



# Nahuel Moreno

Speeches in the  
IEC of IWL-FI  
(April 1986)

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# Foreword

The material published here contain most of the speeches by Nahuel Moreno at the meeting of the International Executive Committee (IEC) of IWL–FI held on April 1986. They give continuity to the elaborations and documents approved at the First World Congress in 1985 and the Foundation Congress in 1982 of the international organization that Moreno headed until his death in 1987 and called IWL–FI (International Workers League – Fourth International)

The main issues have to do with the world situation, the fundamental features of imperialism in the Reagan era, the characteristics of the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leaderships that led the struggles of the masses in the 1980s, some of which faced, even if partially, imperialist domination Also on the tactics of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and the confluence with eventually revolutionary union currents.

Regarding this IEC and the two previous ones, Moreno’s speeches regarding the discussion with the leadership of the PST of Colombia regarding the tactics towards the trade union organization *A Luchar*, which is mentioned very briefly in chapter 7 — about the RUF —, are pending for publication. Regarding *A Luchar*, Moreno vindicated his program and proposed that it should be developed as a revolutionary trade union current but that the initial expectation that it would evolve into a RUF had been closed, since its components, except the PST, had shown that they responded to the political influence of the guerrillas. The pseudonym Simon was used by the main leader of the PST of Colombia and member of the IEC, Kemel George. Alberto Frank was the pseudonym used by Alberto Franceschi, Venezuelan leader and member of the IEC.

Chapters 1 to 6 are archival materials and chapters 7, 8, and 9 reproduce what was published, prior revision and correction by Moreno, in *Correo Internacional* No. 20, June 1986. Titles of chapters, subtitles of chapters 1 to 6, and the notes are from the editor.

## **The Editors**

September 2019

## CHAPTER 1

# About the Petty-bourgeois Leaderships I

Every socialist revolution is popular. It is not just us, Trotsky says it: every workers' revolution is popular, it drags [other sectors], it is not only the working class [who does it]. Possibly in some exceptional countries — Belgium, England, France I think not — it will be purely proletarian but [as something] exceptional. It may be in the United States, it may be that the political revolution in Russia is purely proletarian but Poland showed how petty-bourgeois sectors were dragged for the revolutionary process.

So, if we say the M-19<sup>1</sup> is popular, we're saying it is the vanguard of all the people, and the revolutionary vanguard of all the people and I don't understand that. Because we want the social vanguard of all the people to be the proletariat, the working class. And in this, we make a relentless struggle.

Then, for me, just as Galanism<sup>2</sup> is a bourgeois leadership that rests on the petty-bourgeoisie, which drags the petty-bourgeoisie, M-19 — and not only M-19, Shining Path and [all those organizations] — are petty-bourgeois leaderships that rely on the people or on specific sectors, such as the very poor peasantry, the lumpens or semi lumpens, diverse combinations of the people and even sectors of the proletariat. They may even have the majority of the proletariat, I don't argue [that] but the leadership, by its conception, is petty-bourgeois.

That doesn't mean that at some stage we may not define it as revolutionary. Precisely, if you define it as revolutionary, you have to say what class sector it is. If you define it as a worker-revolutionary then let's go in there, follow its discipline and the problem is ended because it is the party. If we say it is petty-bourgeois revolutionary we're saying that at this moment, for a stage, at this juncture, it fulfils a progressive role. If you want, let's not call it "revolutionary", [let's call it] "progressive". That is, let the sectarian comrades [call it progressive and] those who lean towards them to call it revolutionary. But between M-19 and Galanism there is nothing in common. Galanism is something tragic; and M-19 at this moment, in its own way, reflects somehow the revolutionary process; as Trotsky says of the terrorists.

**Alberto Frank (AF):** Were Montoneros<sup>3</sup> a petty-bourgeois leadership like M-19?

- 
- 1 The **April 19 Movement** (abbreviated **M-19**) was an urban guerrilla from Colombia that finally signed a truce with the government of Cesar Gaviria. It arose from the rejection of university students to fraud in the presidential elections of 19 April 1970. Its leader was Carlos Pizarro. Subsequently, it became the Democratic Alliance, an electoral party integrated into the bourgeois-democratic regime. His highest figure was Antonio Navarro Wolf, who was President Gaviria's minister.
  - 2 **Galanism** was a bourgeois movement originated within the Colombian Liberal Party, led by Luis Carlos Galán Sarmiento (1943–1989). It made a "renovating" proposal, "against corruption", "against drug trafficking", etcetera. Although its populist preaching found support in plebeian sectors, it was categorically pro-imperialist.
  - 3 **Montoneros** was the main Peronist guerrilla organisation in Argentina. It was born encouraged by Peron himself. In 1973 it supported the brief government of Hector Jose Campora, who was quickly overthrown by Peron. On 1 May 1974, Peron drove them out from the massive rally of the day. It pursued guerrilla warfare between 1970 and 1979. It was primarily composed of young men and women of the middle class.

**Moreno:** For me, yes, although they came from the big bourgeoisie. Very important sectors came from the big bourgeoisie, the Argentine oligarchy and the aristocracy but impoverished.

**AF:** Didn't they lose the progressive character because of the nefarious nature of the policy they carried out, oblivious to the workers' movement?

**Moreno:** Oh, sure. And this always happens. Because, by being petty-bourgeois they don't believe in the working class, they don't have our Trotskyist conception; they lead us to a road without a way out. Terrorism is terrible. It distances the proletariat from assuming itself as a class, dissolves it in the whole of the people. [The opposite] of what we want to do: that the proletariat assumes itself as a class for itself and as a leader of all the oppressed people. We fight for that and they don't. With the category "people", which is correct, they try to dissolve the classes by completely denying Marxism and Marxist politics.

**AF:** The policy of M-19 then is nefarious.

**Moreno:** For me, yes. If M-19 were for a revolutionary workers' policy in Colombia already, in 15 days the situation changes and we have to start thinking about how the socialist revolution in the world is going to develop because in one, two or three years we take power in Colombia and a monumental mess is created throughout Latin America, et cetera, et cetera. How wouldn't it be nefarious if it has the possibility of transforming itself into a revolutionary working class leadership and ...! But they can't for class reasons: they are petty-bourgeois but revolutionary, that is, they are on the other platform, in the place [opposite to] Galan.

**Simon:** They face the regime.

**Moreno:** Exactly! And they face it in a violent way and raising progressive issues. "Out with Betancur"<sup>4</sup> is progressive. We disagree with their methods, we disagree with their program, but we don't stop pointing out they are on our side of the border.

**AF:** In Colombia, do we denounce M-19 as nefarious?

**Moreno:** Ah, you can't report like this. We can't say "nefarious". You can't, from any point of view. They stop being an ally; they stop being people we respect.

Now, let's go to [the definitions] of petty-bourgeois and popular.

First, let's go wrong, empirically; let's touch a case, which is Gallanism. Gallanism is a bourgeois party that drags the petty-bourgeoisie. It's different from [defining it as] petty-bourgeois. That is, it is similar to Trotsky's definition of the French Radical Party: an imperialist party, of financial capital itself, which dragged the petty-bourgeoisie. In other words, it was an imperialist party, of the big bourgeoisie, but its clientele was petty-bourgeois.

This is a contradiction of capitalism, says Trotsky, because the capitalists either impose Bonapartist regimes or, if they accept bourgeois democratic regimes, they have to win the support of a significant sector of the population. That is, [in this sense, a] party can be defined as a workers' party even if it is not — Peronism, [for example] —, or it can be defined as popular, petty-bourgeois, whatever, because it drags the people. Else, there is no way to make parties that participate within bourgeois democracy. Because [if] a party — [for example, that of] Herriot<sup>5</sup> in France — presents itself [saying]: "I am a representative of the interests of financial capital, I will see how I bust the petty-bourgeoisie; this is my program and keep voting for me", the petty-bourgeoisie ..., it will be a client of the comrade who [votes] for him and I don't think many more. Then there is this problem, that of the bourgeois parties that have their privileged sector and know how to do demagoguery and some proposals in favour of this sector or which give the impression they are in favour of these sectors.

4 **Belisario Betancur** (1923-2018) was a politician, President of Colombia from 1982 to 1986 for the Colombian Conservative Party and the first to initiate a dialogue with the leadership of FARC.

5 **Édouard Herriot** (1872-1957) was a leader of French Radical Party of the Third Republic who served three times as Prime Minister and for many years as President of the Chamber of Deputies (1936-1940) and President of the National Assembly of France (1947-1954).

Petty-bourgeoisie is a very broad expression. There is a great theoretical discussion, which even Marx and Trotsky [must be doing] there, next to Saint Peter, because Marx in the last century and Trotsky in this century seem to give different definitions of the problem of [the] petty-bourgeoisie. Trotsky spoke of a modern middle class, of a modern petty-bourgeoisie, which were white-collar employees, as they are called in Yankee sociology —Wright Mills, etc. Instead, for Marx, everyone who received a salary was a member of the working class. That is, for Marx what defined the worker was to receive a wage or a salary. Not so [for] Trotsky. In his reference to the weak points of the *Communist Manifesto*, he points out as one of those points precisely that fact: that a modern middle class emerged.

I lean towards Marx. So, for me, [the modern middle class] is proletariat. Banking employees are workers; they belong to the working class, for me. In this, I am with Marx and not with Trotsky.

There are other very complicated problems. I get the impression that, by ceasing to be European, Marxism is advancing a lot, acknowledging everything we owe Europe, including Marx, Engels, Trotsky, and Lenin, our great masters. For example, Trotsky didn't study the Mexican revolution at all and didn't predict that in the postwar period there would be dozens of revolutions like [the one that took place] in Mexico. [This issue] doesn't even [show] in the *Transitional Program*, nor warnings about the guerrillas nor [about] what are guerrilla victories, nothing. And he was in the typical country of the guerrilla in this century.

In the last century, it was Spain. Everyone studied it; the military ... they all studied the guerrilla against the French occupation. And later, [in Mexico,] there was another great revolution or guerrilla process that was impressive, worldwide — there may have been others but this one was known, the Yankees filmed it, [and they wrote] books like John Reed's —, and yet Trotsky, who lived there — and also in Turkey, where there was the phenomenon of Kemal Ataturk<sup>6</sup> — left a few pages; it was not his specialty. And I think it is a model of revolution different from the October model.

But there is another very important point, the semi-proletariat, which is the new discovery of a neo-Marxist tendency. [They have discovered] that for the world development of capitalism the semi-proletarian was fundamental because thanks to this they have been able to pay hunger wages. Millions, millions, and millions of workers in the world — [the semi-proletariat is] much more numerous than the working class — are exploited by the largest capitalist companies in the world, [in which] this semi-proletarian or semi-slave system is used. The Spanish empire was very intelligent, against everything that is believed. [It was] an empire led by very competent people, Carlos V, Felipe II are comparable to the greatest Roman or British rulers, they were almost geniuses in the structuring of the empire: how they organized, how cities were made, and so on and so forth. I think they performed extraordinarily well for the benefit of their own class and, then, it's not bad to say it. Lenin begins one of his great books — "*Left-Wing Communism* ..."<sup>7</sup> — with a quote of how British politicians act and saying that they act very well for their class, that they unite, etcetera, etcetera.

I think this problem of the semi-proletariat — but semi "proletariat", that is, it works for a wage — is very important, it has given dynamism to several revolutions. For example, the self-criticism of Huberman and Sweezy<sup>8</sup> about what they wrote about Cuba is very interesting. About

6 **Kemal Atatürk** (1881–1938), was the founder and first president of the Republic of Turkey from 1923 until his death in 1938. He imposed a series of powerful reforms to create a modern, democratic and secular state. Kemalism remains one of Turkey's main political forces.

7 Moreno refers to "*Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder*. We believe the passages referred to are found in Chapter IX: "Left-Wing" Communism in Great Britain. (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 31, pp. 77–89, Progress Publishers, USSR, 1964.)

8 **Paul Marlor Sweezy** (1910–2004) was a Marxist economist, political activist, publisher, and founding editor, together with Huberman, of the long-running magazine *Monthly Review* in 1949. He is best remembered for his contributions to economic theory as one of the leading Marxist economists of the second half of the 20th century. **Leo Huberman** (1903–1968) was an American Marxist economist, and also union and political activist, author of the well-known book *Man's Worldly Goods: The Story of The Wealth of Nations*. With Paul Sweezy, they co-authored *Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution*, *Socialism in Cuba*, and *Introduction to Socialism* among others.

10 or 15 years after [that work], they write a self-critical book [in relation to their assertion] that Cuba was a country of little capitalist development and of peasantry. They say the tremendous dynamic [the revolution] acquired [is because] Cuba was always a super-super-capitalist country; since the last century. Something I believe.

[Capitalist] of a special type, agrarian, with slavery [in its beginnings]. The great Cuban oligarchy, [which] was almost predominant in the Spanish aristocracy, dominated first — if I am not mistaken, in the middle of the last century — and closely linked, intimately linked to the Yankee oligarchy of New York. [It was] tied to the world capitalism in the narrowest possible [way] that one might think of. Almost all the sugar from Cuba went to the United States and the Yankee capitals themselves were associated with the Cubans.

What do Huberman and Sweezy say? That they had not realized they were all semi-proletarians, in fact, proletarians. What happened was, the sugar mills hired them only when they needed them and the rest of the time they were out of work [because of] the country's little industrial development. Then, they had to return to their plot with what little they had earned, which had to last them all year. But [Huberman and Sweezy say] they were proletarians, their tendency was [to] be proletarians, they wanted to work all year. These sectors, liberated by the process of the revolution and the fall of Batista, are the social pressure that forces Fidel to advance an enormity. Unlike other countries. [In] China, for example, the process was much slower and forced rather by imperialism. Instead, here there was a proletarian pressure. That's what Huberman and Sweezy say.

[?]:<sup>9</sup> Is it semi-proletariat or is it an agricultural proletariat?

Moreno: For me, it is semi-proletariat because they don't live off their wages, they don't reproduce their labour force with their wages. Put another way, they have one foot on each side. They have one foot in their own subsistence — that is, to work for subsistence, mainly of their family, and in their free time — and [the other foot] in the factory, where what they get is not [enough] for subsistence.

**Ricardo Napuri [RN]:** This is the case in Peru, with important slum layers and with agricultural workers from the coast, who work for a while and then go to their plot.

**Moreno:** And this [is] general. The most modern research points out — because of this influence of research outside Europe — that this is a generalized phenomenon. For example, they have also discovered the largest city in the world was not Paris, London or any similar city, but Potosi. They are all things Europeans don't know, and neither did we, influenced by Europeans. But it is good that we begin to know it together, that's why we're all Trotskyists.

I'm sorry if I expand on it but I want to analyse the social sectors that take part in the world revolution. Maybe I go on for a little too long but it's to answer it and I think it's an interesting and important point.

Along with this, today there is a process of overcrowding in cities. With this overcrowding in the cities, a marginal sector emerges. There is the rare phenomenon of a great Trotskyist leader, for me very intelligent, very smart, and of great intuition, like Hugo Blanco, who began his speeches in Lima saying: "Comrade workers, comrade thieves, [comrade] prostitutes", et cetera, et cetera. This indicates there is a tremendous marginal sector, as we see in Colombia, in Lima, in Bogota ...

**Simon:** The bourgeoisie call it the "informal sector" of the economy. In Colombia, the "informal sector" is two-thirds of the population.

**Moreno:** Of course; now I understand why it is an informal country. Well, but those sectors exist. It is tragic, it is something terrible; what happens in Mexico has no name; Sao Paulo ... Rio de Janeiro too, but Sao Paulo is the vanguard (and the comrades didn't know it): I think [this sector] is bigger, possibly much bigger than in Bogota.

**Simon:** Would you call them petty-bourgeois sectors?

9 [?] means we haven't been able to identify the speaker.

**Moreno:** No, not at all! Neither is the semi-proletariat petty-bourgeois nor are these declassed sectors petty-bourgeois. They are lumpen, or declassed. Let us not call them lumpen because we consider we have to try to win many sectors because they are precious sectors for the fascists; we have to dispute them to the fascists. We don't have to be in love with them; M-19 itself can end [in fascism]. They are unstable sectors because they don't have a permanent job. Psychologically they are the opposite of the proletariat. Sometimes the unemployed worker begins to oscillate between these two categories. And it is not petty-bourgeoisie. Along with this, there exists today a huge, tremendous petty-bourgeoisie, which for me is not lumpen but has points of contact with the lumpen, which are the street vendors. They are the lowest part of the scale. [Above them are] all the small shop owners, the grocers, the handcrafters, the peasants who have their plot and live on it, which in many countries are very numerous.

## CHAPTER 2

# About the Petty-bourgeois Leaderships II

**Moreno:** [Although] it seems to me that in some points we have already agreed with Comrade [Simon], I am concerned with the problem of M-19, if we don't define the leadership of M-19 as a petty-bourgeois, petty-bourgeois populist if we want. This is a difference I consider very important and I don't know whether we agree or not. It seemed to me that yesterday Comrade Simon accepted the interpretation I gave that people is everybody and [of] different sectors of class, etcetera, etcetera. Because M-19 obviously has a program and a leadership who are not proletarians. [Nor] do they use our methods, although it has very progressive aspects; it is an ally, it is the opposite of the FARC,<sup>1</sup> etcetera.

Therefore, the problem of the M-19 leadership is pending. I think we agree on the character of the movement, and yesterday it seemed to me we also agreed on the character of the leadership. If we didn't agree, I see a very important discussion because I see the danger we tend to [believe] there are popular revolutionary leaderships that will lead the whole people. For me, this true revolutionary leadership of the whole people can only be the proletariat — the only class and class leadership that can reflect all the people is the proletariat because of its breadth.

**AF:** In a conjunctural sense there may be non-worker leaderships that lead all the people, such as Sandinismo.

**Moreno:** But that's another problem. That is a fact; they lead the people, it is a fact. But revolutionary, of historical type, [only the revolutionary workers' party can be it]. I will even accept M-19 is revolutionary, if we say it is petty-bourgeois because with this I mean they will make a revolution but they will lead it to a dead end. The definition of petty-bourgeois means that: nationalist, petty-bourgeois, democratist, etcetera, and etcetera. It is not bureaucratic but revolutionary.

I think that, in that sense, [we must remember] the famous argument that when Nicaragua was liberated, the FSLN became our main enemy. You have to remember the two sides of my argument.<sup>2</sup> And I give it a lot of importance because I [keep holding] we're going to vindicate the Sandinistas as national heroes until the moment [of the revolution] and afterwards we will vindicate those Sandinistas who break [with the FSLN] and move on [to defend] a program of socialist revolution. And this will happen only through conflict within the Sandinista movement because the entire Sandinista movement can't go [to a program of socialist revolution] because of its status as a petty-bourgeois leadership. Not only petty-bourgeois, even bourgeois, because

1 The **Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia** or FARC, was a guerrilla organization formed in 1964 and linked to the Stalinist Communist Party of Colombia. Its historical leader was Manuel Marulanda and for years they controlled some rural areas of the country. In the 1980s they began to link to drug cultivation and drug trafficking. In the second decade of the 21st century, they agreed to a disarmament agreement and move on to electoral activity with the government of Juan Manuel Santos, negotiating it in Havana, Cuba.

2 See Nahuel Moreno, *Perspectives and Revolutionary Politics after the Victory of the Nicaraguan Revolution*, a report to the Central Committee of the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores of Colombia* (PST-C), August 1979. Available for downloading from <http://www.nahuelmoreno.org/english.html#2>.

there is a study the Mexican comrades brought us [which shows] the entire Sandinista leadership belongs to the largest Nicaraguan oligarchy and bourgeoisie.

