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A new leadership emerges

Report by Nahuel Moreno to the General Council of the Fourth International (International Committee) at the end of May 1981, and published in *Panorama Internacional*, Year V, No 17, August 1981. The report was signed by Miguel Capa, one of the pseudonyms used by Moreno. All notes are by the editor.

The Open Conference ended five months ago. For me, for us in general, it had two fundamental objectives: to lay the programmatic basis for the reconstruction of the Fourth International and to open the possibility, in the short term, of proclaiming this reconstruction.

Each of these objectives had its development and has acquired a certain perspective. One, very short term, is the amendment to the programmatic theses. That is, to finish fine tuning the program. In this case, the deadline was very short because most of the proposed amendments were interesting but did not call into question any substantive analysis of the theses.

In opposition to this, the perspective of reconstructing the Fourth International poses a problem that, as we develop, becomes more present and necessary — democratic centralism. Because there can be no reconstruction of the Fourth International without being able to completely impose democratic centralism, which in turn demands a Bolshevik operation of the International and also single sections.

Let us then see the steps we took to achieve this reconstruction and, more specifically, its content, democratic centralism.

For the Executive Committee, there are five key areas:

1. **To build a respected leadership, working as a true team;** and this leadership will be respected only if it responds to the demands of the class struggle and to the subjective problems of party building.

2. **To act as a world party in the key regions of the class struggle,** with the essential goal of building the national sections.

3. **To ensure that the International works as a party,** with single sections which take part in the class struggle of each country.

4. **To transform our publications into agents of organisation and collective grouping,** according to the teachings of Lenin and that they be not simply organs of general political analysis.

5. **To wage a systematic battle against the revisionist Unified Secretariat,** with the awareness that it is not possible to destroy it since it would be necessary to destroy its social roots. We know that, as long as Stalinism and counter-revolutionary apparatus exist, the USec will find in them a breeding ground. It is, therefore, a systematic struggle to accelerate its crisis.

These are the five points that I will develop in my report.

I. A leadership team

This issue of leadership, along with the issue of the program, is the key to every party. There have been programmatic agreements that did not flourish in some healthy organisations because homogeneous leadership teams were not achieved.

Trotsky pointed out that, in normal times, the weight of inertia made the general mentality of the workers conservative. It is in revolutionary times when this mentality begins to change.

The weight of inertia is reflected in our organisations, it creates habits even inside the leadership teams. Sometimes, we get to have our own slang and different key words are used.

A faster than expected progress

In this sense, we can say we have advanced very quickly in the construction of a single leadership of the International, integrated as a team.

We had already seen in the Parity Committee¹ that we were advancing very fast and now we have confirmed this. The most categorical argument is the enormous intellectual and physical weight of what has been written in these five months. And as a team, we have advanced more than the Theses and documents themselves show.

We will have to study when we can, the reasons for this speed. Roughly, we can say that there are very similar experiences and conclusions between the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (PST) and the *Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (Unifié)* (OCI (U)). It would be interesting to delve into why they are so similar. For example, taking a theoretical question, why in a 40-year discussion about whether or not Latin America is a nation, the OCI (U) and PST comrades have fought a common battle, without knowing each other.

Today I intend to be descriptive and not look for the causes. We formed an extraordinarily homogeneous team. Otherwise, we would not have been able to pronounce ourselves on so many theoretical, political and organisational problems, big and small. We work hard and there are results and answers in line with our political needs.

This is something very important and there are comrades who still do not perceive it. In the leadership, the existence of factions is almost a memory of our political childhood, although they have barely ceased to exist. That is the secret to the emergence of the team.

For example, what happened with the amendments? During the Open Conference and at its conclusion we came to believe that they were the main immediate task, even though they did not generally question the Theses. But we started to work and we almost forgot about them; only at the end, we corrected them. It is because at the Conference we were still under pressure from the previous stage, where the main issue was the program. Later, we entered the maelstrom of responding, as a united team, to the class struggle, and the issue of the amendments became marginal.

Leadership for the Fourth International (IC)

One comrade commented, regarding the political orientations of the sections, that Pierre and I negotiated Brazil for Spain. The comrade who said the phrase does not understand at all about the situation. He does not understand that Pierre “sold” the whole Organising Committee for the

1 **Parity Committee:** Committee formed by OCRFI, BF and LTT in December 1979, which operated until the Open World Conference in December 1980, electing the General Council which appointed the Executive Committee and the Secretariat of the FI (IC), the factions being dissolved.

Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) to the Fourth International (International Committee) (FI (IC)) and that I “sold” the entire Bolshevik Faction (BF) to it.

For my responsibility at the head of the BF, I will mention that there is a country where I have fought to propose to the OCRFI leader as the centre of the unified leadership.

This is something I have thought a lot about. I think it will be repeated in other countries. It responds to a Marxist analysis — in general, the BF cadres came out of the youth cadres of the USec, where they fought, through discussions, against revisionism and the apparatuses. They have great virtues, but they are not proven. In contrast, OCRFI has a trajectory against revisionism and the apparatuses, of fighting in the mass movement, which allowed it to mould a more mature and solid type of cadre.

But when I proposed one of these mature comrades, I did it as the axis of the FI (IC) leadership in its sections; just as in other places we seek different solutions with the permanent criterion of forming a leadership team. This is how we move in the Executive Committee, pushing for the emergence of a leadership of the FI (IC) as efficient as possible.

No one, in the leadership, is thinking of the past. Our obsession is to find the best answer to the problems of the class struggle. On the contrary, on both sides, we have the impression that we enrich the old analyses. There is not the slightest desire to see whether one or the other wins or whether a position matches with one tradition or the other. We are enriching our mutual experience and are conscious that we have better documents than those written in the past.

II. Our participation in the class struggle

At the Conference and the Council, we had two positions that we continue to claim as successes, those on Poland and El Salvador. Now we need to judge whether the Executive responded with initiatives and enriched that vote.

Our method

And here the danger is that the judgment will become intellectual, that it will only measure up to what point our forecasts matched reality. Primarily, what should be judged is not that, but whether our analyses, campaigns and everything we did it allowed us to strengthen our parties.

It seems a subtle distinction. However, it is decisive. Ours is not the USec’s method. It is not a question of when there is a problem in the Himalayas let us send there a team of scholars who have a well-nourished library so that they can get a resolution. We have a well-defined goal — to develop our organisation. The analyses are based on that.

And this is why they are corroborated quickly. Precisely, the construction of the party shows us the small mismatches and allows us to apply the Leninist condition of self-criticism by praxis.

The discussion on El Salvador

On El Salvador, I will not dwell on the international campaign that, with a few exceptions, the sections developed successfully.

What I do want to point out is that we left the Conference quite weak for our activity in the country, without an exhaustive document warning of the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism in the “final offensive”.¹ Despite the difficulties and the distance, the Executive Committee (EC) — which had been discussing the problem — took notice of it shortly afterwards. As a result of this, two orientations coexisted for two months — those of the Central American comrades and the EC.

¹ This is a reference to what the *Frente Democrático Revolucionario* (FDR – Revolutionary Democratic Front) / *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN – Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) called “final offensive”, launched in January 1981.

Our impression was that, if the final offensive failed, the situation in the city would be, in practice, a victory of fascism, different from that of the rest of the country. We retook the classic Trotskyist analysis of civil war at one point: in a geographical sector, fascism; in the other sector, the revolution, but with our comrades on the side dominated by fascism and, in addition, with a misconception, believing that the government would be defeated immediately. Thus it reappeared in another form, the error we had already pointed out to the comrades, those who thought that economic aid was the fundamental problem. For us, this was a suicidal policy because the main thing is an analysis and a correct program in order to build Trotskyism. The facts and our preaching allowed us to convince our comrades and limit the losses.

Poland and Czechoslovakia

On Poland, we have made several campaigns, as the defence of Solidarity, for the relinquishment of the persecution against Kuron, and for the reinstatement of Baluka to his job. To them, we must add the campaign for the release of comrades Thonon and Anís, detained in Czechoslovakia, and released after 20 days of intense mobilization. The victory of these campaigns is the most important of this period. Never had the Fourth International in its years of struggle against Stalinism achieved something similar.

But about Poland, we have done much more. The subjective side has been developed, as important as the other, and if we look at it historically, perhaps more, giving guidance to build the national section of the International. This elaboration is in the documents and draft resolutions that we will discuss at this meeting.

Another campaign that, combined with the others, can become fundamental is to support the International Congress convened by the National Union of Students of France (UNEF). If the Polish student union attends it could have a global impact and all sections — it is a suggestion — should take the orientation of calling to participate in the congress which the Polish student organisation goes to.¹

III. Towards the setting up of single sections

I apologise because I am not going to dwell on each of the sections and I will limit myself to those who have the unification raised or those in which we have had discussions or problems.

