, which is basically defined by the attitude assumed by the masses and by the modifications that operate in their conscience.” This is the most a champion of the theoretical and political struggle against guerrilla warfare in Bolivia, like Lora, can say to announce his 180-degree turn. But Lora has to be unmasked and this is achieved very easily. You, who have relations with him, can do it very easily by asking him whether ELN or POR (Combate) accepted his positions and abandoned their guerrilla strategy or, on the contrary, it was Lora who abandoned his criticism of guerrilla warfare because of the “change in the consciousness of the masses” and who has agreed with these organisations on a new “guerrilla war” in Bolivia. We are more than convinced ELN and POR (Combat) have not changed their positions one iota; those who have changed them have been the other organisations that have folded to theirs.

We can also make a prediction. As in Bolivia there are no conditions for a guerrilla war, with mass support, FRA will be short-lived. The different class sectors, with the political parties that represent them, as soon as they have objective conditions to develop the policy that best defends their interests, will abandon the guerrilla projects to position themselves again in the political and social panorama of the highlands, as bureaucrats or good national bourgeois. Specifically, FRA will have little historical life, against the desire of Lora to make it almost eternal.

A weird fascism

Lora, like the other members of FRA, defines the current Bolivian government as fascist (for example, on page 143 from the book quoted). One page earlier, our author tells us the following: “The Bolivian political situation is changing rapidly and in the short term it can shift from passive to active resistance, which will occur as the outbreaks of rejection of the *gorilla* misgovernment become widespread and, therefore, gain a high political expression. In this path, it is worth mentioning **the defeat of the ruling party in the union elections that have taken place in the mining centres**. The Minister of Labour moved to Siglo XX mine with an unmistakable electoral campaign and in response to this abusive interference, **the workers voted tightly against the men addicted to the regime and gave victory to the left.**”

One does not fight better against a reactionary government by defining it always the same: fascist. The word is strong, it hurts our ears but it does not change reality. The best way to fight against any bourgeois government is to make a clear and fair definition of class, also its probable dynamics. The Stalinists, during the third period, practised this tragic game of calling all bourgeois governments as fascists without distinguishing their different characteristics. Trotsky has dedicated many pages to combat this theoretical infantilism, which exempts me from dwelling too much on the subject.

There are reactionary, very reactionary governments that are not fascist. There are others which are semi-fascists. You, the Brazilian comrades, have set a good example of theoretical responsibility by refusing to define as fascist the government of Garrastazu Medici and the previous ones of Castello Branco and Costa e Silva. You make strenuous efforts to specify the different class relations that gave them origin and explain their dynamics. In general, you have been inclined to consider them different varieties of Bonapartist, ultra-reactionary governments, without being fascist. All this, despite you having been through torture and prison in different opportunities. You already know my personal opinion that some of those governments have had semi-fascist characteristics. This difference of appreciation does not invalidate the methodological agreement: bourgeois governments must be studied and defined as the Marxists we are and not in an agitative or sentimental way, replacing the epithets with serious definitions.

In Bolivia we have the same problem: do we define with Trotskyist seriousness the character of the government or do we insult it? We have great doubts it is a “fascist government” that allows union elections to be won in the country’s main unions. If it is fascism, it is very rare and of a new kind because precisely every fascist government is characterised by crushing the working class with its trade union organisations and parties with methods of civil war and relying on the mobilisation of the desperate middle class and the lumpenproletariat. This is the classic Trotskyist definition of fascism, to distinguish it from so much ultra-reactionary government that exists and that is not fascism.

In Bolivia, if we stick to Lora, the government has not destroyed the unions. On the contrary, it leaves them a certain margin of freedom and its methods are neither “civil war” nor the mobilisation of the petty-bourgeoisie and the desperate lumpenproletariat against them but the other way around, it tries, in an “electoral campaign”, to win in the union elections, accepting to lose them.