How do we define Sandinismo? For me, it is still a petty-bourgeois leadership. I am against making non-class definitions. I'm against it on principle. [The definition of] "popular leadership" is a non-class definition. Popular is a non-class definition because it is inter-classist and I am against it. That is, there is no class called ["people"]. Precisely now the British Trotskyists are making a great theoretical discussion and hitting very strongly on Abraham Leon [because he speaks] of people-class, for the word "people". I know what they want to say, and maybe they are right, although I am a big fan of Leon and I have my doubts about how he uses the word "people". They hit him hard for the word "people". What does "people" mean? If it is people, it is not a class, because "people" is a sum of different classes. There is no class "people", there are small peasants, there are communal peasants, and there are different sub-sectors of class: lumpen, shopkeepers ... And people are everyone, everyone who is oppressed. Even the bourgeoisie was also part of the people at the time of the bourgeois revolutions. [People] were everyone who didn't belong to the feudal estate.

I make this theoretical consideration because Sandinismo is either workers or petty-bourgeois, or lumpen, or bourgeois, but it has to be of a class, of a class sector. I am against, because of my Marxist method, of it being [popular]. For us, the analyses are of class. This is why we believe [the Nicaraguan] is a popular revolution in which internal frictions will inevitably take place, there will be problems because within the people take part different sectors. We already predicted: "There may be problems with peasant sectors." Precisely because it is popular.

The attempt to make another definition of Sandinismo or of M-19 — and I see a certain unity in both attempts — seems to me to end in the danger of [saying] they are popular leaders, and during a historical stage they are justified because if they lead the people and at the same time they are popular leaders, they are fulfilling a progressive historical role. And we believe that even at the moment they take power, they limit the revolution. As the Sandinistas did, who cut us off from the possibility of making unions, who cut us off from the possibility of making a brigade to go to El Salvador.

We must remember very well everything we proposed. And we're vindicating it too little because it is one of the greatest historical political achievements. We must take up everything we proposed for Nicaragua and say: "Look what happened to them." As we can now say: "Look at Contadora." We sometimes forget, a little because of the hurry, to point out the tremendous mistakes [of Sandinismo]. Who was right: did the Constituent have to be held or not? Who was right: did the unions have to be developed or not?

And who was right about running to El Salvador, with a brigade, not like the [Simon Bolívar brigade] which supported them, but with a brigade of forty or fifty thousand [and] the problem of all Central America was immediately ended? [Honduras] would be made a sandwich; Guatemala would develop, down to Costa Rica, the Salvadoran government would fall. It would have changed the whole story: it would be a tremendous mess but nobody could have stopped it, nobody, nobody. At the moment of its peak — fall on your back — I would have put Chamorro as president of the Republic to call a Constituent Assembly. That would have been my policy: Robelo prime minister, Chamorro president of the Republic to call at three or six months a Constituent and the brigade in El Salvador. That would have been the axis of my policy: the brigade in El Salvador. And then we come back from El Salvador and we beat in the elections Chamorro and Robelo, who [would be forced to make] a bourgeois party. The FSLN goes, takes 80 or 90 per cent of the votes, and expropriates everything, etcetera, etcetera. I see it crystal clear because, with Chamorro as president and Robelo as prime minister, imperialism could not attack.

And [look at] everything that happens because of a petty-bourgeois, lumpen or bourgeois leadership. How can we define the Sandinista leadership? We can't define it as workers revolutionary. It may be workers but then it is reformist counterrevolutionary. The only way to add the adjective of revolutionary is qualifying it with the name of another class; it has to be "such" revolutionary, [i.e., revolutionary] for that class, [for example,] peasant. The left-wing revolutionary socialists were

great revolutionaries because they were for the expropriation of the land, etcetera, etcetera, but petty-bourgeois, which explains why they later made terrorism against Lenin and broke up.

**Carmen Carrasco:** Is the FSLN Castro-Stalinist?

**Moreno:** For me, it is not Castro-Stalinist. For me, it is an independent leadership. For me, it doesn't depend on Cuba or the USSR, at all. There are disparate currents, but as a geometric result it is independent, i.e., it is not dominated by Stalinism, they don't do what Moscow tells them but they move according to what they consider convenient. For example, when the *Contras*<sup>3</sup> harass him, Ortega goes to [Moscow and asks] to give him weapons, etcetera, etcetera. Extraordinary attitude, for me, independent. And it is the same leadership that spoke on the phone with Alan Garcia, in Uruguay, to inform him of what he would say and to consult him. It is very petty-bourgeois, oscillating.

**CC:** It's an independent leadership but, at the same time, they are friends of sectors of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie.

**Moreno:** That's right, exactly right. [They have relationships with sectors] of the oligarchy, of the highest bourgeoisie. The magazine the Mexican comrades brought me shows the leaderships of the Sandinista Front and the *Contra* (not of the Somocista *Contra* but of the last one that has left). Such a family, of the greatest oligarchy: one or two [of its members] abroad because they are against, one or two in the Sandinista government as ministers. Such another oligarchic family: one, two or three abroad; one, two or three in the Sandinista government. It's quite a job, a very long article that looked like the European [Almanach de Gotha]<sup>4</sup> because it took family by family. I was very surprised. At first, I didn't pay it any importance, then I began to read and it left me bewildered, [doubting] whether we needed to say bourgeois of the leadership instead of petty-bourgeois. This was what a Colombian ambassador said [when asked if the Nicaraguan ambassador was] to be a socialist revolution: "No way, because the youth of the most distinguished families in Nicaragua have taken power."

Let's look at the comparison between M-19, Farabundo Marti Front<sup>5</sup> and FARC. It seems to me M-19 has with FARC the [common] point that it is not a front, that is, it is a clearly defined political movement. I think Farabundo Marti is really a front. Farabundo Marti is impregnated, dominated, influenced by Stalinism and M-19 not at all; it has a leadership independent of Stalinism. Farabundo Marti isn't, although it isn't fully Stalinist; that's why, for me, it's a front. Unlike FARC which are not a front. M-19 has in common with FARC the fact it is monolithic. That it is monolithic doesn't [mean] there is no discussion but that it is a party, that is, it has its own identity: it is as if it were a party and not a front. And it has this in common with Farabundo Marti to a certain extent, and above all with Sandinismo, which is independent. For me, Sandinismo is independent. We can't define it as Stalinist; we disagree totally with imperialism.

There is another theoretical problem linked to this one: Colombia and Central America. I still believe that the structure [of Colombia] has been changing, that [before] it was part of Central America and today it has transformed into a powerful industrial country. It's what [we] always [said], that half is Central American and half is South American. It has very common elements with Central America; this type of guerrilla is opposite to the type of guerrilla that exists in Peru and the same as in Central America: the guerrilla is influenced by Stalinism and there is an independent guerrilla.

3 **Contras** were the various US-backed and funded right-wing rebel groups active from 1979 to the early 1990s in opposition to the Sandinista Junta of National Reconstruction in Nicaragua.

4 The *Almanach de Gotha* is a directory of Europe's royalty and higher nobility, also including the major governmental, military and diplomatic corps, as well as statistical data by country.

5 The **Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)** is a political party in El Salvador. The FMLN was formed as an umbrella group on 10 October 1980, from five leftist guerrilla organizations: the Farabundo Marti Liberation People's Forces (FPL), the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), National Resistance (RN), the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS), and the Revolutionary Party of the Central American Workers (PRTC). The FMLN was one of the main participants in the Salvadoran Civil War.

For example, it's no coincidence you ask for a comparison between M-19, FARC and Farabundo Marti. You should have added Sandinismo. M-19 and FARC, what do they look like? To Farabundo Marti, to Sandinismo? Find me other comparisons with South America. If [the Colombian guerrilla] is not from Central America, if it doesn't have Central American elements, why do you ask that question? You yourself say that there are similar elements when asking the question. And if you broaden the question, you have to expand it to Sandinismo and say: "What is common between Farabundo Marti and Sandinismo with M-19 and FARC?" And there are many elements in common: they are part of the same process; they are modern guerrillas, with modern theories, with modern methods, with capable leaderships.

On the other hand, if the other guerrilla [that of Peru], didn't write in Spanish, if they wrote in Quechua or in any of the pre-Spanish indigenous languages [they would understand each other perfectly] even the things they do. That is, it is of an incredible backwardness and has nothing to do with the Central American and the Colombian [guerrillas], which have many elements in common.

**Simon:** On the previous point: the social base of FARC is peasant; socially, the peasantry is a petty-bourgeoisie, so I agree to call the leadership as petty-bourgeois.

**Moreno:** I have my doubts about whether it is all petty-bourgeoisie. I have my doubts about [it is not] also an agricultural proletariat that became petty-bourgeois. I have my doubts because of some quotations given to me and some tales of proletarians or semi-proletarians who made guerrilla. In other words, I think [the social composition of FARC] is predominantly peasant, with important elements that come from the large haciendas or persecuted by the large haciendas.

**Simon:** In Colombia there is an indigenous movement that organizes, fights, and arms itself to defend itself, and has a guerrilla, Quintin Lame,<sup>6</sup> which is the military organization of the indigenous movement. We define it as the military organization of the indigenous people who fight, even though they have students and some intellectuals. Do we define it as a petty-bourgeois leadership?

**Moreno:** For me, yes. If they are peasants...

**Simon:** They are indigenous, it is the indigenous movement.

**Moreno:** Yes, but indigenous peasant. [Indigenous] is not a social class. What kind are they, what do they do in the economy?

**Simon:** But then Quintin Lame is poorly defined as a military organization of the Indians.

**Moreno:** No, because they are indigenous people who are peasants, they synthesize the two things; the definition is very good. It is indigenous because they are indigenous people who at the same time have the national problem and organize themselves based on the national problem.

**Simon:** That is the problem with popular because, strictly speaking, the petty-bourgeoisie is not a social class either. They are social sectors, some increasingly closer to the bourgeoisie and others more and more dispossessed and impoverished.

**Moreno:** Yes, but it is a class which consists of the small owners who don't exploit workers. And it exists.

**Simon:** There are sectors of the population, such as those who live in the slums of Cali, who resist, fight, organize, and arm themselves. So we can say, as we do with M-19, that it's a non-proletarian leadership, and as a political definition of its leadership we say it is petty-bourgeois, but they don't reflect the same social sector as another guerrilla like FMLN. In Colombia we say, as a whole: there are a series of social sectors that are petty-bourgeois, popular, impoverished masses, etc., which are different layers, which in their struggle are organized and have managed to form armed military organizations. These sectors are not proletarians, and their leaderships, politically speaking, are petty-bourgeois but reflect different social sectors.

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<sup>6</sup> **Movimiento Armado Quintin Lame** (Quintin Lame Armed Movement, **MAQL**) was founded in 1984 as an indigenous guerrilla movement that operated in the department of Cauca, a province in south-central Colombia that is 40 per cent indigenous and characterized by large landholdings, unequal land tenure, and conflict between indigenous reservations and landowners.

**Moreno:** Very good. Ok, we don't have differences.

[?]: There may be a guerrilla with a workers social base and with a petty-bourgeois leadership.

**Moreno:** Yes, too.

**Simon:** M-19 at the beginning had lawyers, intellectuals, very high officials, and we suspect that even ministers. When breaking with the truce and in the process of radicalization it continues being this type of leadership but only the poor masses of the poor districts remain with them; the intellectuals abandoned them.

**Moreno:** Yes, but take the social base of all those leaders and you will see they are petty-bourgeois.

**AF:** Explain to me the term "social revolutionary", **Simon**.

**Simon:** It is a social phenomenon of a revolutionary type because it is a phenomenon of the masses that rise up to confront the regime.

**Moreno:** If so, I agree a thousand per cent.

**Simon:** What happens is they, as a petty-bourgeois leadership, reflect the phenomenon, place themselves on it and begin to direct it. That's why one falls and ten get up. It is not just any apparatus.

**Moreno:** What he means is it has the support of the masses, of a mass sector.

**Simon:** Not having an understanding of this phenomenon and saying it reflected only a popular sector led us to a very serious problem of misplacement in the trade union movement. We find that many combative sectors of the trade union movement began to look towards it. Many union leaders today are part of M-19, which previously had absolutely nothing. We have found workers' conferences in which most of the workers are part of M-19. They begin to express that the only way to defend the salary is to support M-19 and increasingly violent methods. It is ok that we lose popular sectors, which we have never had, but the only thing missing from the party is that by misunderstanding this phenomenon, we also lose a working-class component.

**Moreno:** Simon, you know that when M-19 emerged Camilo [Gonzalez] was of the opinion it had no prospect, and we discussed and I said: "No, [it's not like that], because in the city there are many declassed people and very hungry, and M-19 is going to have a great development." That's why I totally agree with you, and [also in] that it can drag the working class. But they will not give it pre-eminence; they will remain populists. And terrorists. That's the other point, **Simon**, that I want to deal with, which is the problem of terrorism.

**CC:** We saw that there was a difference between M-19 on the one hand and Quintin Lame and FARC on the other, which was that Quintin Lame is for indigenous self-defence, FARC for peasant self-defence and M-19 is a political organization for the seizure of power.

**Moreno:** I'm with you; that was our conclusion.

**Simon:** In Colombia, the National Guerrilla Coordinating Board [CNG] was founded, convened by M-19, which runs it, and which Quintin Lame enters. The Coordinating Board defines that all of them are a political project for the seizure of power. So, what appears first as a pro-indigenous resistance organization ends up being led by another organization in a different direction. I think you can't say: "This is this, this is something else."

**Moreno:** No, because for me Quintin Lame is the incorporation... that's precisely why it's popular. That is why M-19 has a popular base, Quintin Lame has a peasant-indigenous base, FARC has only a peasant base and of defence; they emerged from below, as a union emerges, that is, without a political project or anything.

What you are telling is very nice because it shows how M-19, precisely because it is an urban and petty-bourgeois political party and has a whole program, manages to drag other popular sectors and even sectors of the working class. Because it holds its own program; without giving the hegemony to the working class. This is what the leadership of M-19 will never give away; they will

try to add everyone, [to do] a sum. And it is doing the sum: Quintin Lame comes over there and they make it revolutionary. Because there was the danger that Quintin Lame, the FARC...

What FARC says is unbelievable. They were made guerrilla fighters on the go. They were happy to have the land and be left undisturbed. They become guerrilla fighters after being hit. And in Quintin Lame there may be similar elements because the Indians [they suffered everything]. In Popayan and in Cauca they became [guerrillas], and it is logical, because what they did to the Indians when I was there has no name. They have been suffering for decades that the peasants take their land, kill them, et cetera, et cetera.

**Nicolas Kramer:** Simon, do you propose that by defining the leadership as a petty-bourgeois one runs the risk of diluting the phenomenon that it represents?

**Simon:** I say we have to define it by the two aspects.

**Moreno:** Very well. Even if they were a small grouplet, I wouldn't make any virulent criticism, I would continue saying: "Guerrillas and terrorism are not useful." That's why I agree with you that there are two aspects. If we give importance to the small grouplet with its program, once it became a mass issue it becomes a decisive tactical problem and strategic.

**Simon:** So, if we put emphasis on the leadership, we would not pay attention to it.

**Moreno:** We would defend it and nothing else.

**Simon:** We say "popular" in the sense that it reflects a non-working class popular sector. We don't assume that popular covers the working class; we say they are non-proletarian sectors. In this sense, M-19 is a leadership that reflects the popular, that is, the non-working class.

**Moreno:** Very well.

**Simon:** So, from the class point of view, if it's not terminological, it's the same to say petty-bourgeois as to say popular.

**Moreno:** No, but it is a definition by negation. Because there has been an enormity of guerrillas — Mao himself has said so — led directly by lumpens. And you have to do the definition: "lumpens". Popular, in the sense you say it, is correct but it is a definition that stays halfway. It is algebraic. [This is the case of] Trotsky's famous denunciation that the character of the government was not specified in the Russian Revolution, whether it was a peasant or a workers' government. The definition of popular is not bad, according to what you said, but it is inconvenient and limited. And we can make it more precise.

**NK:** How does M-19 define itself?

**Simon:** As revolutionary.

**Moreno:** Ah, yes, popular. They don't claim to be working class, not at all.

**RN:** I want to alert you about something Simon said that is very important for the future. If they build themselves as the armed wing of the leadership in a mass process, in the correlation between mass leadership and military leadership there may be an agreement in which they capitulate to the leadership of the masses. If this is the armed wing, we, the proletarian revolutionaries, would be deprived of having our own revolutionary apparatus and we would ask the others to be the military apparatus. The danger of capitulating to military apparatuses is real.

**Moreno:** But there is another danger: that we ignore that it is military; because they are filling a void. There are two dangers, two-pointed.

**RN:** But that, by default, is what they believe. They don't mind recognizing a mass

**Moreno:** Surely they think so.

**NK:** And you support the CNG's call to the National Assembly?

**Moreno:** That we have to discuss it.

**Simon:** We reached an agreement, with slogans that unify a sector of the workers' movement and all others that are influenced by the guerrillas: "For a National Assembly" and "For workers' and people's power".

**Moreno:** Yes, but I have my doubts...

**NK:** The Coordinating Board, because of the petty-bourgeois nature of its leadership, refuses to fight for power, that's why it calls for the People's Assembly.

**Moreno:** No! Backwards. It systematically calls for power.

**NK:** Their power. Or of the People's Assembly and they vindicate themselves as the armed wing.

**Moreno:** But even if it's theirs, let's suppose. That only makes it revolutionary. I, for example, am against that Assembly because I believe that it doesn't coincide with the current level of the mass movement. [But, as] a historical proposal, I do.

## CHAPTER 3

# On the Countries Independent from Imperialism

Simon poses the problem of independent countries. The first thing we have to say is it is a success of our *Theses* [of the IWL–FI] to have defined the different types of countries: colonial, semi-colonial, dependent, and independent. [We must] take up this old classification and definition from the Leninist era, which had been lost for decades by the Marxist and Trotskyist movement. And it is not by chance we have rediscovered it lately, because it is when this phenomenon has taken place and then, logically, we returned to theorize about this issue.

There are independent countries: it is shown by the fact that imperialism attacks them. And if it attacks them it is not because they are dependent on it but because they are independent.

We arrive now to the problem of allied nation. [The definition of] allied nation seems very dangerous to me from a theoretical point of view. I understand the intention of Comrade Simon: he wants to transfer on a world scale the relationship that is established at the national level with the exploited classes. But this has the grave danger of forgetting they are capitalist countries. And because they are capitalist countries, is the current Libyan state allied with the Libyan proletariat? Is it allied to the Italian proletariat, to the workers of the Fiat of which Gaddafi owns 15 per cent, Libya owns 15 per cent? Are they an ally of [Gaddafi or] even Libya? Because it is Libya that owns 15 per cent of Fiat.

So, the word “ally” is dangerous. I don’t know why we have to change what we [always held] that we defend it unconditionally against any attack by imperialism. And in this sense yes, when they attack, we’re defenders, we’re more than allies. But always maintaining the class difference, which is different.

Because it seems to me, Simon, that you forget the problem of the States. The existence of a State is a fundamental fact by itself. For example, within Colombia there is unity with the peasantry because the peasantry doesn’t direct the police or the army, nor is it a state or anything like that. And then we’re allies of them because everything they do goes against the State, but [State] not in the sense of a country but in the sense of a governmental apparatus and essentially a police one and an army. And we’re deadly, mortal enemies of Gaddafi’s army, Gaddafi’s police, and Gaddafi’s government. And so, if we say [they are] allies, it gives the impression that we make [some] concession.

We defend Libya, we defend the right of Libyans to have Gaddafi rule, if they vote for him; we attack that there is no democracy; we attack the terrorist policy of Gaddafi [defining it] as a criminal policy. We believe Gaddafi does nothing to win the European proletariat, does nothing to win the Yankee proletariat.