The importance of the OCI (U)

I would like, however, to mention the OCI (U) as a fundamental party for the whole International — maybe at this moment the most important national section — because it is perhaps, where we can have greater successes, for the combination of the objective and the subjective. I am referring to its election campaign and its goal of 10,000 militants.

This would lead Trotskyism for the first time to the prospect of a true Bolshevik party becoming a mass party. And I say for the first time because in Bolivia — where Trotskyism could have been of masses — such type of party and leadership did not exist.

If one has to take a historical reference it should be that of the Bolshevik party in the year 1912, when the workers' rise begins. The OCI (U)'s election campaign opens the prospect of reaching that goal of 10,000 militants, at a time of world as well as national revolutionary rise.

¹ The International Conference convened by the UNEF was held a week later, between 4 and 8 June 1981, and it had the central presence of the Polish students' delegation.

Unification in Venezuela

The EC begins to work with the great triumph that is the unity in Venezuela,¹ achieved on a programmatic basis. The organisations made a Joint Unification Committee without looking at who had more or fewer representatives and achieved a leadership that made the previous differences disappear quickly.

Trotskyist unification had a certain impact on Venezuelan reality. I think it was Rangel who pointed out that while the parties on the left were dividing, the phenomenon of Trotskyism, appearing as a pole of regrouping, is new.

Portugal, a different process

Here the unification was different.

In Portugal, the PST failed to cope effectively with the Stalinist provocation. For the EC, it was a question of acting swiftly to save the cadres, leaders and the very good experience of the PST. Fortunately, we had the POUS, a well-built organisation. We have had to act hard polemicizing with both sides, and in fact, the unification has already been arranged; there is a document and a leadership has formed.²

We are excited about Peru

In the EC we are excited, after having gone through a critical situation in Peru, in which we had to take part a lot.

From the Conference, we had already come out well armed politically and the comrades of both parties³ acted seriously and fraternally. They begin to lay the foundations for a stronger party, perhaps the strongest politically of our Latin American parties. There was a discussion about electoral tactics, which is an example. Some of the points of the debate were of principle, others of tactics, and they discussed them quietly, without epithets, focusing on the unification, that will take place in July.

Brazil, there is agreement but no progress

We cannot say the same about Brazil. During the Conference, we thought there would be no problems. The opposite of Peru, we have not had big discussions in Paris about Brazil. However, we cannot speak of progress. The comrades would take one, two or three steps forwards, and back three, two or one. We cannot do a detailed analysis because we lack news and systematic information. We do know, yes, that we have the characterisation of the government — which is always essential in a national discussion — solved. The same is true of the Workers' Party. There is even a coincidence in the place where we need to give priority to our work. We do not know to what to attribute this erratic march, which can only be solved if the two collaborate.

Our discussion in Spain

In Spain, we have been presented with a complex situation. First, there were big differences between our two organisations. But from the putsch of 23 February it began to happen that both parties begin to agree in many background analyses (I believe that by developing previous

1 In Venezuela, the MIR (Proletarian) and the PST were united in the Congress held on 7 and 8 February 1981. José Vicente Rangel (two-time candidate for president), Teodoro Petkoff (secretary of the MAS, Movement for Socialism) and Moisés Moleiro (of the MIR, Movement of the Revolutionary Left) were present.

2 The Unification Congress was held on 20 June 1981

3 It refers to the Peruvian POMR and PST.

agreements). At this moment, the Executive Committee, bound by the circumstances, gives a general framework, which opposes both organisations.¹

And I want to dwell on this because there have been more or less veiled criticisms of our method, which we will nevertheless vindicate. At the end of the Conference, taking into account the differences between our parties, in Spain we had the policy to move very slowly, promoting an ultra-fraternal discussion, where differences were clarified and an agreement was reached, including with the EC.

I say this because now we are told that the EC did not start by giving an overall picture. True, but it was a political decision. A decision that — let's make it clear — we will repeat in similar cases where there are large differences unless there are objective facts that force us to adopt another line. Because if there are objective facts, the matter is ended — we are not a school or a sanctuary.

If the class struggle does not hurry us, we will maintain a great tranquillity and let the discussion develop, so that it enriches us all.

We want to learn. I insist that when there are important differences between comrades, the EC will act with the same slowness and care because for us it is a matter of integrating, combining, synthesizing; never to marginalize. We are very respectful of all leaderships and we are not going to start with written polemics in which we can discredit a leadership comrade, as it would happen directly if we start by polemising.