Our opinion is that the Banzer government is an ultra-reactionary government, based on a solid bourgeois front, which makes the two main sectors of the Bolivian bourgeoisie participate in power: the mining bourgeoisie of the Altiplano and the Santa Cruz bourgeoisie (cattle, sugar, and cotton, in a colossal expansion). This government is qualitatively different from the one of Barrientos, which had or came to have semi-fascist characteristics with its attempt to rely on classless peasant or petty-bourgeois sectors against the workers’ movement. These different characterisations would explain the profound differences between Banzer and Selich, the true continuator of Barrientos; differences which are inexplicable if both Banzer and Selich are directly fascist.

We may disagree on the character of the current Bolivian government, on the weight the desperate petty-bourgeoisie has on it; but in one issue I am sure we will agree: that the current Bolivian government, which allows elections in the major mining centres, is not as reactionary as the Brazilian government, which you do not classify as fascist. This is the only thing I wanted to point out.

To build the Trotskyist Party within the mass movement

With so much discussion about FRA and the positions of Lora and Altamira, there is the danger we forget what is essential: **the construction of the party within the Bolivian mass movement.** This is precisely Lora’s crime: **to have completely abandoned this task, to replace it with its merger with the opportunists and ultra-leftists.** The discussion about the fascist or non-fascist character of the Banzer government hides an ideological mechanism: defining the different Latin

American governments as fascist has the ultimate objective of justifying, for supposed “objective” reasons, the abandonment of the “grey”, every day, monotonous work of our party within the mass movement, to get lost in the tragic speculations of guerrilla warfare or other suchlike variations.

Even with fascist governments, the task remains the same: to build the Trotskyist party every day within the mass movement. But this task is made easier; it has much more immediate possibilities, in reactionary regimes which are not yet fascist. Lora should have dedicated the last chapter of his book to Trotskyist participation in mining union elections and not to tell us how he betrayed the masses and Trotskyism by trying to join the Communist Party and Lechín in FRA for life. What in the book of Lora is a subordinate comment, made in passing, “the government lost the elections in the mining centres”, for us, Marxists, is the decisive fact.

You, the Brazilian comrades, give a magnificent example to world Trotskyism: without haste and without pause, like Goethe’s star, you build the Trotskyist party being active within the Brazilian workers’ and students’ movement. If there was already a rise in the early 1960s; if in 1968 you lived another rise, there is no reason to be pessimistic: there will be rises and opportunities increasingly richer and more impressive. While the ebb lasts, while the government and the exploiters seem more solid than ever, you continue to build the party within the mass movement for that rise of the masses that will inexorably come and that will be much stronger than the previous ones. There is not a minute to waste in criminal fantasies: an anti-imperialist front “to seize power and build socialism” with Prestes or Goulart, or “the people’s long war”. Both fantasies take us away from the only long war we Trotskyists recognise, the one the working class leads every day in their places of work and housing. It is to this “long war” that we want to join and that we intend, with time, to lead.

What you do with so much heroism needs to be done in Bolivia. With an addition: the Bolivian working class is the most heroic, capable, and fighter of all working classes so far this postwar period, almost 30 years. Its accumulated experience has led it more than once, in its class actions, to rediscover Trotskyism, as when it destroyed the bourgeois army and imposed the workers’ militias. This unbeatable working class is more than a fertile ground to build the Trotskyist party in an intransigent struggle against opportunist variations, while we fight the reactionary government at the head of the mass movement.

Comrade: I am sure this is a decisive crossroads for Brazilian Trotskyism. On the one hand, there is Lora and *Política Obrera*, assuring you that with bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, reformist, and ultra-leftist parties and characters one can get to “take power and build socialism”. On the other side are we, those who think only with orthodox Trotskyist organisations can one get to “take power and build socialism”. On that side are the Lorists, who think all the organisations of the Bolivian left have become “revolutionary” and “Marxist”. On this side are we, who believe none of these organisations has become Marxist or revolutionary, who hold to the Trotskyist analysis they are reformist or ultra-leftist. On that side are the revisionists who want to get married for life, with General Torres, the Stalinist Communist Party, and Lechín. On this side are we, defending the program of orthodox Trotskyism.

With the hope you will know how to live up to the circumstances, I say goodbye with Orthodox Trotskyist greetings.

Nahuel Moreno