For example, the money he used in Fiat. If he were to pose in Italy that with this money he will make industries in Libya controlled by the Italian workers’ movement together with the Libyan workers’ movement — but for that, it would have to be a workers’ state — he would win the sympathy of the entire Italian proletariat, or of the whole Spanish proletariat, where there are so

many unemployed. And yet, he uses his money to be almost a majority shareholder, one of the most important, of Fiat and other companies. Gaddafi is a great exploiter of the European proletariat.

So I don't see the advantage of saying "allied nation". I know what you want to say but I don't see the advantage; [it is not] superior to what we say. We defend its independence to the bitter end. We know they are independent, we want them to remain independent, but they cannot continue being independent unless they make the workers' revolution, that is, if they don't dismiss Gaddafi. Gaddafi is a Trojan Horse in independence. He was already a pro-Yankee [fanatic]. [As] I don't know Libyan history well I don't know why he changed, because he was a man very linked to Yankee imperialism. He didn't arise against Yankee imperialism at first.

Here Simon also raised [the question of] independent countries and the need for these. Yes, so much that I thought that, if I had time, [I was going to] write a resolution. In my opinion, there is a difference in relation to governments. I think we have to act with those governments demanding things from them while they have the support of the mass movement, for being independent. Contrary to our total confrontation with semi-colonial governments, which are agents of imperialism. They are not agents of imperialism. But [we act like this] to unmask them before the mass movement. Is it clear or not? We can't unmask them by confronting them in a violent way but by saying what must be done to make the country more and more independent. While in a semi-colonial country we propose "Down with the government", here we overthrow the government by proposing a permanent transitional program based on [the] country becoming more and more independent.

Because in all these revolutions, which we call democratic or of national liberation, even if they are executed, there is a very interesting combination: they all show their socialist character and the need to develop as a socialist revolution because of the global economic crisis. A political-economic combination takes place. Today, and quickly, six months after a country achieves its national independence, its national liberation, it has immediately posed socialist tasks and the socialist revolution, not only national but also international. But [they are posed] as the only way to defend their independence.

The entire politics of the petty-bourgeoisie or of the national bourgeoisie at the head of these states always leads to the loss of independence; it is always a dead end. They are leaderships who, for deep socio-economic reasons, by their very nature are historically counterrevolutionary in the long run, inevitably. Because they stifle, they control the mass movement. Everything that Fidel is describing of Cuba happens. He is telling how Cuba is now.

So I think there has to be a different tactic for these governments. But tactics that can't be of support but of demand and criticism, demand and criticism and to raise these demands in the name of deepening independence, that the country be increasingly independent.

For example, in Nicaragua we have to demand from the government to expropriate the entire bourgeoisie because, in fact, the entire bourgeoisie serves the *contras*. Taking this fact, we demand from the government. And in this way criticize it: "It is a limited government, it is petty-bourgeois, and then, because it is limited, it doesn't advance." We have to raise the Contadora<sup>1</sup> question, that we Trotskyists were right, that the revolution had to be extended, and that Nicaragua had an [appropriate] moment to support the revolution in the area and achieve a revolution in the area in one year. [We have to] point out the crime of not having called the Constituent Assembly. Then they have had to call for an election demanded by imperialism, et cetera, et cetera.

With military policy, too. Well, with everything. But with a demanding character, while [towards] the other governments it is a total confrontation. We call to fight against those governments. [Instead, against independent governments] we fight indirectly. But it is also a fight because we call on the workers' movement not to accept any sacrifice or anything while that government is in place. That is, we demand strikes... Because they are capitalist states, all the specific struggles of

1 **Contadora Group:** formed by the governments of Mexico, Colombia, Panama, and Venezuela, and supported by Fidel Castro, to stifle the development of the Central American revolution, especially in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. It took the name of Contadora Island, in Panama, where the first meeting was held on 7 January 1983.

the workers' movement for us are sacred. If it were a workers' and revolutionary state, we may call to red Sundays of work, to any other type of sacrifice. There we must, in principle, be totally against because the workers' movement doesn't control the State. That is, in the face of the whole crisis, that the rich pay it, this is not the policy of Sandinismo.

[?]: It is a policy similar to the one Trotsky had for the USSR under Stalin.

**Moreno:** Very similar, because when the possibility of war approached, Trotsky proposed to Stalin once or twice to let him in. He took [the USSR] as a workers' state and asked to see what could be coordinated to fight together against imperialism. But there is also a problem, and it is that, for us, the masses are not with the bureaucracy but against the bureaucracy. And don't forget that [for] the independent countries I said it has to meet two conditions: to be an independent country government and to enjoy the massive support of the masses. Two conditions, not one.

## CHAPTER 4

# On the Anti-imperialist Front

You raised the problem of the anti-imperialist front. I don't know if you know the history of the two theses of the Second Congress [of the Third International]. Trotsky and Lenin were the extreme right, those who were most for the support of nationalist movements. Roy was completely opposed. And, to make a common text, everything was elaborated between Lenin and Roy. Roy was closer to the position that was adopted later. For me, it has to do with all the analysis I have done against OCI [*Organisation Communiste Internationaliste*], [in] that chapter where I do its history.<sup>1</sup> I don't know whether you know my work, I think [it is], sufficiently documented, and, if necessary, we would document it more. That is, that Trotsky and Lenin were advancing in the colonial problem. Trotsky abandoned the theory of permanent revolution and only takes it up again on 1927–1928.

For me there can be no [anti-imperialist] front; there can only be a front within a class. There may be agreements with other class sectors. That is, you call anti-imperialism a front. A front has to have common organisms, common discipline, like a union. A union is a front and then it has common organisms and discipline. And we don't accept from any point of view making a front with another class, submitting to the discipline of another class. This is why we're against the anti-imperialist front. Trotsky, in all his literature, never, never again touched the problem of the anti-imperialist front. And Lenin and Trotsky, when they were on the right, always went to the end. [However] they didn't speak of a front; they pointed out the need for agreements, et cetera, et cetera. But they went further: they fought Roy [saying that] what was to be done was to support.

There are even incredible things, [such as] the resolution of the Executive of the [Third] International on Turkey, which we must study very well whether they are right or not. Let the historians discuss if this is true, because the resolution of the Communist International is tragic because they murdered communists and the resolution begins by saying something similar to this: "Even though they murder us, regarding their government our policy is of criticism, of class independence, but at the same time of agreements against imperialism, and we will not abandon those agreements."

So, we're against the [anti-imperialist] front because a front is an organization that remains, or tends to remain. And this can only take place for socio-economic reasons in a class and not between different classes, who live in different places, have different struggles, different interests. Therefore, we believe that in the working class a factory committee, for example, or a strike committee, which is a united front body, or an agreement with the CP and the Socialist Party to make committees, pickets to fight against the fascist right in France, they are organisms that continue, that move for workers' democracy, we tend to move them for workers' democracy. That is, for it to be called a front, it has to have these conditions of continuity, centralism, discipline, and democracy. But we can't do a front of those characteristics with [non-working class sectors].

**Simon:** Even if they are, let's call it that, popular classes.

**Moreno:** Ah, only by agreement.

<sup>1</sup> See Nahuel Moreno, *The OCI(u)'s Betrayal*, in [www.nahuelmoreno.org/english.html#2](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org/english.html#2), in particular, Chapter III, "The Anti-imperialist United Front as Expression of the Theory of Progressive Bourgeois Fronts", pages 19–28.

**Simon:** In other words, our policy is that they also organize themselves as popular sectors and then we make alliances.

**Moreno:** Alliances, and that the proletariat ends up directing them.

**Simon:** We're not for the peasants' and workers' front but for the peasants to organize themselves and fight, we support them and make alliances with them.

**Moreno:** Exactly. As Lenin and Trotsky, who agreed with the Left Social Revolutionaries, did.

**AF:** But having soviets and proposing the peasantry be integrated into workers' organizations, as a policy.

**Moreno:** It's ok. Trotsky warned against the soviets of soldiers or peasants, encouraging them but pointing out that if there was no backbone, which was the workers' soviets, they might go anywhere.

Thus, we're for agreements. On the contrary, we want to teach the whole IWL that we have to be of enormous scope in knowing how to make agreements and pacts, and very progressive agreements. And [also] the definition of an ally, which for us is very, very important. That is, that [with these sectors] we can make agreements with a more or less certain continuity because we consider them allies. We make agreements, unity of action, around certain points but we act only if we agree. On the other hand, in a united front body, once it is set up [it] acts on [what the] majority decides, even though we may be against it.

## CHAPTER 5

# The World Situation: The Class Struggle and the Imperialist Counteroffensive

### The world situation in general

Let's move to the problem of whether the independent countries are the target of the [imperialist] counter-offensive. Well, here I see a point of unity in Simon and in Nicolas, a very important, impressive oversight, in that there is no attack on the USSR in the low-intensity war. It's Afghanistan. It is [an attack] directly against the Russian army. And Cambodia [also]: a total oversight. Afghanistan is central to the Red Army, it is a central point for the USSR, and yet they are also doing counter-guerrilla against it. Therefore, my opinion is that we have to ratify the line we have and that we already wrote in the *Theses*,<sup>1</sup> which was also a success of us: imperialism, of its different weapons to fight [against] the revolution, has begun to give more and more importance to the counter-guerrilla. And it uses it everywhere it can. For example, in the analysis of the comrade, that it tried to raise a *Contra* by bombing in Libya, I don't know whether or not it is correct but it is very ingenious and very deep. It is very possible this is the case, that is, that the real plan of imperialism was to achieve internal change within Libya.

Beware of the problem of fascism posed by Nicolas. Imperialism is using increasingly harsh methods in relation to the revolution, it gets harder and harder. It is evident that imperialism uses more and more tools against the revolution. And against the USSR, against the independent countries, against everything they can, if they have the conditions to make a counterrevolutionary guerrilla. In the USSR, it has no possibility of a counterrevolutionary guerrilla, or in the countries of the East [of Europe], in China at the moment it has no need because it penetrates. That is, in its counter-offensive, imperialism uses increasingly violent methods. But I believe that within its possibilities, within [the possibility it has from the fact] there are Somocistas, for example, in Nicaragua, that there are religious and all kinds of guerrillas in Afghanistan, [that there is] a guerrilla and a tribe, the most numerous, in Angola.<sup>2</sup> [They are] exceptional conditions for imperialism. In those three places, it makes a counter-guerrilla, and it gives that counter-guerrilla more and more money and more weapons. If we didn't [say it], we would deny reality. But [what it gives is limited], because imperialism can't do what it wants, it doesn't dominate the situation. It is a fight of revolution-counterrevolution and, in general, the revolution continues to expand.

On the problem of the imperialist counter-offensive, and I move ahead to the American discussion and what Comrade [Kramer] calls "ideological". Precisely this ideology, for me, has to do with a social phenomenon that has nothing of ideological, which are the needs of very important sectors of the Yankee bourgeoisie, on the one hand. And also, if I am not confused, there is the beginning of a fascist movement, as you say, that covers 20 million people, more or less, influences 20 million. Then it ceases to be ideological; it is the ideology of 20 million, which I accept.

1 Moreno refers to the theses developed in *The Transitional Program Today*, available for downloading from [www.nahuelmoreno.org/english.html#2](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org/english.html#2).

2 Moreno refers to UNITA guerrillas that was based on a majority ethnic group in Angola and, supported by South Africa, fought against the "Stalinist-bourgeois" MPLA government. See, Nahuel Moreno, *Angola: the Black Revolution Underway*, available for downloading from [www.nahuelmoreno.org/english.html#2](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org/english.html#2).

There is a permanent contradiction between what Reagan says and does. All the press has pointed out he should learn from Theodore Roosevelt, who was very friendly and greeted the ambassadors of the countries he was going to invade. I read it in the Yankee press, telling him he had to learn manners [from Roosevelt]: before swallowing a country he called the ambassador, treated him very well, they drank English tea. The next day he totally smashed them, beat them to a pulp, he invaded [the country] with the infantry. The Yankee bourgeois press has said Reagan could learn this and it has also said he has the phonograph diplomacy. I think the comrade refers [to this] when he talks about the ideological element. That is, what Reagan says, what kind of picture he paints, and how he is doing.

I think it is important to point out the United States' democracy is truly the most formidable bourgeois democracy that history has ever given, that there is a democratic inheritance — we have already touched on it in other meetings of the Bolshevik Faction and IWL — that it really makes the presidential system in the United States very different from the presidential system of other countries that have this system, like France; it is the opposite of France. That is, the Congress has a great influence, and there have already been two attempts to go to Bonapartism. That's where the ideological thing comes in, but for me it is not ideological, it is a policy they can't quite make it succeed. So, what the comrade calls ideological is a series of phenomena, ideological also, but which have a very important political, economic and social base.

So let's not put as a specific element of the American phenomenon that there is an ideology. I go to that: there is always an ideology, there can't not be one. And for me, an ideology has emerged that doesn't yet dominate America but there is an ideological tendency to fascism in America. Reagan doesn't [have that ideology], but has flirted with this wing, and has a discourse very similar to that of this sector. I mean, Reagan comes to be a von Paulus,<sup>3</sup> or something like that. It has nothing to do with the German situation.

Well, this is a true element of the American reality: there are 20 million people influenced by the criterion that you have to bust the Jews, that you have to persecute the blacks, that you have to do absolutely everything against the world revolutionary process, and that a world war must be waged. The essential basis of this ideology is that the world war must be waged.

I'm afraid of this ideology. Why? Because for me, it's not [just ideology]. If it were [only] an ideology I would not be afraid of it, [but] it has slight expressions of elements of civil war on a world scale, which is, [for example,] that of the *Contra*. [The *Contra*] is a very serious question, the issue of rockets for UNITA<sup>4</sup> is a very serious matter, it is a very small part of what Reagan's extreme right allies want to do. That phenomenon exists in America.

The difference is that, for me, it is not essentially against the Yankee proletariat yet; because the Yankee proletariat is not mobilized, it is not the great danger. That's the difference with Hitler, that's why it's an ideology different from Hitler's. Hitler, who unfortunately was a huge reality, who cut off the German proletariat, had his own ideology which was of the superior race. [That ideology] responded to the need for Germany to dominate the other imperialist countries. On the other hand, the ideology of the new Yankee fascism is an ideology for the world revolution, and not an ideology to stop the proletariat of the country itself and to occupy territories of other imperialist countries, as it was in the case of Hitler. The ideology of fascism that begins in the United States is not to occupy Japan, not to occupy capitalist Europe, but to defeat the world revolution.

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3 **Friedrich Paulus** (1890–1957) was a German field marshal during the Second World War who commanded the 6th Army during the Battle of Stalingrad. The battle ended in disaster for the Wehrmacht with the ultimate defeat and capture of about 265,000 German personnel, their Axis allies and collaborators. Paulus surrendered in Stalingrad on 31 January 1943, the same day on which he was informed of his promotion to field marshal by Adolf Hitler. Hitler expected Paulus to commit suicide, repeating to his staff that there was no precedent of a German field marshal ever being captured alive. While in Soviet captivity during the war, Paulus became a vocal critic of the Nazi regime and joined the Soviet-sponsored National Committee for a Free Germany. He moved to East Germany in 1953.

4 UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) is the second-largest political party in Angola. Founded in 1966, UNITA fought alongside the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in the Angolan War for Independence (1961–1975). Later, in the ensuing civil war (1975–2002) against the MPLA it became a military force financed by the United States.

So this is a real and true problem, this policy exists. [But] this policy has many drawbacks: bourgeois sectors are against it; the American mass movement which they haven't yet convinced at all that there is another Vietnam to be had. That is the most serious problem they have. They have the problem of the global mass movement because the European proletariat and the European masses don't want that either; they don't want at all America to take part in this way. That is, this ideology, this policy, and these bourgeois sectors have a myriad of inconveniences, of contradictions. But it exists and is a part of Reagan's policy that, when he can, he begins to apply. He is applying it timidly, but it is part of reality.

When it is said to be peripheral, I accept it in the sense that it tries to hit where it feels strongest, but it is not peripheral in the sense that it hits Afghanistan. It hits in Afghanistan and not directly in Siberia because in Siberia — as I already said — there is no guerrilla. In Siberia, they can do absolutely nothing, in Afghanistan, they can.

So, on this particular discussion, I believe the revolution and the counterrevolution are becoming increasingly polarized. This is the whole secret of the problem. And the counterrevolution — Reagan — makes a permanent effort. And it has incorporated, reincorporated, into the methods of the international counterrevolution the armed struggle. This is so, it is a reality; you can't argue it. That's why [there is] this ideology. An ideology that has to be applied timidly [because] it has almost all the masses of the world against it.

But it is an ideology and a policy, which [America] tries to apply to the extent of its possibilities, which [consist in the use of] methods of civil war. Before, until Vietnam, [they always used this policy through war], invasions (the issue of Korea, later on, Vietnam). But after Vietnam, they had to give up, abandon this perspective. And now they also have to apply it through the *Contra*, through guerrillas. [Imperialism] doesn't dare, it hasn't yet given the qualitative leap that the Yankee troops be who invade. It doesn't dare to take this leap, although it is also preparing the whole apparatus, [but] it will be very difficult to convince not only the population but the army itself to invade other countries; they haven't reached such point yet. That is, the point they have reached is to use mercenary troops or guerrillas that they can control, guerrillas like those of Afghanistan and Angola, which are authentic, in the sense they have a social base, even if they are from the right. They try to use them for this plan to start using methods of civil war against the world revolution.

But if a stone has just been thrown, we have to say it has just been thrown; in dialectic it is very important [to know] whether the stone has just come out or it has already arrived and put a swollen eye on someone. That is, [it is very important to know] the trajectory, and that this process has just begun. It has just begun and, according to the comrade, there is a good chance it will be reversed by the mess that Reagan has with his Bonapartist trends, and with the split of the Yankee bourgeoisie. According to the picture given by the comrade, the relationship between the different sectors of the Yankee bourgeoisie is increasingly chaotic.

If so, the situation is less serious than I thought. In this, [my position] was close to the gravity that the Central American comrades pointed out. Relative gravity, I insist, but [it seemed to me] that Reagan was stronger than what the comrade paints. We have to study this.

## **Fascist trends in American imperialism I**

I will continue with [fascism, counterrevolution], which is the big issue. Then I will touch on the status quo and some matters.

Why do we give importance to the problem of fascism, of the counterrevolution, and disagree with the comrade, who in his "Thesis" sees it as a national and not an international phenomenon?

We believe there are an ideology, a policy, and a sector of the Yankee bourgeoisie that begins a counterrevolutionary strategy of an armed nature. This, for us, is a new phenomenon. We said it in the *Theses*, and last night I, who unfortunately can't sleep when I'm worried, could read a lot of quotations. I don't want to expand on it, but I inform you [I have] exhaustive documentation

[which shows] that in the year 1982 — it means that our Theses were almost seers — when [we said that] Reagan incorporated a new element, which was the counter-guerrilla, one or two of the extreme right groups began to consider this policy. It is a brand new phenomenon. They bring the proposal to a senior government official, [though] not one of the best known. And, from there, a secret and political leadership is created, outside the government, to which the government sends four representatives: a member of the Navy, an officer; a member of the Army; a member of the Air Force, and an official member of the CIA. It is a political organization of a colossal strength, so big that they raise money to help the counter-guerrilla from all over the world. And the central objective is the USSR.

This happens when Reagan gives the OK, but from then on they start to pressure Reagan to adopt an overall strategy for the problem of the entire counterinsurgency, the counterrevolutionary guerrillas. Which are more than I thought because there is a Vietnamese one, inside Vietnam, there is another one in Laos; they are like six or seven.