For us, respect for all leaders of the FI (IC) parties is sacred. The leaders are a specific category of militant, independent of the circumstantial political position they have. In this, we follow Trotsky, who made a defence of Brandler as leader of the German CP. And this, regardless of whether he was his political enemy, head of the right wing of the party. Trotsky defended him and would never have used Stalinist methods to suppress him.

This is a sacred principle of ours and not the student method of starting discussions at any time and in any circumstances.

But in Spain, we could not keep this long and fraternal discussion for long because there was an attempted *coup d'état*. And in this also I vindicate the method, which made us declare our position. We warned that we have differences with the two organisations and we wrote them because sometimes seven days are enough to arm the whole International, while at the same time we offered to the Spanish parties that they also write in the magazine.

Clarified what is and will be our method I want to point out that in the political discussion about Spain there is a very important principled question. In this revolutionary upsurge, all dictatorial and Bonapartist regimes, when they feel very weak in the face of the rise of the masses — and sometimes without major events, preventively, by what they see in the world — they adopt a series of mechanisms, to create new institutions or modify the old ones, let's call it that, but in order for the Bonapartist regime to continue.

This, which is the essence of the discussion, is not a Spanish phenomenon. It is a world issue — it is an issue in Bolivia, Argentina or Brazil and we have seen it and we will see it very often.

IV. Our publications: collective organisers

All our publications are intended to serve the construction of our parties and the International. We voted to publish two books and we are a bit behind schedule. But we have voted two tools, which have come out with punctuality and, for me, efficiently. I refer to the weekly newsletter and the monthly magazine.

¹ These organisations are the Spanish Partido Obrero Socialista Internacionalista (POSI– International Socialist Workers Party) and the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST–Socialist Workers Party). The general context is provided in the articles on Spain signed by Luis Favre and S. Salano on behalf of the EC, published in issue 7 of Correspondencia Internacional.

The weekly newsletter is a weapon for the middle cadres and the national leaders, especially for the latter.

We view the magazine as a mass organ, to be read by thousands of workers and young people. And we have not yet achieved the necessary balance. The articles are uneven, sometimes when they are right in the form they are a mess of content, and other times, when the content is correct, they have characteristics of an internal bulletin.

But in general, we believe that there has been an improvement for several issues and we overcame a period in which political control lacked and there was a journalistic deviation.

Its sale number is of 15,000 regular copies and about 3,000 more in irregular form, taking into account special reproductions made in some countries.

Within the plans of the Executive Committee, which does not want economic deficits, it is the fundamental goal of achieving a publication in the English language. We consider ourselves an International with an amputated arm as long as we do not publish an English organ. We are preparing the foundation carefully.

V. The fight against the USec

We do not know whether we should talk about our fight or about the USec's own self-destructive fight because our organisations have not yet been able to use the evidence offered by the class struggle for this systematic battle, which the EC is trying to speed up.

What is important is that the differences between the SWP and Mandel are deepening more and more. This does not mean that Mandel goes against the revisionism of the SWP, but that history is repeated as with Pablo and with the ERP.

That is, Mandel wants revisionism within his organisation, he does not want them to break and fills himself with revisionist theoretical arguments to cover them and justify the permanence of the declared revisionism within his organisation. In this way, he himself makes a complete revisionism.

Because it is not, as some comrades believe, that Mandel is a Trotskyist who reconciles with the revisionists. He is part of revisionism; he is a typical sample of the revisionism that his organisation wants to have so that those who break are always the others. So it was with Pablo and with the ERP. And it is possible that history will repeat itself.

But Mandel's plan is to co-exist with the SWP even though the SWP continues to defend the most incredible revisionist positions and breaks discipline in all areas. Ultimately, they are united. The SWP says "Castro and the FSLN are revolutionaries", and Mandel says "the mass movement will make them revolutionaries". It is an almost grammatical discussion, in which Mandel gives the theoretical framework for the deviation. It reminds us of what Paul said in the 1950s — Stalinism is bad but will inevitably lead the socialist revolution throughout Europe.

This is a practical conclusion for the reconstruction of the International. We will not wait for a sector of the USec to break and then to do the rebuilding with it. And there is no sectarianism in this, but rather it responds to our analysis and characterisation of the USec.

Well, comrades, my report has a primary aim. The development and conditions show that everything is maturing for us to hold the reconstruction congress of the Fourth International.

I think that if this process is consolidated, the next meeting of the General Council has the obligation — and if it does not, it will not do its duty — to set the date for its realisation. §