They hold a very important political meeting in Angola, attended by one of the biggest financial supporters of this campaign; also the whole Nicaraguan *Contra* attends. This body is not essentially made to go against the Sandinistas. Against Reagan's line — against Reagan's line! — they say: "Serious error [Reagan's policy for Nicaragua] because the Sandinistas have prestige and the Somocistas are swine despised by the entire world." Then, it is a strategy where the Nicaraguan problem comes in as a tactic.

I don't know whether the discussion we're having with the comrade is understood. First, it is not so ideological, nor so [exclusive] of Reagan as the comrade says. It is very political, real, and it is on a world scale: it is a policy for the world, it is an ideology for the world and it is a general staff already made up by eight leaders, military and political, for the world; for the world, not for [the interior of] America. That [uses] methods of civil war.

That is, there is for the first time a unified, central organization in the world, which has its offices, and which has organic links with the Armed Forces and the CIA of the United States, which is fighting to have a joint military strategy to make counterrevolutionary guerrillas or other variants like that. This comes from earlier; they have made it happen only now. But maybe in America, we know it, because the comrade always surprises us with data. Yesterday he surprised me with a spectacular fact: that the fascist wing, those 20 million, was not anti-Jewish.

I came prepared [with this material from the rabbi]<sup>5</sup>, leader of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, [who speaks] on behalf of the entire American Jewish movement, on behalf of one million two hundred thousand Jews. On behalf of him and of all, all Jews: "It is not a coincidence that the rise of right-wing Christian fundamentalism has been accompanied by the most serious advance of anti-Semitism that the United States has known since the end of the Second World War. When the head of the Moral Majority demands a letter of Christian rights, it is not surprising to see that synagogues are set on fire and Jewish families are intimidated in their homes. I don't accuse Jerry Falwell<sup>6</sup> of deliberately inciting anti-Semitism, but I affirm that his sermons inevitably have that consequence."

That is, after the guy talks, they will burn synagogues or break up Jewish homes. Is it also ideological? And the comrade didn't mention it. It doesn't exist. With the argument that he lives in the United States, we can't discuss anything, because he always takes out a notebook and says: "I have the quote." I also have the official statement of the Catholic Church, where it says exactly the same thing: that it is pure racism.

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<sup>5</sup> The name of the rabbi is not clear in the recording. Probably it was Zindler.

<sup>6</sup> **Jerry Falwell Sr.** (1933–2007) was an American Southern Baptist pastor, televangelist, and conservative activist. He was the founding pastor of the Thomas Road Baptist Church, a megachurch in Lynchburg, Virginia. He founded Lynchburg Christian Academy (now Liberty Christian Academy) in 1967 and Liberty University in 1971 and co-founded the Moral Majority in 1979.

One and a half or two months ago I was summoned by Beveraggi Allende, the leader of the extreme anti-Jewish right in Argentina, who together with Zamora<sup>7</sup> defended the workers of the Ford [factory]. (Beveraggi Allende was General Secretary of the Labour Party; he is one of the biggest reactionaries and fascists in Argentina.) Because of the problem of defending the Ford workers, we considered it appropriate to go and see what this person wanted, who is a public celebrity in the country. [When, in one part of the conversation,] I said that Reagan was with Israel and with Zionism. [Then he replied]: “Yes, but not undercover, as these newspapers show.” And he pulled the newspapers from the American right to show me how they were completely pro-Reagan, and all the newspapers [doing] a racist campaign against Judeo-Marxism, Freemasonry, and Communism. I say this because the discussion with the comrade is that all this right is fanatical pro-Zionist, that’s why I brought that quote from the Catholic Church and all the American Jews denouncing the ferocious racist campaign within America.

What makes everyone confuse the situation is that every time it becomes more polarized, more violent means are used on one side and on the other. Terrorism is not coincidental; it expresses this phenomenon, a degenerated expression. As Trotskyists, we are totally against terrorism. But, just as Trotsky, to see the rise of the Russian revolution, also counted the number of attacks, we also have to see it on a global level.

The revolutionary process rises and the counterrevolution responds, it hasn’t been defeated, it is not defeated. Because what we have to say is that this generalized mass rise of the entire world, where the proletariat of the Southern Cone begins to have a relevant role, is not accompanied in general by the proletariat of the more advanced countries. There is an uneven development of the revolutionary rise. That’s how it is. We have said it [during] the IWL Congress and we continue saying it.

The definition of a world revolutionary situation doesn’t mean there is a revolution in all regions or revolutionary situations everywhere. We also believe we see fundamental seeds of revolutionary processes in Europe — and bigger dynamics than the European Trotskyist comrades usually see —, like [what] we thought of the NATO problem in Spain, as we think [of] what is being prepared in all of Eastern Europe, [of] which Poland, as the comrade pointed out very well, is the symbol. But we believe that Europe, the United States, the Russian proletariat, the Japanese proletariat, in general, are totally in the rearguard, except for isolated expressions. Instead, we believe the backward continents or sectors are in a colossal rise, uneven but tending to even out, with waves, as the comrades said very well. And this is the essential element of reality.

But what we have to understand [is] that this rise tenses the situation, [like] the rise, the development of the mass movement in Russia led to Kornilov. Kornilov could not happen in February, or before February; it had to take place after a few months, after February, when the mass movement became more aware and the rope tensed further.

Well, we believe there are [some] elements [in the American situation] of what the comrade says — at a distance we can’t know whether it is to the degree the comrade says, that a process has already begun, a pre-revolutionary situation or something [of the kind], I don’t know how the comrades define it. That is, elements of the mass movement begin to rebel with great violence, apparently with greater unity than in Europe. [This] would confirm the prognosis made to us by Gnder Frank [when he told us] he didn’t believe in the European proletariat but [that], for empirical reasons and for the analysis of history, he did believe the American people and the proletariat, and [also] the blacks and all [the popular sectors] would rise. I also believe there are elements; I don’t know whether to the degree the comrade says but they are elements. There is relative stability, Reagan rules and then he uses the relative social stability to prepare. Faced with this revolutionary rise, they have a policy of hitting the revolution, of negotiating.

And hence this contradiction, for me correct, [which the] comrade points out: that Reagan does much less than what he says, that there are “serious” — in quotation marks — sectors of the

<sup>7</sup> **Luis Zamora** (b. 1948) is a lawyer, politician, and militant of Argentine human rights organizations. He was part of *Movimiento al Socialismo* [Movement towards Socialism] in Argentina between 1983 and 1989.

bourgeoisie that worry he will do less than what he says, but not because they want him to do what he says but because they want him to say what he does. As the comrade says, [there are] different sectors [in the Yankee bourgeoisie], the crisis is hitting, dividing the bourgeoisie.

We have been saying this for a long time because of a casual fact that [caught our attention]. A few years — three or four — after Reagan took office, I read an editorial in a Yankee magazine [saying] this regime can't stand anymore, [that is] a reactionary regime that doesn't support the workers' movement, that pays bad wages, that allows for unemployment, and so on and so forth. That article was signed by Iaccocca. So, [I told myself]: "In America there must be many Iaccoccas." I saw the reference of who he was and, yes, he was the Chairman of Chrysler. It can't be clearer. That is, [he was] attacking, calling again for a Roosevelt type policy.

So, comrades, there is more and more tension. But this contradiction, what the comrade calls ideology (and we have to see the content, what it means, and not be debaters already experts of many years, nor take advantage of young comrades, or also abuse in the controversy using rhetorical resources and of all kinds), the contradiction between what Reagan says and what he does has to do with this rise. It is not a secret. It also has to do with the relationship of forces, that is, it shows the mass movement is the one on the rise. With the clarification I already made [about] this unevenness. Reagan would speak very differently if there were a revolutionary rise in the United States; then there would be threats to the people of the United States themselves. Today it's all about abroad. It means they consider [that] their rearguard, that is, their proletariat, their blacks, etc., etc., are relatively calm. Everything they say is on a world scale: against the USSR, against the revolution, against this, against the other. And [they say] nothing about within, essentially, of repression of social movements, [except] this ideological question of racism, of Jews or perhaps of blacks too, but not as a permanent or central policy. It is not by chance that the comrade says, and I add to it, that [it is confusing]. I know there are [pro-Zionist bourgeois sectors] and, in general, Reagan's policy is in favour of Zionism.

The important thing is to understand that this contradiction between what [Reagan] says and does is caused by the very rise of the world revolution. Increasingly, he tends to do more: every time there are more and more counterrevolutionary guerrillas, they have bombed Libya, which is not a tremendous act. But from there to the fact the largest counterrevolutionary action they have taken in Grenada, which frankly is one of the smallest islands in the world, doesn't say much for Yankee imperialism with the missiles it has, etcetera, and etcetera. It is the biggest operation it has carried out.

It is just that the masses of the world have allowed him to do only that. And what shows that it is a colossal revolutionary rise is [that they use] the counterrevolutionary guerrilla. Because according to von Clausewitz<sup>8</sup> and military science, who uses the guerrillas? The side which is much weaker. That is, they have to act like chicken thieves: they steal something, they put their hand in the night if they can attack, et cetera, etcetera.

I [speak] to emphasize, then, that the key to the situation continues [being], and is increasingly confirmed, a rise of the masses in the world.

Hence the importance, [for example, of what happened] in the Philippines. I would like to know whether [other Trotskyist currents] predicted the fall of Marcos,<sup>9</sup> the victory of the mass movement, as we predicted. That has to do, for me, with the definition we discussed in the IWL Congress. The facts are there, the political facts that show our thesis [was correct] that there was

8 CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ (1780–1831) was a Prussian general, one of the most influential historians and theorists of modern military science. He is best known for his treatise *On War* in which he discusses an analysis of armed conflicts, in particular, the Napoleonic wars, from their approach and motivations to their execution, including comments on tactics, strategy and even philosophy. Clausewitz's thinking is often described as Hegelian because of his dialectical method. He had many aphorisms, of which the most famous is "War is the continuation of politics by other means."

9 **Ferdinand Marcos** (1917–1989) was a Filipino politician and kleptocrat who was President of the Philippines from 1965 to 1986. A leading member of the right-wing Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement), he ruled as a dictator under martial law from 1972 until 1981. His regime was infamous for its corruption, extravagance, and brutality.

a mass rise, which was growing ever wider. The Philippines is a tangible demonstration. This is not self-proclaiming, it is a fact. This is why the thesis on the Philippines begins with a categorical quotation that has happened almost to the millimetre, mathematically. And like this one, the Theses [of the IWL] and our Manifesto are full of this problem.

There is a counter-offensive, there is a counterrevolutionary guerrilla, and there is a bombing of Libya. But imperialism has to do everything in this way, given the [rise of the] mass movement. That is, imperialism itself is weak. It is weak but weak doesn't mean it doesn't fight. And weak within the enormous strength it has, which is a colossus: it's the weakness of a Cassius Clay<sup>10</sup> or something like that. We have to understand: it is a giant but its role as world cop is weak, it can no longer intervene as in Korea or as in Vietnam. It has to use other people, not Americans. It has to use the guerrilla method, which is a method of weak people, of those who feel much weaker than the rest, etcetera, and etcetera. And it has to use social movements like Le Pen<sup>11</sup> in France, that is, large social movements of a counterrevolutionary type, or relatively large, with a true social base. Because the comrade, who is European, can explain to us better than anyone how sometimes the [petty-bourgeois masses were against the working class with methods of civil war]. Classical fascism is an example of this. I am with Hansen<sup>12</sup> in that a new type of fascism has emerged, which is the fascism of the White Hand,<sup>13</sup> that of the *Muerte a Secuestradores*<sup>14</sup> (MAS) of Colombia, the Triple A<sup>15</sup> of Argentina, and so on. I think it is one of Hansen's greatest contributions to Trotskyism. It was he who said: "[Fascism] changed." And he also said it had changed because of the world revolutionary victory, because of the world's rise. Fascism itself had had to adapt to giving sudden attacks and not to face the working class with the middle class, with methods of civil war.

## The "status quo" of the situation in Central America and its relationship with the situation in Colombia

I want to move on to the definition of the status quo.

First, we needn't argue about words. For example, I think that chronic revolutionary situation is correct; there is a chronic revolutionary situation. So I don't argue against this definition and I congratulate the comrades who made an effort to make a more precise definition also in their terminology.

10 **Cassius Clay** (1942–2016) was an American professional boxer, activist, and philanthropist. In 1964 changed his name to Muhammad Ali after joining the Nation of Islam and he was a great activist against the Yankee invasion of Vietnam, the reason for which he was prosecuted. He is widely regarded as one of the most significant and celebrated sports figures of the 20th century and as one of the greatest boxers of all time. At the time of his death, he had been suffering from Parkinson's disease.

11 **Jean-Marie Le Pen** (b. 1928) is a French politician who served as President of the right-wing populist National Front from 1972 to 2011. He also served as Honorary President of the National Front from 2011 to 2018.

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

13 **The White Hand Gang** was a collection of various Irish American gangs on New York City waterfronts from the early 1900s to 1925 who organized against the growing influence of Italian gangsters. Their name was chosen in response to the Sicilian Black Hand gangs and carried the implication that the Irish gang was the "white" counter to the growing presence of what they considered "non-white" Italian gangsters and Italian immigrants. They were known to be virulently anti-Italian and particularly violent, with members killing each other.

14 **Muerte a Secuestradores** (Death to Kidnappers) or MAS, was a Colombian paramilitary group supported by drug cartels, US corporations, Colombian politicians, and wealthy landowners during the 1980s to protect their economic interests and fight kidnapping. *Muerte a Secuestradores* has assassinated political opponents and community organizers and waged counterinsurgency warfare against guerrilla movements such as FARC-EP and M-19.

15 The **Argentine Anticommunist Alliance** (usually known as **Triple A** or **AAA**) was an extreme right-wing terrorist group in Argentina under the government of Peron in 1974, encouraged by a sector of Peronism, the trade union bureaucracy, the Federal Police, and the Armed Forces. It was responsible for the disappearance and death of almost 700 people.

Now, just as you forgot Afghanistan (and from old comrade to old comrade and old friend to old friend, without argument or argumentative trick), it's no coincidence that you have forgotten a country in all the characterization of Central America and the Caribbean. You didn't name Nicaragua, you didn't name it once.

**Simon:** But I told you that the situation, after rising with the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution, with the aggression of the *Contra* has gone so, so low that afterwards it hasn't returned to the initial point, that's why it remains...

**Moreno:** Yes, you did say that, but you separate Nicaragua from the whole. Because to demonstrate that there is a chronic revolutionary situation, you show Panama, that there are no dictators, etcetera, etcetera. But today, for example, that there are no dictators is not a victory of the mass movement but part of the imperialist counterrevolution. It is a concession that imperialism is forced to make, a movement [from] above because of the great Nicaraguan victory, etcetera, etcetera. In the same way that Contadora is [used] to isolate. So, why do we call it status quo? Because of Nicaragua. Otherwise, we would say a continuous rise with a chronic revolutionary situation without a solution, but continuous rise.

Well, then, for us, Nicaragua is very serious, as it is very serious about FARC and the Colombian CP that support [the truce]. We believe there are two decisive facts in the area, which are Nicaragua and Colombia, and that Colombia is very important and has its influence in the area. In Nicaragua, the revolutionary process didn't end, because it must be said the *Contra* is really being liquidated, that the war is being won by the Nicaraguan people, in spite of the leadership, of the mistakes of the leadership. It is also an expression that the revolutionary rise continues and defends itself from attack because the struggle of the Nicaraguan people against the *Contras* is heroic. And the Sandinista government has adopted a series of measures that, in general terms, have paid off. I don't know whether it is correct the report of our comrades there, who [say] they can liquidate [the *Contra*]. I have been thinking and I get the impression the report may be true, not anecdotal but politically correct, that the *Contras* may already be totally liquidated, [without the possibility of] raising their heads, and that the Nicaraguan government doesn't [want] them destroyed because it thinks that if *Contras* remain America will not invade, and that if America are left without the *Contra*, it invades; then they leave it, they don't finish liquidating it, that is, they continue playing war.

**AF:** In addition, the presence of the *Contra* is an element of internal cohesion.

**Moreno:** It may also be, but if America invades them, they have an internal cohesion factor that is 20 times bigger. Ok, that's why we want to call this the status quo. We don't know what name to put to the fact, the one you pointed out, that there is a great rise in Panama, there is a rise in Honduras, in El Salvador what you said has happened, [in] Guatemala I still see it very weak, there was a beginning [of a rise] but [it was] an outbreak. So, how do we even it? It is totally different from when Nicaragua triumphed. When Nicaragua triumphed [there was] a wave across the isthmus. [Some country] might be delayed, like Costa Rica, but everything was going forward. Instead, we now see the counterrevolution has made some progress.

Once more, I insist on Colombia too. We believe the CP agreement is a deep counterrevolutionary agreement and leaves very serious wounds in the Colombian workers' and popular movement. The CP almost direct move to the counterrevolution is not just anything. Is it clear? We already know the communist parties always are in the counterrevolution, but historically. Now, if this report is correct, it is directly [counterrevolutionary]: [it is] pointing out guerrillas, pointing out activists, helping to kill them. You yourself said: "They are unconditional allies of this conservative government."

On the problem of the Caribbean and the [Central American] isthmus. I think [in the isthmus] we must keep [the definition of] revolutionary status quo or another similar name, [like] "chronic revolutionary situation with an unstable equilibrium"... we can search for the definition. We already specified what we mean by revolutionary status quo: we have gone back a long way in Nicaragua — that is the key — and imperialism has achieved a democratic counterrevolution.

So we're looking for a name, which has its importance because it allows us to be specific. And for me, the Caribbean is another [sector,] totally separate. There the black factor comes in, it is fundamental. It has a rather large kinship with the Mosquito Coast, with Belize and all that, but the isthmus is one thing and the Caribbean is another. And in the Caribbean, for me, there is a great, colossal revolutionary rise. Nothing stabilized there. That is why I am interested in Cuba, if what is happening with Fidel — this terrible self-criticism — is because there is great anger in the ranks.

I think the Central American characteristic of Colombia is disappearing. I think, as a dynamic, it was a completely Central American country, it was very poor, and the historical conditions have made it industrialized, developed. What was also a development in Central America — but latent, because it has almost no internal market, etcetera, etcetera — in Colombia has transformed into the emergence of a strong industrial bourgeoisie and a whole series of factors that make it more South American and less Central American. If we take the dynamics from day to day, it is less Central American. When we did it, the definition was a bit more historical than current.

[The dynamic is that] more and more is coming towards South America. I believe at the beginning of the century it was [a] Central American country and almost pure: of the same poverty, of the same standard of living. [But now,] studying the structure, the weight of the industrial, non-peasant proletariat, [it is increasingly less Central American]. And I also think the state in the last 10 years has modernized, has become much more capitalist and less Central American.

## The crisis of the communist parties and the changes in the politics of Stalinism I

Throughout the report, we forgot something that a comrade touched when [he referred to] Cuba. In the area, what does it mean this mess that Fidel has, who is doing a strong campaign against the bureaucracy and now against enrichment, against everything? I pose it as a question. Isn't it also a reflection of the situation starting to dislocate, that there is a lot of anger in the population against the bureaucracy? Can't this be it? At least, there is a very profound change in Cuba by Fidel. They keep making self-criticisms, changing government people, ministers come and go, eliminating officials. There I see a very serious problem. Is it part of the Caribbean problem or not?

**Simon:** Militarily, there are also many changes.

**Moreno:** Yes, many. They have totally changed the [military] strategy and rely on the Algerian, Vietnamese, and El Salvador strategy. They learned from El Salvador and have abandoned the Russian strategy. They repudiate the Russian strategy and believe that everything they had done is useless because it was a copy of the Russian strategy to fight in Europe. It is the most ridiculous thing in the world, only bureaucrats can think the island of Cuba can fight against Yankee imperialism with the same system of the Russians. At least that's what they say: that Fidel breaks with all Russian strategy and [with] military advisers. [They take the model of] El Salvador because it is small like Cuba. Then, as El Salvador endures an army prepared by the Yankees and manages to fight, Fidel says: "That is the great example, along with the Vietnamese and the Algerians."

But this comes from earlier, the new is everything we said of changes in all places, systematic self-criticism, attack on the bureaucracy for fraud, theft, everything. I leave the question: what does it mean? Does it mean it is part of the Caribbean phenomenon and there is a big discontent in the Cuban population, among the workers? Or is it just a problem at the top of the bureaucracy? Is Fidel making these changes because there is pressure from the ranks?

Today, Sovietologists have discovered that colossal waves of strikes caused almost all the most important changes of government in the USSR. For example, the rise of Khrushchev and then of Brezhnev. It has been discovered, 10 or 12 years later (because it is very difficult to find out when there are strikes), that there were waves of strikes lately. It's been about eight years since there hasn't been any, but there were several. So, maybe, in Cuba there is a strike, but [it may also

be something] similar to the USSR: absenteeism from work or things like that. It seems to me there is something there.

## Fascist trends in American imperialism II

I think we have to continue discussing thoroughly, comrades, because I believe all the comrades are making important contributions. All the concerns that Comrade Simon has brought are all legitimate and important. I will see if I answer some questions.

For example, the question of Afghanistan is correct: the arrangement with the USSR is [that it continues] to dominate Afghanistan. There is, in fact, a counterrevolutionary agreement not to mess up the Arab world because it doesn't suit the United States or the USSR. The Muslim problem is very serious. Then there is an agreement to reach a status quo, a historical agreement, let's call it that, when they fight. But, it seems to me, it is not correct to say that they are giving little help [to the guerrilla. The US fully supports the guerrilla and they have made terrible holes in the Red Army, very large.

[On the] private aid these Yankee fascists [give to the counterrevolutionary guerrillas]. I don't have the data for Afghanistan, but [the private aid given to RENAMO<sup>16</sup> of Mozambique is: 50 thousand uniforms for fighters, 500 SAM missiles, 15 thousand light weapons, ammunition for three thousand fighters, 500 bazookas, rifles and 81 mm mortars and heavy machine guns.

Afghanistan is the first country these fascists aid. All this new strategy arises because of the aid they gave to Afghanistan because there was a very important support committee for Afghanistan.

Edu: The Argentine press published they gave it US\$500 million.

Moreno: If it were what is known, what *The Washington Post* says and everything [that is made] public, then they don't give it anything. The Committee for Free Afghanistan received, for its part, since 1981, US\$45,000. That is what they say publicly.

But there are countless things that are unknown. For example, where did the money come from [for what I just read]? It is not known, because publicly I don't know if they have given Mozambique anything more than 60 or 70 thousand dollars. But we know this because they made a public campaign, they took out a notice to collect money in one of those mercenary magazines that exist in the United States. Then, we know. But this is exceptional, in other cases, they haven't asked for it [like this].

But I acknowledge that yes, they consider Afghanistan is an area of influence [of the USSR] since the time of the Russian Revolution. After the Russian Revolution, when the first treaties began, there was almost an agreement that Finland and Afghanistan were areas of influence of the USSR.

## The Shiites

About the Shiite problem. We must study the problem of the Shiites, because the Shia, from its beginning, was always the popular religion. Of course, they are medieval, super backward — like Abd el-Krim<sup>17</sup> was — but to what extent, in their own way... I stress what the comrade said. Their proposal to make republics has a very progressive side regarding Saudi Arabia and the Arab

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16 **RENAMO** (Mozambican National Resistance) is a militant organization and political movement in Mozambique. Sponsored by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). Founded in 1975 as part of an anti-communist backlash against FRELIMO, the country's ruling party.

17 **Abdel Krim** (Emir Abd-al-Karim al-Khattab) (1882–1963) was the leader of the Berber insurrection of 1921 in Spanish Morocco. He proclaimed the Republic of Confederate Tribes of the Rif and put the Spanish defence on the defensive. To suppress the movement, French imperialism intervened, bringing the rebellion to the whole territory. The movement of Abdel Krim received the solidarity of the Third International and the Pan-Islamic Movement. He was defeated in 1926.

Emirates; it is a great slogan, extraordinary. [But] by giving it a religious character, it has another reactionary aspect. That is, it is a very contradictory phenomenon.

First, Shia Islam in Iran today is the biggest counterrevolutionary factor there is, for me. But it differs from the echo, from what is reflected in the other countries of the area as a Shiite movement, which in, general, in almost all countries is very anti-imperialist.

## North Africa

About North Africa. It seems to me we forgot a little about the workers' movement. The African workers' movement has its strongest, most cultured, highest-level, most historical bastion in the three [countries] of North Africa: Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria. [This is so] because of its proximity to Europe, its colonization, etcetera, etcetera, and because of the influence of European Marxism, that is, it is the area with the greatest influence of European Marxism. In Nigeria this phenomenon also takes place but above all with the sailors and other very small sectors of the workers' movement, which have a great influence from the English Labour Party. But [in North Africa] there has been [influence] of the CP and the Socialist Party, and there is a great trade union tradition. And, for me, in North Africa — along with South Africa — the dynamic, predominant, and already totally dominant element is the workers' movement.

## South Africa

I believe that in the comrade's extensive report on South Africa the leaderships were not attacked to the end. The possibility of civil war, of a civil war [of] the whites, etcetera, etcetera, was pointed out. But there is an enemy as terrible as the whites, and more perfidious, which is the black leaderships. And we have to stop [on this because], otherwise, we do a sociological analysis of the reality of South Africa, that is: the blacks on one side, the whites on the other, a civil war. And the problem is more complex because I think the African nationalist leadership, not just because of the Stalinist influence but because of its petty-bourgeois and bourgeois character is a terrible danger for the black revolutionary process in South Africa.

## World economy

Let's go to the economic problem raised by Raul.

What will cause the crisis, what is already causing the crisis is the trend to protectionism. If imperialism achieved the process of free trade that it has had [with] Bretton Woods,<sup>18</sup> and with a deficit, it would achieve stability. It doesn't achieve stability, but not only because it has losses in the trade balance but because of the protectionism that breaks the world market. What you say leads to protectionism, and that protectionism is what leads to the crisis. But the crisis itself is not caused by the trade deficit or balance of payments, because it could stand. That is why I clarify in my speech that I agree with everything that Comrade Rolo said. I agree the Yankee economy is very bad, but it is very bad because there is already protectionism, because the world market is already dislocating. So that is the process, which is a little more complicated, more mediated than how you painted it and much more mediated than how Rolo painted it.

18 The **Bretton Woods Agreement**, negotiated in July 1944, established a new international monetary system. It was developed by delegates from 44 countries at the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference held that month in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. Under the agreement, other currencies were pegged to the value of the US dollar, which, in turn, was pegged to the price of gold. The Bretton Woods system effectively came to an end in the early 1970s, when President Richard Nixon announced that the US would no longer exchange gold for US currency.

## The crisis of the Communist Parties and the changes in the politics of Stalinism II

The problem of the Communist Parties' crises. The big question is whether Cuba, under the table, has a tactic different from Moscow's, or [whether] Moscow has steered control in Cuba, or [whether] there is a real crisis. We get the impression there is a combination of the two phenomena: there is a real crisis, but it gives us the impression the line of approaching us is [agreed] in common between Cuba and the USSR. In other words, they remain Stalinist parties linked to the bureaucratic workers' states. But there may be [friction]. There are differences.

The CP [in Grenada had] a policy different from Cuba. They have friction, but it seems to me... For example, in Moscow, they have just awarded the Order of Lenin to Athos Fava.<sup>19</sup> I don't think they gave it to him for free. But they may be not [linked].

We're studying this phenomenon which, we believe, is general. We have the impression, for many years, that NKVD has changed the characterization of the Trotskyists, for the problem of the possibility of world war: before we were agents of the CIA and [now we're] mortal enemies of them [the bureaucrats of the workers' states], but who defend the USSR and defend Cuba against aggression, and defend other countries, for example, Nicaragua. [It is] something similar to what is happening to us with the Nicaraguan government, which [previously] sent us prisoners and now gets along with us because it came to the conviction we're together with them against the *Contras* and against the advance of imperialism. Internally, they say: "These ultra-left Trotskyists are sons of bitches, but let's use them, because at least they are against imperialism." It is my impression of all the Communist Parties. There is a general change for this phenomenon [of the possibility of a war]: imperialism and us, "if there is a war, an attack, a clash, they are with us", they say.

This happened clearly in Nicaragua, and many years ago. There was a great surprise when we agreed electorally with the Mexican CP many years ago. We reached an electoral agreement with a very, very good program — although not as much as the one we developed in Argentina. We backed off on a single point. And there was a great controversy with Hansen, who became furious and made a tragedy around that point, which was an ambiguous paragraph and could be taken well. Very rare in Hansen, who knew Trotsky very well, and Trotsky had been to the bitter end, had fought against the Socialist Workers Party for the support of the CP. And a CP worse [than the Mexican]; more Stalinist than the Yankee I don't know any, except perhaps the Argentine CP, but the Yankee wins anyway. And Trotsky fought to the bitter end to support it and that we linked; he wrote articles [holding] that the rank-and-file membership [of the CP] was revolutionary.

I think in 1939, shortly before Trotsky died, there was a very big discussion [in the SWP]. It was a more or less internal discussion; it was uncovered later. It is being retaken now in England because of the problem of war, [by] those who attack the Socialist Workers Party for always having trade unionist inclinations, because they opposed Trotsky's line of agreement with Stalinism, of unconditional support in an election campaign. They all opposed it, with Cannon at the head, and Trotsky said they gave in to the left bureaucracy.

**Alicia S.:** Does it also have to do with the controversy between the defencists and the anti-defencists?

**Moreno:** No, it has nothing to do with it. It's [a discussion] with his friends, with the defencists. Trotsky proposes that we support the CP's candidate for president. However, the CP kicked us out; they didn't deal with us.

<sup>19</sup> **Athos Fava** [1925-2016] was one of the top leaders of the Argentine Communist Party, which was characterized as one of the most right-wing, obsequious to the Soviet bureaucracy, and anti-Castro of all the Stalinist parties in Latin America.

Later, in Colombia, we reached an electoral agreement together. And later in Argentina, where the agreement has already been reached.<sup>20</sup> They've opened up relatively since earlier, [trying] to use us.

Well, we get the impression this line comes from Moscow; that they are not communist parties that rebel against Moscow...

[For example,] Gorbachev's last speech where, instead of saying "the police agents", he names the Trotskyists as a legitimate, almost sympathetic current — he doesn't say "sympathetic" but names it —, as [an] ultraleftist current which wanted a permanent war. It is an entire [speech] dedicated to imperialism. And he says that imperialism denounces them [accusing them] they want to make revolution and war and [that] this is false, [that] this line, the line of those who want to liquidate imperialism, like the Trotskyists, it was liquidated, it was defeated politically. It's incredible: [he doesn't call us] police or counterrevolutionaries or anything like that. That is, [we're] a current of the workers' movement that had an ideological difference with them, and [that] they beat ideologically.

Simon: The Central Committee of the Cuban CP voted, and it is official policy, that Trotskyism is a current of the revolutionary movement.

Moreno: Ah, ok, that confirms [what I say]. [Also] the fact that they invited Zamora and that Fidel Castro asked our union comrades whether he was going or not. That is, as the saying goes, "there are loves that kill".

Well, and Zamora went there. As they clarified that we could not speak, then a flyer was printed and Zamora distributed it in the Congress. A flyer giving the whole Trotskyist line and saying we were totally against Fidel Castro, that he was an agent, [that] he served imperialism and capitalism, that we totally disagreed with his policy. They didn't kick us out, we were not prisoners or anything; we were farewelled with all the honours. And a member of the Political Bureau, the third in the hierarchy, invited Zamora to his house to discuss, and there we said that they were bureaucrats, absolutely everything, and the guys, [with] smiles: "Well, the situation will change", etcetera, and etcetera. And when the Cubans came to Argentina they went to visit Zamora, despite everything we told them.

In short, it is clear there is a change and I think it is a global phenomenon. They have come to the conviction that in a fight against imperialism we're next to them, and then we're a misfortune but they have to endure it, like diseases.

The second element regarding the crises of the communist parties is they have an objective crisis provoked by the revolutionary processes. They have collaborated with dictatorships, with the most reactionary bourgeois sectors, then there is a readjustment and every readjustment causes a crisis.

And the third factor is that I think so, that they are in crisis. It is a crisis of belief, of faith. There is a crisis in the ranks. How can the ranks of the Argentine CP not be in crisis? They supported the military government, which killed their close friends and when they went to tell the Political Bureau they had to fight against the government that killed their friends, they said: "No, it is a progressive government, it is a democratic government, let's not make too much trouble."

We would propose them a united front to fight against the kidnappings and the deaths and they were totally against it. And now they make self-criticism and they say, very smug, very calm: "We were wrong like 20 years in a row, we supported the right. And nothing happened here." It turns out they have many more dead than us, with [their] relatives [and their] close friends who are militants, and they tell them that.

<sup>20</sup> Moreno alludes to the *Frente del Pueblo* (People's Front, FREPU), the agreement between the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement towards Socialism, MAS, Argentine section of the IWL-FI) and the Argentine Communist Party, whose characteristics are described further on.

It is similar to when Mandel<sup>21</sup> went to Colombia, and said: “I have nothing to do with the guerrillas; I have nothing to do with ERP.”<sup>22</sup> They don’t [have] anything to do and they declared it official section! They did everything to keep them from leaving the International. They wanted to leave and Mandel told them: “Stay.” ERP was the pride [of the International]. The oldest of the Krivines<sup>23</sup> was in Argentina participating in the leadership of ERP. Also, Molinier,<sup>24</sup> who was the treasurer of ERP. And very smugly, in that big conference, [Mandel] says: “I have nothing to do, nothing at all.” He has to do with 500, 1,000 or 2,000 dead Trotskyist militants or sympathizers. This is not that we were wrong with the line and we didn’t grow by 100 or 200, but we lost 500, 1,000, with his line. And he said he had absolutely nothing to do with it!

Then, [the communist parties] are in crisis at the roots. There is a total crisis, as I believe that there is [also] a total crisis in [the CP of] Spain, although there have been no divisions. I get the impression there will be some division, on the right or anywhere.

[On the] problem of whether or not there is a break on the left. This concept of “on the left” we have to know how to handle it with great care, very carefully. For example, it seems to me that Raul’s analysis takes into account the past and not the present. We’re not Marxists if we don’t take the concrete fact that, even if [the CP] is official, linked to Moscow, or whatever, even with all the bureaucratic influence you want, a certain line can be favourable, it may [go] to the left. And today all the communist parties of the Southern Cone, except for Chile’s, that is, in all the places where dictatorships have already fallen, a wing of the CP or of the leadership is pulled to the left, to agreement with us, and the right tends to break.

There is [also] the theory of Salvadoran Schafik Handal.<sup>25</sup> Is it an official theory of Stalinism or not? Are the Cubans behind him? It is another mystery. What does Handal say? That the CP has been a specialist in joining with the right, has had great patience, and has been an extraordinary tactician in always joining with the right and that all this policy of joining the right has led to disasters for all the Latin American CPs. Why not [unite] with what is on the left of the CP? The CP has to learn to make connections and fronts with what is on the left of the CP.

He talks from his own experience. The Salvadoran CP was in total crisis and they started with this manoeuvre of uniting the right and the left. Because where they show their Stalinist and opportunist character is in that they raise the front with the right and the left. That is, it is about convincing us — which is what they are trying to do here. The FREPU<sup>26</sup> is within their plan to make a popular front. A popular front but where the ultra-left is part of it. But this forces them to make a turn to the left because they can’t recruit the ultraleft if they don’t make a turn.

[In the Argentine case], for example, they were desperate to make committees of the People’s Front together with us and to have it voted; to make a common party, with voting. And we didn’t

21 **Ernest Mandel** (1923-1995), born in Belgium, was one of the main leaders of Trotskyism since the postwar period, and also a Marxist economist. Together with Michel Pablo, he promoted the reorganization of the Fourth International after the assassination of Trotsky, and since the early 1950s, they led the opportunist sector, responsible for the crisis and dispersion of Trotskyism since then. From the 1960s until his death, he headed the so-called “United Secretariat” of the Fourth International.

22 **ERP** (People’s Revolutionary Army) was the military structure of the Workers Revolutionary Party – The Combatant (PRT-EC), led by Mario Roberto Santucho, during the 1970s, and which had been recognized as an official section of the Fourth International by the majority headed by Mandel and Livio Maitan since 1969, when they promoted guerrilla deviation.

23 **Jean-Michel Krivine** (1932–2013) was a surgeon and member of the *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (LCR, Revolutionary Communist League), French section of United Secretariat of the Fourth International. He was a cousin of the LCR leader, Alain Krivaine.

24 **Raymond Molinier** (1904–1994) entered Trotskyism in the 1930s, and integrated one of the sectors of the French section with which Trotsky argued.

25 **Schafik Handal** (1930–2006) was a Salvadoran politician. Born in Usulután, he was the son of Palestinian immigrants from the town of Bethlehem. Between 1973 and 1994, he was the general secretary of the Communist Party of El Salvador.

26 The People’s Front (abbreviated **FREPU** in Spanish) was a political coalition in Argentina, formed ahead of the 1985 parliamentary election. FREPU consisted of the Communist Party of Argentina, Movement towards Socialism and a small group of Peronist trade unionists.

accept it at all. For us, they were coming to the left, with all their contradictions. With the plan to grab the left and then go and agree with the right for whatever it was, they were going to the left. As Trotsky said in America: first, it is a class party, its members are revolutionists; but as or more important than that is that they are denouncing imperialism because they made a deal with Hitler. Agreeing with Hitler, something more horrible is impossible, put them on the left in America, because in agreeing with Hitler they began to say that [there was] Yankee imperialism and [that] Roosevelt's was an imperialist government — a truth as big as a house — and, from being next to Roosevelt, they broke with him and began to raise that [America] was the dominant imperialism in the world, that it was necessary to fight against it, etcetera, etcetera. And Trotsky said: "It's good, it's good; they're saying this, it's not bad. Let's support them in that, that Yankee imperialism is very bad. Before, they used to tell us it was not [imperialist] and that it was very good."

[For] us, then, the ideal is a centrist current of the left, independent, that moves towards us. For structural reasons, Stalinism can't come towards us. [All] Stalinism — the one linked to Cuba, the one linked to the USSR — is part of the world counter-revolutionary bureaucratic apparatus. But perhaps, at a certain moment, the bureaucracy itself is forced to go to the left as in the United States, which goes to the left in the most tragic moment of Stalinism, which is when it agrees with nothing less than with Hitler.

And well, that is Marxism: to take the concrete realities. And in America, at the moment when the Kremlin was farthest to the right, the American CP went to the left by order of the Kremlin itself. Contradictory but real. Trotsky takes that situation and says: "Let's support".

We in Argentina have considered that they come to the left. First, we had doubts, [then] we did a test. We went [to see them] and [told them]: "No FREPU, because you have a FREPU plan different from us. FREPU for us is a class front, and it is because it is you, us and those Peronist sectors that accept a class program such as the FREPU program. But you have the plan to join right-wing sectors, to make a national and social liberation front." Then nothing of political unity: it was an electoral agreement. But we wanted to test whether they were moving to the left or not. And we told them: "The proof we demand so FREPU stops being an electoral agreement and starts to be something a little more serious is that we agree to be against the union bureaucracy, against Argentine capitalism, and against the companies. If we agree in practice, that is, if we make union groups that fight for union democracy, for the liquidation of the bureaucracy and for a class policy in the unions, that is, if you accept our program in the unions, we call it the People's Front Grouping of... the Meatworks, or of such a union. We want to know [whether you agree]."

And at the beginning, the old Trotskyists, -among whom I include myself, -did that test believing it wouldn't work. Because they began to tell us: "You have to understand, all our leadership and half of the militants of our party are right-wing, educated in the class collaboration, they are all reactionaries. And we thought they were not going to make a deal. Comrades, they began to agree almost everywhere with us. [We have several joint trade union slates.]

**Simon:** Do they want grassroots organizations and accept the organization to be called People's Front?

**Moreno:** Yes, in the trade union arena they accept it, yes! And they accept the program: against the bureaucracy, for workers' democracy, and so on. In the places where they have agreed with the bureaucracy we have them against the ropes because we're demanding they break and denounce the bureaucracy, and they tell us: "Don't go so fast, it can't be."

To "Chapulín Colorado", one of their great bureaucrats — the one in Acindar<sup>27</sup> —, they demanded he agree with us. They have sent him to the USSR [to accept the discipline] because he refuses to agree with us. And they come and tell us: "An old comrade and he doesn't accept discipline! He doesn't want to do the front. We have sent him to the USSR some time to see if he

<sup>27</sup> **Acindar** is an Argentine company that produces structural steel and provides services for agriculture, industry, and construction. Its headquarters is located in the city of Villa Constitución and has plants in the cities of Rosario, Villa Mercedes, La Tablada, and San Nicolás.

breaks his ties with the [union] bureaucrat.” And they make the front with us without their top leader in the metalworkers union. This is going to the left.

Well, this happens everywhere. Brazil, comrades, is an example. Based on the experience of Argentina, when we passed through Brazil, we urged our comrades to see what happens. In this, Trotsky foresaw well when he proposed in America to know how to unite and respect the ranks. Ultimately, it means, in the long run, that the ranks, or the most dynamic sectors of the ranks will place themselves against the leadership. So I think there are processes to the left, very large and of all kinds. Not in Europe, where there is no much class struggle, but everywhere else. The comrade told me that in the [American] black movement there is a Muslim movement. It is very possible that it is very superior to the previous one, that it is more to the left.

## CHAPTER 6

# The weakness of imperialism

I believe that this entire problem of the imperialist counter-offensive, of the ideology and the reality of this counter-offensive, has to be studied within the framework of the global relationship of forces.

Specifically, I believe that, because of the global revolutionary rise deepening and expanding, the relationship between revolution and counterrevolution is increasingly tense. This is all the secret of the problem. And in this imperialist defence of the system in the face of the irrepressible rise, Reagan makes a permanent effort to reincorporate the methods of armed struggle in the counterrevolution that he leads and directs.

As Nicolas said so well, Reagan “does what he can”, not what he wants, in his plan to use methods of civil war, that is, of armed struggle to face the revolution. Until the Vietnam War, imperialism always used military methods. It used invasion. Later, they used the war, against Korea and then against Vietnam. But once defeated in Vietnam, Yankee imperialism had to stop using war and invasion for a while.

Instead, it had to place a whole emphasis on the negotiations. Negotiation remains still its main resource. But in the growing global polarization of the class struggle, Reagan tries to incorporate elements of civil war.

Now he does so through counterrevolutionary guerrillas. He hasn't taken the qualitative leap of Yankee troops invading. Although in Lebanon they made an attempt, a test that failed them resoundingly. Granada is also an invasion of very little importance, although symptomatic. They don't yet dare to take the leap, although they are preparing all the military apparatus to hit it as soon as they can.

And that's where Reagan's ideology comes from. Precisely this ideology for me has to do with the needs of a very important sector of the American bourgeoisie.

As Nicolas says, there is a contradiction between what Reagan says and what he does. But Reagan talks about doing what a section of the Yankee bourgeoisie wants done. And, in addition, there is a beginning of a fascist movement in the US, the Christian fundamentalists, who want to do all the barbarities that Reagan talks about and more. This movement covers some 20 million adherents and then the issue is no longer ideological, or is the ideology of 20 million people. But anyway, this is embryonic.

Reagan represents a Bonapartist attempt that fails to fully implement its policy. I think it is important to point out that in the United States, which is truly the most formidable bourgeois democracy that has taken place in history, there is a democratic tradition which is difficult to dismantle. This is why the presidential system in America is very different from the presidential system of the Southern Cone or the other countries that have this system, such as France. The congress in the USA has a great influence. And two attempts to go to Bonapartism and downgrade parliament to a secondary role (Nixon and now Reagan) have already failed in this century, due to the resistance of the American masses to support any attempt to limit their democratic rights.

Put another way, Reagan can't fully implement his ideology, his plans, his wishes, because he faces these two resistances: first and foremost, the offensive of the colonial masses; second, the more or less strong resistance of the American masses to being cannon fodder or to having their freedoms cut off.

Let's not state as a specific phenomenon of the American process that there is an ideology. There is always an ideology, you can't help but have it. An ideology begins to emerge that still doesn't dominate in the US. And it is also possible that it is as Nicolas says, that at the same time a tendency arises from other sectors of the bourgeoisie that seek that Congress have greater influence.

## Fascism against the world revolution

But just because Reagan finds it difficult to apply his policy, doesn't mean it is a pure bluff, that they are empty threats. There is an ideological tendency to fascism in the United States. Reagan is not part of this fascist wing but he flirts with it and has a discourse similar to this sector. That is, he comes to be a Von Paulus (right-wing German general who allied himself with Hitler without being a Nazi) or something like that.

This is a true element of the American reality. There are 20 million people influenced by the criterion that you have to crush the Jews, that you have to persecute the blacks, that you have to do absolutely everything against the world revolutionary process: from guerrillas, invasions, bombings, to world war against the USSR.

There are already expressions of some importance, although not dominant, that Yankee imperialism once again uses arms to stem the rising revolution: the "Contras" thing in Nicaragua; the rockets for UNITA in Angola and the Afghan guerrillas. They are very serious and novel issues. It's a small part of what Reagan's far-right allies want to do, but it starts somewhere.

But this policy has two key differences with the policy of Nazism. The first is that it doesn't essentially go, for the moment, against the American proletariat — because it is not mobilized, it is not the immediate great danger for the Yankee bourgeoisie. It goes against the world revolutionary rise; it is an attempt of world fascism. The second is that the US dominates the world capitalist economy; therefore it doesn't need, like Nazi Germany, to invade other imperialist countries, to dispute the market and hegemony.

And this also explains why the nascent American fascism has an ideology different from that of Hitler, a Christian fundamentalist religious ideology or that of the Moon sect.<sup>1</sup>

The ideology of the superior race conformed to the Nazi goal of dominating the other imperialist countries by military means. The ideology of the seed of new Yankee fascism is to face the world revolution. It is not to occupy Japan, it is not to occupy capitalist Europe, it is to defeat the world revolution.

This policy has many barriers that hold it back. There are bourgeois sectors against it, the American mass movement to which they haven't yet convinced that there is another Vietnam to be made. The proletariat and the European masses don't want this either. They have the problem of the world mass movement. That is, this policy has a myriad of drawbacks, of contradictions. But it is part of Reagan's policy which, if he could, he would apply it. It is, therefore, a part of reality.

Nicolas says that imperialism hits in peripheral places. I would rather say that it hits where it feels strong to strike with counterrevolutionary guerrillas. To hit the USSR, it hits in Afghanistan where there is a guerrilla that can be supported and doesn't strike in Siberia because there is no guerrilla there and it can do absolutely nothing.

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<sup>1</sup> It refers to the sect headed by **Sun Myung Moon** (1920–2012), a Korean religious leader known for his business ventures and support for right-wing political causes.

## A “general staff”

This policy of supporting “*Contra*” guerrillas began to be considered by one or two groups of the extreme right in 1982. They brought the proposal to a senior government official and from there a secret political directorate was formed, alien to the government, but to which the government sends four representatives: from the CIA, the navy, the army, and the air force.

This political organization is of colossal strength, so great that they raise money to help the “*Contra*” of the entire world and whose central aim is to attack the USSR.

From then on, this organization presses for the government to adopt a joint strategy on counterinsurgency, that is, a central strategy to develop counterrevolutionary guerrillas. Since then they have developed or supported six or seven counterrevolutionary guerrillas, including one in eastern Vietnam and another in Laos.

This organization held a very important meeting within Angola, in which participated one of the most important financial supporters of this campaign.

This counterrevolutionary directorate defines that the policy carried out by Reagan in Nicaragua has been a mistake because the Sandinistas are very prestigious and the “*Contra*” is formed there by the Somozist scum which is despised all over the world. In short, this counterrevolutionary directorate defines a strategy, within which Nicaragua comes in as a tactical problem. It is not the axis. That is, it is not as ideological as Nicolas says; it isn’t just a project of Reagan. Nor is it an armed attack only on independent countries.

It is a policy for the world, it is an ideology for the world, it is a General Staff made up by eight political-military leaders for the world.

For the first time, there is a unified organization in the world, which has offices and organic links with the Armed Forces and the CIA of the United States, which fights to impose a military strategy as a whole, to make counterrevolutionary guerrillas or other such variants to defeat the world revolution, including the USSR.

It is a qualitative leap of the imperialist counterrevolution in the post-Vietnam stage, to begin using military methods, of civil war, to confront the masses.

## An uneven rise

The revolutionary process rises and the counterrevolution responds; it is not defeated. And this is because, in this generalized mass rise of the entire world, where the proletariat of the Southern Cone begins to have a relevant role, it is not accompanied, in general, by the proletariat of the advanced countries. There is an uneven development of the revolutionary rise.

In making the definition that there is a world revolutionary situation, we don’t mean there are revolutionary situations in all countries at the same time. The proletariat and the masses of the imperialist countries and the USSR are not leading revolutions at this time. In any case, we believe we see seeds of revolutionary processes in Europe, with larger dynamics than the European Trotskyist comrades generally see. We foresaw the dynamics that could be developed in Spain with the NATO referendum<sup>2</sup> and we also believe that something very important is becoming ready in Eastern Europe.

But, for the time being, the European, Russian, Japanese, and American proletariat are very much at the rearguard, in general, except for isolated expressions.

Instead, we believe the backward continents or sectors are in a colossal, uneven rise, but tending to even out. And this is the essential element of the current reality.

<sup>2</sup> A Spanish NATO membership referendum was held on 12 March 1986 to gauge support for the country either remaining a member of, or leaving, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which it had joined in 1982. It was called by the PSOE government lead by Felipe Gonzalez.

This rise tenses the world situation, in the same way as the development of the Russian mass movement in 1917 led to the attempt of a counter-revolutionary coup by General Kornilov. Kornilov could not take place in the democratic revolution of February 1917 that overthrew the Tsar. It had to happen a few months after February, when the mass movement increasingly stretched the rope.

We believe that imperialism uses its relative social stability to prepare and begin to launch its counteroffensive with elements of civil war, guerrillas, and bombings against the world revolution.

Reagan's rhetoric and politics are centred against the world mass movement and not against the American mass movement which they see as relatively calm. We believe there are certain elements in what Nicolas says about the situation in the US but not perhaps to the degree he sees. His description speaks of an almost pre-revolutionary situation, where there are elements the mass movement begins to revolt with great violence, apparently with greater unity than in Europe. This would confirm the prognosis Gnder Frank made to us that he had no trust in the European proletariat but, for empirical reasons and an analysis of history, he did believe the American people and proletariat would fight hard in the short term. I also see elements of that, although not to the degree the comrade sees.

We also see the elements of crisis in the bourgeoisie and its divisions. Two or three years ago in an American magazine, I read an article that said the regime could not withstand any more, that it is reactionary, that it doesn't support the workers' movement, that pays poor wages, that allows unemployment. Whose article it was? From the president of Chrysler, who attacked the government and proposed to return to the old policy of Roosevelt to make concessions to the workers. The comrade's observations on the war economy are very interesting and it is true there is a great discussion in the Yankee bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, there is an important seed of fascist movement in the United States as we have said. But also the politics of this movement are all directed against the world revolution at this time. The fascists and Reagan would speak very differently if there were a revolutionary rise in the United States. Then there would be threats to the people of the United States. They consider the Yankee proletariat and the blacks are relatively calm. All their threats are on a global scale, against the USSR, against the world revolution.

## The stone that is just thrown

Imperialist politics is an escalation. Increasingly, they tend to make more counterrevolutionary guerrillas and now they have bombed Libya. But in relation to the revolutionary rise and its role as world cop, imperialism is weak; weak within its huge colossal fortress. But weak after all for the great counterrevolutionary task it has, wants, and needs to accomplish.

It can't intervene as in Korea or Vietnam. Its greatest success has been the invasion of the tiny island of Granada. For the missiles it has, it's not much to say.

But it's just that the masses of the world have only allowed it that. What shows the colossal strength of the revolutionary rise is that imperialism uses the counterrevolutionary guerrillas so much. Because who uses the guerrillas? According to military science, the side that is much weaker uses the guerrilla. They have act like chicken thieves, who raid the coop at night. That imperialism uses guerrillas, makes one or two invasions as in Lebanon, Grenada, and bombing against Libya shows to me it is very, very weak faced with the rise of the world revolution. Yankee imperialism always used war and direct invasions. It invaded Vietnam with its army and suffered a severe defeat from which it tries to recover. Since then it is weak although it tries to recover.

As because of the rise it can't launch the petty-bourgeoisie with methods of civil war against the working class in countries where there is revolutionary mobilization, then the counterrevolutionary staff, which has a fascist ideology and project, applies its policy of using methods of civil war against the world revolution using the "Contra" guerrillas. Which reflects the cop is still very weak, doesn't dare to invade, or to wage war directly.

But this is a process that has just begun. We have to say the stone has just been thrown. In dialectics, it is very important to know whether the stone has just been thrown or it has already arrived and left someone with a swollen eye. That is, it is very important to know the trajectory of the stone.

This process has just begun and, according to Nicolas, there is a good chance it will be reversed because of the problems Reagan has with his Bonapartist tendencies and because of his ties with a sector of the Yankee bourgeoisie and not with the whole of it. According to the comrade's opinion, the relationship between the different sectors of the Yankee bourgeoisie is increasingly chaotic.

If so, the situation is less serious than I thought. I had the vision that Reagan was stronger than what the comrade says. This, we have to study it.

## **A definition we need to keep**

We risk of believing that what essentially characterizes the world counterrevolution at this "Reagan" stage is the use of military and war methods when it is the opposite. We should not confuse the new elements of reality with reality as a whole. That a street fighter, who is getting a colossal beating by an enraged mob, defends himself with a stick doesn't mean he doesn't continue to get beaten up and lose the fight. It only means that to defend himself he incorporates a new weapon, the stick.

The same goes for Reagan and Yankee imperialism. The axes of their policy are two. One consists in diverting the revolutionary rise to colonial bourgeois democracies, that is, to use the democratic reaction instead of the stick, where it is possible. "With the right to vote the revolution was over and everyone to work or starve to death", the State Department pontificates. The second axis of the imperialist policy is to negotiate and deepen the agreements and the counterrevolutionary front with the USSR, the governments of the backward countries, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, the church, and its imperialist partners.

The new military elements are added to these two main axes.

We repeat our old definition: the club to impose its negotiation.

## CHAPTER 7

# The Revolutionary United Front

The World Congress of the IWL–Fi held in March 1985 approved the *Theses on the World Situation*, which defined as an “absolutely privileged” sector for the activity of our parties “the autonomous currents of the vanguard that are against class conciliation” and that arise as a result of the crisis of the counterrevolutionary apparatuses and the global mass rise. To work on them, the *Theses* adopted the tactic of the revolutionary united front, which “consists in achieving political-organizational agreements based on common programmatic points that allow us to participate jointly in the processes of class struggle and in the fight for the leadership of the mass movement”. We defined the revolutionary united front as “a transitional step towards a mass revolutionary party”.

In over one year from the World Congress, we had to take stock of the results of this tactic. The International Executive Committee discussed extensively in this regard as the most important sections of the IWL made a thorough effort during the past year to seek revolutionary unity agreements with very good results. Important revolutionary agreements were achieved but, unlike what we forecasted in March 1985, they were fundamentally in the trade union arena and not with political organizations or currents to build revolutionary political parties.

### What did we say in 1985?

The revolutionary united front is an agreement between political currents of the working class that adopts a revolutionary program and some organisms — leadership, newspaper, etc. — that give it a certain permanence. As the *Theses* say, it is a transitional step towards a revolutionary party.

We saw that there could be no revolutionary united front if it didn’t consciously propose the construction of a party to fight for the political leadership of the working class.

Our analysis started from the fact that the crisis of the reformist apparatuses would release broad currents of activists and fighters that turned to the left in search of a political option.

This has been confirmed but we must make a correction to our theses because the currents that break with the communist, social-democratic, Peronist, and Aprista parties are expressed fundamentally at the trade union and not the political level. This is why there hasn’t been, as we thought a year ago, the revolutionary united front of political currents that come together in the perspective of making a revolutionary party. We made agreements with union currents around revolutionary programs but whose axis, whose central and immediate task is not the construction of that party.

## The crisis of the apparatuses

When I was young, during the 1940s, workers spent their time in the premises of class parties. As there was not much money because of the crisis of the 1930s, a single socialist or communist newspaper was bought in a premise and every day in the afternoon 80, 100, 200 militants arrived and read the newspaper among all. This was the most important social fact for all workers, after work and their Sunday fun.

This has been lost today, not only because of television and advances in communications but mainly because of the betrayal of the leaderships.

No longer do the workers go *en masse* towards the communist and socialist parties. They distrust them and their leaderships, even if they keep voting — less and less — for their candidates in the elections, as is the case in Europe.

All the communist parties of Europe and the Americas are in crisis. The French CP has just received less than 10 per cent of the votes in the last elections, after having had almost 25 per cent of the votes. The Spanish CP has divided into three for a while, the Italian CP, the strongest in the western world, is today a front of tendencies that go from the right to the left. In the Americas, there is no CP with a head: the Argentine is in a terrible crisis after having supported Videla; the Brazilian is divided for having supported for years the union bureaucracy linked to the dictatorship and called “*pelegos*”, the Bolivian has been divided for having been part of Siles Suazo’s starvation government; in Colombia, the communist guerrilla FARC agreed to the truce with the government and a good number of FARC members separated from that organization.

The Socialist Parties also begin to feel the crisis. There is Felipe Gonzalez, who almost lost the plebiscite for the referendum in Spain, with broad sectors of his party and his electorate who turned their backs on him. Not to mention bourgeois parties that had significant mass support such as Peronism, which is in a huge crisis, or what can happen in the Peruvian APRA as the masses begin to get disenchanted with Alan Garcia.

Besides the crisis of the apparatuses, the working class has re-entered the scene, especially in Latin America, South Africa, and the Philippines, and to a lesser extent in Europe. These two facts, plus the growing proletarianisation of our parties or groups, which are increasingly part of the working class, as we will see in the balance of activities, show we will find more and more currents and groups of activists with which to seek revolutionary unity. In this sense, immense possibilities are opening up to Trotskyism.

## Trade unions are the focus

By moving away from the reformist workers’ parties, the workers have gone to take refuge in the unions, which are, today, the privileged place where the activists are grouped.

Because of this, all the new currents that arise as a result of the crisis of the apparatuses and of the workers’ rise are expressed mainly at the union level and not at the political level.

This is why old tactics such as entryism in the mass workers’ parties have ceased to be useful, because now the masses are actively organized in the unions, and not even there they do so permanently. Sometimes they only join the union life when there is a dispute or a workplace agreement is being negotiated with the bosses.

This is a worldwide phenomenon and there are several clear examples of this: the astronomic development of Workers’ Commissions in Spain, which became the undisputed axis of resistance to the Franco regime and which have remained the centre of Spanish union life in the last years.

The Unified Workers’ Central (CUT) of Brazil and the Workers Party (PT) are another illustrative example. PT is a new party, of class, very influenced by the Church, and which brings together an important sector of the workers’ vanguard, especially in the State of Sao Paulo, the

largest in the country. PT leads CUT, which is the new workers' central emerged in the fight against the "pelego" trade union bureaucracy. But despite their attractiveness, the workers and the vanguard revolve more around CUT than PT.

We could also list the growing importance of the Uruguayan central (PIT-CNT),<sup>1</sup> the independent trade unionism of Colombia, and so on.

This reality, big as a house, had been analysed by us but we had not drawn conclusions in relation to our tactics: today, the ground for achieving revolutionary agreements is fundamentally trade union and not political. In the past year, we haven't seen strictly national political currents that turn to revolutionary positions, and that seek to build revolutionary parties but we have found ourselves in Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina with currents or groups of revolutionary union activists, who fight against politics of peace and against the government in Colombia, against the "pelego" bureaucracy and the CUT in Brazil, against the Austral Plan<sup>2</sup> and the union bureaucracy in Argentina. They are the sectors with which we must seek at all costs revolutionary agreements, although, for now, they are only expressed at the union level. But they are the starting point for the construction of true revolutionary workers' parties in the future.

Taking into account this trade union character, we believe that in all countries where there is a great workers' rise, where we have small parties inserted in the unions, we will find endless possibilities to unite with revolutionary currents or activists.

## A positive balance sheet

Therefore, our balance sheet for last year in relation to the united revolutionary front is highly positive and not negative: although nowhere did we achieve pure political agreements to build revolutionary parties, we made agreements with revolutionary trade union currents in Colombia, which is the vanguard of this process, in Brazil, and it begins to be applied in Argentina with the opposition union slates.

Something similar happens in Mexico, where the Zapatista Workers' Party has been founded, but with left-wing centrist neighbourhood currents or activists.

Our task now is to elevate these revolutionary trade union fronts to the political arena, that is, to the construction of the revolutionary party, whether these currents enter the IWL and our national parties, whether mergers take place or new parties are formed where our sections can become a minority.

We want to dwell at the experiences identified — Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico — because they are the example of how we should act and because they point to the immense possibilities that open to us as the revolutionary rise increases and as our parties are proletarianised.

## A Luchar

A *Luchar* [To Fight] is an agreement reached between the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (Socialist Workers Party) of Colombia, the Trade Union Work Committees, the Bread and Freedom Movement, and the Trade Union Integration Committees (CIS).

A *Luchar* is the highest expression of the revolutionary union front and its program (see *Correo Internacional* No. 18) is an example of this: against imperialism and capitalism, for socialism, against all bourgeois governments, for class independence and against class conciliation, for workers' democracy, for a workers' and popular power, for the vindication of the leading role

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1 The Interunion Workers Plenary – National Workers Convention, popularly known as PIT-CNT, is the trade union centre in Uruguay. Virtually all unions in Uruguay are affiliated with the PIT-CNT.

2 The **Austral Plan** was an Argentine economic plan in 1985 devised by Minister of Economy Juan Vital Sourrouille during the presidency of Raul Alfonsin.

of the working class. The weak point of the program is that it doesn't raise the construction of a revolutionary party of the working class.

The birth of *A Luchar* is a sample of what we have been saying: for several years there has been a general rise of workers, peasants, and popular sectors in Colombia, which is combined with the rise of very powerful guerrilla organizations.

Belisario Betancur's government signed a truce with FARC, the pro-Soviet guerrillas, and with M-19, which was supported by the entire left and throughout the country, including by the Unified Secretariat.

There were only two sectors opposed from the beginning to the peace policy of Betancur and the CP: those that today make up *A Luchar* and a split of the FARC.

In a country where the Central American guerrilla tradition is combined with the workers' struggle of the Southern Cone of the continent, *A Luchar* has set roots in the working class and brings together the most revolutionist strip of union activists in the country. *A Luchar* emerged from independent trade unionism, which, as the name implies, is the trade union sector that is not part of the pro-bosses centrals or the communist central. This sector was led by Maoism but when it entered a crisis, in the early 1980s, it released the revolutionary potential of an immense strip of fighters.

When the IWL World Congress was held on March 1985, we thought we saw in *A Luchar* the embryo of a political revolutionary united front, that is, that it tended or should quickly tend to be a political party and we wanted to accelerate the discussion and speed up this process. But despite our wishes, the agreement didn't reach the point of making a revolutionary workers' party, because the other currents didn't see it that way. Unfortunately, we carry the lack of tradition of strong workers' parties and the influence of the guerrillas, which make it difficult to see the urgency of building a revolutionary workers' party.

But this doesn't detract from the immense achievement that *A Luchar* is, the most finished and structured revolutionary union front, with an extraordinary program, with national leadership, and with an influence that covers almost the whole country, with regional organizations, with a newspaper and with a strong union weight.

In any case, our policy continues to be to achieve a revolutionary workers' party that extends this wonderful unity to the political arena but without rushing the process, respecting the criteria and will of the groups that make up the agreement.

## The example of Brazil

Together with the beginning of the workers' rise in 1978, a very deep process of union reorganization of the working class opened in Brazil, accompanied by a political revolution against the "*pelego*" bureaucracy linked to the dictatorship and the emergence of a class independence party. This process gave a leap with the fall of the dictatorship in 1984.

Founded in 1983, CUT agglutinated all the unions that broke with the "*pelegos*" and under the leadership of PT. This had been born several years earlier; its base was the unions of the Industrial Belt of Sao Paulo and it began a rapid electoral career, as a workers' party.

From there, a process opened of breaking up of the "*pelego*" bureaucracy supported by the CP and the transfer of dozens and dozens of unions to CUT. But the leadership of CUT and PT — which the Church controls — is also bureaucratic, and trade union currents have begun to emerge in the unions that question it.

Within this framework, trade unions and of class, anti-democratic and anti-government oppositions and tendencies have begun to emerge. The best example is the trade union tendency established in Belo Horizonte — the third city in the country with three and a half million inhabitants — the capital of the second state of the country, Minas Gerais, with 16 million inhabitants. In the

CUT Congress of this city, the delegates of the metalworkers union (which groups 55,000 workers) linked to our party, *Convergência Socialista* (Socialist Convergence), presented a Thesis whose axis was the fight against the Plan Cruzado<sup>3</sup> of the Sarney government, for the moratorium of the foreign debt, and against the “*pelego*” and CUT bureaucracies. The Theses also proposed the fight against the bosses’ parties and for the PT slates for the next constituent assembly and governors’ elections to include 80 per cent of worker candidates, because the PT leadership is raising petty-bourgeois and intellectual candidates.

The fight against the government’s economic plan was a fundamental point because the leadership of CUT had merely made lukewarm criticisms, supporting what they call “positive aspects” of the plan, which in fact is supporting the government.

In the Congress, the Theses got the support of 40 per cent of the delegates — 110 out of 270 — representing roughly 250,000 metalworkers, drivers, miners, guards, teachers, health, and construction employees. The current didn’t win the Congress because it is weak among the banking and service unions but it is the majority in the blue-collar workers’ movement. Under pressure from this current, the Congress approved the rejection of the Government’s Plan Cruzado.

After the Congress, a meeting was held where the trade union tendency was formally established around the points raised in the Congress, with 75 delegates attending. Now, the comrades are preparing to take part in the CUT congress of the State of Minas Gerais and they intend to extend to the countryside where there are many rural workers and a very strong landless movement, which is breaking with the “*pelegos*” under the direction of a left-wing of the Church. There are several rural unions that agree with the tendency.

However, this process of Minas Gerais is not as advanced as that of *A Luchar* because programmatically it is not yet placed for the revolution, although it points this way, and it is a state and not a national tendency, as in Colombia. Of course, we must bear in mind that Brazil is a very large country, almost a continent, that it is very difficult to unify different processes at the national level, and that the state we’re talking about has as many inhabitants as other Latin American countries. The good thing is this experience begins to be repeated in other cities.

In Rio de Janeiro, 140 trade union and neighbourhood delegates of the PT have sent a letter opposing the candidate PT intends to raise in the next elections because he is not a worker. The anger against the bureaucracy of CUT and a PT linked to the Church is growing, which will favour the development of these independent currents in all the major manufacturing centres, allowing their national extension.

## Anti-bureaucratic slates in Argentina

If we were to keep the analysis of the revolutionary united front of a year ago, we would fall into the simplification of saying that in Argentina it is very difficult to apply this tactic because there are no revolutionary political currents that detach themselves from Peronism or other parties.

Since 1983 the crisis and bankruptcy of the Peronism and the union bureaucracy of the CGT began, which for over 40 years controlled the Argentine working class in a totalitarian way. Today, the great bureaucrats can’t even appear in public: Lorenzo Miguel<sup>4</sup> was booed by an entire stadium, Triaca,<sup>5</sup> who is a millionaire, never goes to any plenary, Jose Rodriguez,<sup>6</sup> of the autoworkers union, can’t step on the Ford factory, one of the largest in the country because they’d kill him. The only one

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3 The **Plan Cruzado** was a program in 1986 to fight hyperinflation that included wage and price freezes and a new currency, the cruzado.

4 **Lorenzo Miguel** (1927-2002) was one of the historic chiefs of the Peronist trade union bureaucracy. Head of the powerful metalworkers union (UOM) since 1970.

5 **Jorge Alberto Triaca** (1941 -2008) was an Argentine trade union bureaucrat. He was Assistant Secretary of the Plastic Workers Union and Secretary-General of the CGT.

6 **Jose Rodriguez** (1935–2009) was Secretary General for 36 years of the powerful autoworkers union (SMATA).

who can speak in public is Ubaldini<sup>7</sup> but there is deep anger against them all. Along with this, there is a renaissance of workers' democracy: after the fall of the dictatorship, the delegates committees and internal commissions<sup>8</sup> began to be restored, which unlike before, now are made up of new independent activists, most of them apolitical or Peronists in word only, that is, by a new litter of fighters who are not controlled by Peronism or any other party.

Thanks to them, the anti-democratic struggle deepens every day; lately, assemblies and voting have become popular in all workplaces to decide stoppages, fighting measures, and negotiations. There has been the case of bureaucrats who approve a strike without consulting which is then rejected by the ranks in assemblies, such as in Health, or agreements between bureaucrats and bosses who are then unauthorized, as in the mail service.

In this context, anti-democratic slates have begun to emerge in the unions, which fight for the leadership of the different unions, whose base are these independent activists. *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement towards Socialism) supports everything, promotes and drives these slates, which also include members of the Communist Party, Intransigent<sup>9</sup> militants, and Peronists. But the fundamental thing is that it is a new, objective phenomenon, not of an agreement between political currents but of an expression of this new vanguard of fighters. These slates are the embryo of a revolutionary union front, still atomized, by unions, which is not national, which sometimes includes people who are not revolutionists, even some minor bureaucrats.

But what makes us define them as embryos or seeds of the revolutionary union front is that the axis of their program is against the bureaucracy and governance by workers' democracy. In fact, they have a revolutionary program, although it still appears mixed in the straw, and they tend to be a front because they remain, don't dissolve after the elections, have leadership, hold assemblies and plenaries that decide.

Take as an example the Orange Slate in Health [union]. Last year it won the elections in Buenos Aires but the bureaucracy burned the ballot boxes with the votes and the elections had to be repeated, and the Orange Slate won again. Above one or the other of the individual characters that make up the slate, its program, its anti-bureaucratic content, and its dynamics have prevailed and each time the current of support for the Orange Slate becomes more radical, more revolutionary and isolates the more centrist or pro-bureaucratic sectors. Earlier, the CP had joined these sectors, but then it resumed the anti-bureaucratic and fighting path and thanks to that, the most progressive positions of the Orange Slate are majority at all levels of the union.

The case of Health was repeated in the meatworkers union, where the anti-bureaucratic Green Slate, formed a few weeks before the elections, triumphed overwhelmingly over one of the oldest union bureaucracies, intimately linked to Lorenzo Miguel. The Violet Slate of the commerce employees union, where Peronists, communists, socialists, and independents converge, gained a great weight in recent weeks but the bureaucracy put obstacles to stop them from taking part. There is also the Orange Slate of the construction workers and many others that arise locally or in other guilds.

This process is very deep and begins to generalize. In relation to Colombia, we're several years behind because it is not a national agreement with revolutionary union currents as the programs on these slates are not as complete as the one of *A Luchar*, nor are all their elements revolutionary.

But this is the path towards the revolutionary unity being adopted by the most combative fringes of the Argentine working class, which is very backward and which for 40 years had the Peronist slab on top.

7 **Saul Ubaldini** (1936–2006) was the Secretary-General of the small union of beer-industry workers. During the dictatorship, he was elected Secretary-General of the CGT, the trade union umbrella body, in 1979.

8 In Argentinian labour legislation since the 1940s enterprise or workplace committees are called **internal commissions**. In enterprises with a large number of workers, the workers elect their delegates and these form the **delegates committee**; then the **delegates committee** elect a smaller steering committee or **internal commission**.

9 It refers to members of the **Intransigent Party**, a bourgeois centre-left political party in Argentina, founded by Oscar Alende. Its membership came from the Intransigent Radical Civic Union, one of the two factions into which the Radical Civic Union had divided in 1956.

## The Zapatista Workers' Party

In mid-May, the Foundation Congress of the Zapatista Workers' Party (PTZ) was held in Mexico. It is a party formed by the *Partido Obrero Socialista* (Socialist Workers Party, POS) of the State of Mexico and a left-wing centrist neighbourhood organization, called Naucopac.

This new party has an ultra-revolutionary program, almost the same as ours and it seems to us that it is an important advance because it is a mediated, indirect way of looking for the workers' movement through the popular neighbourhoods that surround the great industrial belts of the Valley of Mexico.

The foreign debt and the drop in oil prices have sharpened the Mexican economic crisis and are increasingly squeezing workers' incomes. Discontent against the government grows and workers' struggles have begun.

Therefore, it is urgent to make foot in the working class but in Mexico, this is very difficult, first because of unemployment and second because the unions are controlled by a totalitarian bureaucracy — the *charrismo* — linked to the state and the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), which rules the country since the revolution at the beginning of the century.

This is the reason why the comrades of POS have considered it necessary to make this detour to the neighbourhoods but to join the working class and its struggles more quickly.

Although, apparently, the PTZ meets all the requirements of a revolutionary united front of a pure political type and, even more, because it would be constituted in a party with a revolutionary program, we dare not qualify it as such. It seems to us that it is an agreement with a neighbourhood, vindicating organization that has a very progressive centre-left policy. It would be, let's say so, a neighbourhood or popular expression of what has happened in Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina through the trade union route. In any case, it is a very interesting experience, which we must follow very carefully.

## Raising these experiences to the political arena

This fine-tuning on the revolutionary union front allows us to expand much more the spectrum of our activity and the possibilities of agreements with revolutionary currents which have not yet expressed in the political arena, taking advantage of the crisis of the apparatus and the rise of the workers.

In Uruguay, for example, there is the entire strip that opposed the leadership of the *Frente Amplio* (Broad Front) and the Communist Party in the last PIT-CNT Congress, which is almost half of the trade union centre. In Bolivia, currents begin to emerge within the COB [Bolivian Workers' Centre] that — finally! — are questioning Lechin,<sup>10</sup> accusing him of being responsible for all the defeats suffered by the Bolivian working class. We want to know what happens in the Working Commissions of Spain. Will a sector arise to the left of Marcelino Camacho, its top leader who is going to stand in the elections allied with the Spanish monarchist far right? What will happen in Peru, where *Izquierda Unida*<sup>11</sup> is the support of the government of Alan García<sup>12</sup> who has started a brutal austerity plan against the working class, so fighting and with such a high political level?

10 **Juan Lechin** (1914–2001) was the most important trade-union leader and bureaucrat of Bolivian unionism. He was head of the Federation of Bolivian Mine Workers (FSTMB) from 1944 to 1987 and founder of the Bolivian Workers' Union (COB) in the revolution of 1952, which he headed until 1987. During the presidency of Victor Paz Estenssoro, of the bourgeois party MNR, between 1960 and 1964, he also served as Vice President of Bolivia.

11 **Izquierda Unida** (United Left) was an alliance of leftist political parties in Peru founded in 1980 by Popular Democratic Unity (UDP), Revolutionary Left Union (UNIR), Peruvian Communist Party (PCP), Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR) and Worker Peasant Student and Popular Front (FOCEP). It was led by Alfonso Barrantes (who lost to Alan García in the 1985 elections) up to 1987.

12 **Alan García** (1949–2019) was a Peruvian politician who served as President of Peru from 1985 to 1990. A severe economic crisis, social unrest, and violence marked his presidential term.

The other problem is to raise these revolutionary trade union fronts to the political arena, to continue the fight for a revolutionary party of the working class, whether it is by winning these currents for our parties, or by forming new parties in which we participate. That is the task the IWL has in front.

## CHAPTER 8

# Independent leaderships: A class definition

The proliferation of independent leaderships is causing controversies about their nature, and we have the problem of defining Sandinismo, Farabundo Marti, M-19 of Colombia, and other similar organizations. I think it is dangerous to define them as “popular” and “revolutionary” leaderships.

In the first place, any organization that drags the people or sectors of the people can be called popular. But the bourgeois parties also drag the people or sectors of the people: Peronism in Argentina; Galanism in Colombia; Trotsky pointed out the Radical Party in France was an organization of the imperialist bourgeoisie that dragged the petty-bourgeoisie.

Moreover, the functioning of bourgeois parties is unthinkable without them having the support and participation of the people or sectors of the people. And if we accept the definition of a party exclusively because it relies on popular sectors, then we would have to say Peronism, Galanism or the Radical Party of the Trotsky era are “popular” parties.

People are the sum of many classes exploited and oppressed by the bourgeoisie: the working class, the semi-proletariat, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, the peasantry, the lumpenproletariat or marginalised. Each of these classes occupies its own place in production and in society, has its own goals and aspirations and struggles with its own methods to achieve them.

Saying that a leadership is “popular” doesn’t allow us to see what class it serves, it represents, that is, for what purpose and with what methods it struggles.

“Popular” is a non-class, negative, algebraic and of summation definition. To know what objectives a leadership serves and with what methods it struggles, we must make a class definition of it.

## The definition of popular classes

Marx and Trotsky have given seemingly different definitions of working-class and petty-bourgeoisie. Trotsky spoke of a modern petty-bourgeoisie, who were white-collar employees, as they say in Yankee sociology. And for Marx, everyone who received a salary was a member of the working class. We lean towards Marx’s definition.

Another very important sector is the semi-proletariat, a new discovery of neo-Marxist researchers. It is a key social sector for the global development of capitalism. The semi-proletarian works part of the year or a few hours every day as a wage earner but he doesn’t earn enough with it to survive and then he has a small orchard or his family in the countryside and thus he gets food.

For example, today in Bolivia, miners can no longer live with what they get paid. They subsist thanks to their peasant relatives who send them potatoes, vegetables, and other produce. But this is not something recent. Kings like Carlos V and Felipe II structured the Spanish empire in the

Americas with this system of semi-slavery or semi-proletarianisation. It allowed the Spaniards to greatly exploit indigenous people in the service of capitalism.

Today the semi-proletariat encompasses many millions of workers worldwide, they are many more than the workers. Large capitalist companies exploit millions of semi-proletarians, paying them a pittance and forcing them to seek additional resources to support themselves.

The semi-proletariat has defined the dynamics of several revolutions. For example, Sweezy and Huberman, two American Marxist authors, made a first definition of the Cuban revolution, where they said it was a country with little capitalist development and very peasant. But 10 or 15 years later they wrote a self-criticism, where they explain that the tremendous dynamics the revolution gained was because of Cuba always being a super-capitalist country, since the last century. A capitalism of a special type, agrarian, with slavery in its beginnings, the Cuban oligarchy was very strong, almost predominant in the Spanish aristocracy in the middle of the last century and, also, intimately linked to the Yankee oligarchy of New York. That is, linked to world capitalism as closely as one can think. Almost all of Cuba's sugar went to the United States and Yankee capitals themselves associated with Cubans, as in the Philippines.

And what do Huberman and Sweezy say? That they had not realized that all those they considered peasants were actually semi-proletarians. It happens that the sugar mills only worked part of the year and the rest of the year they were left without work because of the country's poor industrial development. Then they had to return to their plot with what little they had earned, which had to last them all year.

This weight of the semi-proletariat allowed the Cuban revolution to advance much faster than the Chinese revolution, where the predominant weight was of the peasantry.

And it is a semi-proletariat and not an agricultural proletariat because they don't reproduce their labour force with wages; they don't reach the wage to live. And that's why they have one foot in each place. They have one foot in the plot where they produce for the subsistence of the family, and another foot in the factory, where what they get is not enough for the family to subsist.

Another key segment of the people is the marginal sector, which arises from overcrowding in cities. This is reflected in the case of a great Peruvian Trotskyist leader, Hugo Blanco, who began all his speeches in Lima saying: "Worker comrades, thief comrades, prostitute comrades...". This shows there is a tremendous marginal sector, as we see in Bogota, in Lima, in Mexico, in São Paulo.

We have to try to win many of these sectors, to prevent fascism, for which they are decisive, to gain a foot in them.

They are unstable sectors because they don't have a permanent job. As psychology, they are the opposite of the proletariat. Sometimes the unemployed worker begins to oscillate between these two categories.

And also today there is a petty-bourgeoisie which is not lumpen, but it is borderline. It is the tremendously large sector of hawkers.

Besides all of them, there are the traditional sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie, the small merchants, and tradesmen. There are also farmers who have their plots and live on their farm. In many countries that peasantry remains numerous.

All these sectors, including the proletariat, make up the people. And within the revolutions, the different popular sectors react with each other. For example, in the Russian revolution, there was an alliance between peasants and workers. The Workers' State supported the distribution of land among the peasants. But immediately there were clashes, even armed, when the peasants began to resist delivering the crops required by the government of Lenin and Trotsky to supply the cities and the Red Army.

## The leadership and the people

The class character of a leadership is determined in part by the origin of its leaders. For example, we recently read an article that details the social origin of the Sandinista leaders and describes some of the main families of the oligarchy, pointing out how one or two members of those families are members of the Sandinista government and another two or three are exiled because they are enemies of Sandinismo. I was left wondering whether the Sandinista leadership should not be described directly as bourgeois. A Colombian ambassador was asked if he thought there would be a socialist revolution in Nicaragua and he said no, because according to his criteria young people from the most distinguished families in the country had taken power.

But, together with defining what class their families belong to, we need to know what program they raise, what political tasks they intend to carry out. And all those leaderships we have mentioned, Fidel, M-19, and Sandinismo raised nationalist, democratic, and anti-dictatorial, non-socialist programs.

This is clearly seen in with the Sandinistas, who refuse to take elementary self-defence measures such as expropriating the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, who in fact uphold the “*Contra*”, and to extend the revolution to El Salvador, holding a nationalist position, even though the victory of the Salvadoran revolution would end with the suffocation imposed by the imperialist blockade.

The pressure of imperialism and of the classes involved in the revolution can push petty-bourgeois leaderships to take the essential socialist measures that they don't want to apply but they do so reluctantly because they are against the workers' and socialist program. Else, let's compare with the Russian Bolshevik leadership. Lenin and Trotsky raised the program of the international socialist revolution, they organized the revolutionary party in the working class, took power with organizations of workers' power, the Soviets. They were of petty-bourgeois or bourgeois origin, as the Sandinistas or Castro, but they broke up with their families' class. Implementing the socialist program and organizing the workers' party, they became a revolutionary proletarian leadership.

In the historical and more general sense, this is the only consistent “revolutionary popular” leadership that can exist.

## Revolutionary, in relation to what?

The only class and leadership of class that can reflect an entire people and all their historical needs is the proletariat. But this said in a historical sense. Obviously, there are petty-bourgeois leaderships, many of them independent of Stalinism, which led their peoples in revolutions.

We're even willing to accept that a leadership like the Colombian M-19 is revolutionary, as long as we also say it is a petty-bourgeois.

M-19 is revolutionary in relation to the objectives of the petty-bourgeoisie. It is nationalist, it is democratic. And it uses the methods of the petty-bourgeoisie, that is, the guerrillas and not the method of workers' democracy and mobilization.

When we say revolutionary petty-bourgeois, we're saying it is a leadership that wants to make a revolution and that, because of its nationalist, democratic, and methodical limitations, it will lead it to a dead end.

When Sandinism came to power, we made a discussion about the two faces of the independent revolutionary petty-bourgeois leaderships, i.e., not controlled by Stalinism. We said that until they come to power they are revolutionary and not bureaucratic leaderships. That until then, we vindicated them as national heroes. But as soon as they come to power, as soon as their objectives as petty-bourgeois leaders come to fruition, then they cease to have a revolutionary character because they are against taking the essential socialist measures to defend and advance the revolution. From that moment on we only defend the Sandinistas who break with their organization and go on to defend a program of socialist revolution.

M-19 is entwined today in Colombia with the mass movement. Embryonically, it approaches Farabundo Marti in El Salvador, although Farabundo Marti is a front and M-19 is a guerrilla army-party. In addition, in the Salvadoran front there is a great Stalinist influence that is bureaucratic and slows it down, and instead, M-19, as we have pointed out, is independent of Stalinism and doesn't have a bureaucratic character.

When the Colombian government proposed a truce, which meant, in fact, committing guerrilla currents in the stifling on the revolution, M-19, just as pro-Soviet FARC, accepted the agreement. But M-19, because of the continuous provocations of the army, the pressure of its ranks, and its independent character from Stalinism and social democracy was forced out of the truce. It then lost many militants and supporters of the petty-bourgeoisie. But instead, it connected with more plebeian popular sectors. M-19 formed a National Guerrilla Coordinating Board with the other guerrillas independent from FARC, where, among others, the Quintin Lame movement entered, which is an indigenous armed organization, i.e., that responds to the indigenous peasant nationalities. More importantly, M-19 today has a strong current in the union vanguard.

Apparently, we're correct here if we say that M-19 is a "revolutionary popular" leadership because it relies on this broad popular base and leads its adherents and allies to a democratic and national revolution. But with this formula, we're no longer pointing out the fact that M-19 is against the socialist program, which never gives or will never give prominence to the working class and its methods and that, because of all that, just like Sandinismo, it will stop the revolution as soon as it takes power, if it does and doesn't betray it first, for its incapacity of class to give a revolutionary workers' orientation.

Defining M-19 as an independent revolutionary petty-bourgeois leadership, we know that at the moment this movement is an ally and we also know what the limits of this ally are because of its class character and its policy, that is, because of the program it raises and the methods it uses. Summing up: M-19 because of its program and petty-bourgeois leadership is a transitory ally in the course of the permanent revolution that only a revolutionary workers' party can lead.

## CHAPTER 9

# Independent countries: Allied nations?

The issue of independent countries is, increasingly, on the agenda. On the one hand, because the revolutionary rise has allowed a large number of countries to conquer their political independence. And, also, because the imperialist counteroffensive raises the need to defend these countries against aggression while holding high the banners of the working class and socialism.

It has been a success of the *Theses of the Second Congress of the IWL-FI* to have defined Nicaragua, Libya, Angola, and others as independent countries.

We're returning to an old classification or definition of the Leninist era, which the Marxist and Trotskyist movement had lost for decades.

Trotsky, Lenin, and the great majority of the leaders of the Third International saw the anti-imperialist struggle of the colonial peoples as the process of their transformation into advanced capitalist countries. That is, in those countries, the socialist revolution was not yet raised. Our teachers considered the movements that struggled to keep or conquer the political independence of the colonial countries as allies of the world proletariat.

Things were different when those movements took power, that is, when they ruled the nation and directed the police and the army against the workers, even if they remained independent of imperialism. It is very ingenious from the theoretical point of view what some authors do: when the independence revolutionaries come to power, those authors apply to the country the definition they previously gave to the movement and say it is an "allied nation".

Trotsky's point of view was different. Trotsky, for example, refused to grant a China independent from Chiang Kai-shek<sup>1</sup> a Russian-owned railway installed on Chinese territory. His refusal had a class character: if its ownership passed to China, it would serve for the exploitation of the Chinese proletariat; on the other hand, if it remained in the hands of the USSR there would be no capitalist exploitation of that proletariat.

Despite this, Trotsky agreed to have a privileged relationship with China to face imperialism and defend Chinese independence. But he was the enemy of treating it as a friendly nation in the railway problem, but rather as an adversary or class-enemy nation.

In the Chinese revolution of 1927, Trotsky specified and added a new element to the Marxist definition of processes in colonial countries. He noted that the fight against imperialism in backward countries is inseparable from anti-capitalist tasks. In other words, in order to consolidate political independence, it is necessary to move towards socialism.

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1 CHIANG KAI-SHEK (1887–1975), was a Chinese general and statesman. He succeeded Sun Yat-sen as leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party Kuomintang and was the maximum leader, under various positions, of the Republic of China founded in Nanjing in 1927 after the massacre of the workers' revolution of 1925–1927. In the 1940s, after the surrender of Japan, he tried to eliminate the guerrilla armies of Mao Tse-Tung, who finally took power in October 1949. After his defeat, he took refuge in the island of Formosa (Taiwan) and founded the Nationalist Republic of China, with the support of the main imperialist powers.

Trotskyism has as one of its birthmarks the defence of this definition of the colonial struggle as part of the national and international socialist revolution. But, with so much emphasis on the socialist character of the colonial revolution, the Trotskyist movement had set aside for decades other definitions of the anti-imperialist struggle, including the Leninist definition of independent countries.

There are politically independent countries, as evidenced by the fact imperialism attacks them. If they were dependent, obviously the US would not launch aggression campaigns such as those suffered by Libya, Angola, Nicaragua, etc.

And it is no accident that we have rediscovered this classification lately because it is when this phenomenon has taken place the most and, logically, we have theorized again on these issues.

Lenin's classification takes on great importance in the context of the new revolutionary wave in which many countries have conquered their political independence.

But to say that these countries are permanent allies of the proletarian revolution is something else.

## Limited "Alliances"

To propose that independent countries are permanent "allied nations" brings insurmountable contradictions. For example, Iraq is an independent country but we can't be allies of that country in its military attack on Iran. While the dominant thing in the Gulf War was the aggression of Iraq we were allies of Iran. But when the Iraqi army was expelled and, Khomeini<sup>2</sup> continued the war to seize Iraq's territory, then we ceased to be allies of Iran.

This shows how we can have alliances with certain capitalist states but always for a limited time and also with limited objectives.

Besides, seasonal alliances don't take place only with independent countries. For example, we were allies of semicolonial Argentina, with its dictatorship agent of imperialism, against Britain and the United States in the Malvinas (Falklands) war. We're also allies of Peru when Alan Garcia resists the economic aggression of imperialism and reduces payments on the foreign debt.

Neither are the bureaucratic workers' states permanent allies and in every sense of the world revolutionary workers' movement. For example, when China attacks Vietnam, we're not allies of China. When the USSR invades Czechoslovakia we're not allies of the USSR,

Furthermore, although our central enemy is imperialism, in the Second World War it was fair to make a military alliance with the US and Britain against Hitler.

At the international level, the only permanent allies of the proletariat are the consequent revolutionary workers' leaderships and governments such as that of the USSR under Lenin and Trotsky. With all other leaderships and states, the revolutionary proletariat can make alliances at the international level for a time and with limited objectives that aid it on its path towards the destruction of imperialism, world capitalism, and the construction of socialism.

## Independent countries are bourgeois states

The concept of "allied nation" seeks to transfer to the international level what happens within a country. To fight against the capitalists in a nation, the working class makes an alliance with the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie, and other popular sectors. Supposedly, then, it would

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2 Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–1989), also known in the Western world as Ayatollah Khomeini, was an Iranian politician and cleric. He was the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which saw the overthrow of the last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and the end of the 2,500-year-old Persian monarchy. Following the revolution, Khomeini became the country's Supreme Leader.

be appropriate that at the international level, the proletariat make an alliance with independent countries.

But this is forgetting that the national state is the representative of the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries, whether independent of imperialism or not, and that it has, as a fundamental mission, to keep the exploitation and submission of the workers, mainly with the army and police.

Let's take a country like Colombia. There we can raise the need for the alliance of the working class with the peasants and other popular sectors. The peasants don't exploit the workers, nor do they direct the state, or the army, or the police. They are our allies against the bourgeois state,

Let us now take any independent country and see if whether it can be an ally of the working class as the peasantry is. Gaddafi<sup>3</sup> is the representative of a bourgeoisie that exploits the Libyan workers and other Arab countries that work there. For example, as soon as that bourgeoisie saw its oil profits fall, Gaddafi didn't hesitate to expel over 100,000 foreign workers from Libya, condemning them to misery and unemployment. We can hardly speak here of the Libyan capitalist state as an ally of the working class.

But there is more. Gaddafi's Libyan state owns 15 per cent of the shares of Italian Fiat and has a stake in many other European companies. In short, Gaddafi is a great exploiter of the Italian and European proletariat.

A revolutionary leadership in a Libyan workers' state would take oil profits and invest them in the development of their country and support the struggle of the workers, and for socialism. Instead of exploiting Fiat workers, it would use the money that today is invested in 15 per cent of the company's shares to boost the struggle of Italian workers and of other countries. And thus, Fiat workers would be Libya's best defenders against imperialism.

Far from being an "ally" of the workers and the revolution, Gaddafi represents the interests of the bourgeoisie and this is why he prefers to use the income of the state to participate in the exploitation of Arab and European workers.

Gaddafi directs the Libyan bourgeois state, his army, and his police at the service of the exploitation of the workers by the Libyan bourgeoisie. We're mortal enemies of Gaddafi's bourgeois state, of Gaddafi's army and police and, therefore, of Gaddafi's government. And we seek the alliance of the Libyan workers and the people against Gaddafi, his state and his government.

## Trojan Horses against independence

We defend independent Libya against imperialism, we defend the right of Libyans to have Gaddafi in the government if they vote for him, although we're convinced there need be a workers' and popular government. At the same time, we denounce the fact that in Libya there is no freedom for the workers' and popular movement; we hold that Gaddafi's policy is a crime against the revolution and that Gaddafi does nothing to gain the support of the European and American workers' movement. But, above all, we say Libya cannot remain independent if the workers' revolution doesn't succeed there. Gaddafi must be thrown out, he has been originally pro-Yankee and then forced to turn against imperialism. Gaddafi is a Trojan horse against independence. Because, as long as there is no progress in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, as long as a workers' state and the planned economy are not implemented, there will always be a danger that the crisis will lead the independent bourgeoisie to submit to the political dependence of imperialism.

In all these revolutions, which we call democratic or of national liberation, there is a very interesting economic-political combination. Today, six months after a country achieves its national

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3 **Muammar Gaddafi** (1942–2011), commonly known as Colonel Gaddafi, was a Libyan military, politician, and dictator who ruled his country for 42 years, from 1969 until the day of his death in 2011. For many years he was part of the bourgeois anti-imperialist movement of several Arab countries, but then he turned to increasingly anti-worker, anti-popular, pro-imperialist and dictatorial positions. He was overthrown in 2011 as part of the "Arab Spring" process and was executed when he was captured trying to flee the country.

independence, it has immediately posed before it national and international socialist tasks as the only way to defend its independence.

For example, to defend the independence of Nicaragua, the best path at the national level would be the expropriation of the bourgeoisie which is allied to the “*Contra*” and, at the international level, the support and achieving the victory of the revolution in El Salvador. These are measures that go towards socialism. The Sandinistas weaken Nicaragua against imperialism by refusing to take these measures. And they refuse to take them precisely because they are petty-bourgeois Trojan horses that haven’t wanted to push the boundaries of capitalism to make a revolution that moves towards socialism, if it doesn’t want to be defeated.

All the politics of the petty-bourgeoisie or of the native bourgeoisie at the head of these states always leads to the loss of independence, to a dead-end — to keep independence you have to advance to socialism but they don’t want to go in that direction.

Historically, they are counterrevolutionary leaderships, even if they get to expropriate the bourgeoisie as Castro did in Cuba. Castro halted any extension of the revolution at the international level and kept totalitarian dominance within Cuba. In doing so, Castro acts as a bureaucrat who defends the privileges he gets from the Cuban national state. The consequence is that, with the bureaucratic control of the masses and the curbing of the international revolution, Cuba weakens against imperialism.

## A policy of criticism and demand

From all this, it follows that to consistently defend independent countries we need to unmask before the masses these historically counterrevolutionary leaderships. Far from considering Nicaragua or Libya, including their governments, as “allied nations”, we have to get the workers and peoples in independent countries to clearly see that their petty-bourgeois or bourgeois governments will take them, sooner or later, to a defeat.

But, obviously, our tactic towards the Sandinistas or Gaddafi can’t be the same as towards the governments which are agents of imperialism in the semi-colonies. We propose a total confrontation with the imperialist agents. Instead, while they have the support of the masses, we criticize the independent governments as inconsequential and we demand they take the revolutionary measures necessary to advance or defend the country’s independence. We propose a transitional, permanent program, in the country’s perspective of becoming increasingly independent,

For example, in Nicaragua we have to criticize the government because it doesn’t expropriate the entire bourgeoisie which, in fact, supports the “*Contra*”. And we have to demand that the Sandinistas carry out this measure of expropriation, essential to end the imperialist aggression.

Now, Contadora has shown its true character by demanding the Sandinistas reduce their weapons without the corresponding disarmament of the “*Contra*”. We have to criticize the Sandinistas for calling the people to trust Contadora, when we have been denouncing the role of this imperialist instrument since it appeared on the scene. We have to criticize the Sandinistas because even today they refuse to break up with Contadora and we have to demand they do so now.

We have to criticize them because they refused to support Farabundo Marti to take power in El Salvador and demand that they begin to support the Central American revolution.

## The defence of the workers’ movement

There is a fundamental aspect for which we don’t propose a policy of demands but one of confrontation. We call on the workers’ movement not to accept any sacrifice as long as Nicaragua remains a capitalist state. We demand the full right to strike and other workers’ rights. All the struggles of the workers’ movement are sacred because they take place within a capitalist state,

even if it is an independent country. Faced with the crisis, our policy is for the rich to pay for it. We oppose the sacrifices the Sandinistas, leaders of a bourgeois state, demand from the workers.

In short, we don't accept the definition of "allied nation" and the policy of permanent "alliance" with independent bourgeois governments. Instead, we hold the Leninist definition of an independent country and the policy of defence of independent countries against imperialism, of criticism and demand of the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leaderships in the perspective of expanding and deepening independence and of calling the workers to oppose any exploitation and democratically decide its path in permanent mobilization until the total defeat of imperialism, that is, until the socialist revolution is achieved.

The proletariat and a revolutionary leadership can make at international level all temporary alliances and with limited objectives that help to advance on this path, giving fundamental importance to the defence of independent countries without capitulating to them and their governments. Without ceasing to recognize in our tactics and theory the qualitative difference between a government that resists imperialism and one that is its miserable agent. ♦