



**Nahuel Moreno**

**End of  
unity with  
Lambertism**

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# End of unity with Lambertism

I

## The existence of an Orthodox Trotskyist tendency is a fact

Among those who have been working on these two projects, the balance sheet and the theses, we decided it was best to open this discussion with a quick presentation. In fact, these are two closely related resolutions. We want to know what objections there are, what controversies, what experiences about the OCRFI [Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International] and the crisis of FI (IC) [Fourth International (International Committee)]. We want to listen to Comrades Napuri, and Alberto [Franceschi] or the comrades who come from Healyism. May all contribute their experiences and criticism. We will reserve the right to respond with a little more time.

Now, I just want to point out a few issues. The first are two facts that can be synthesised in a single sentence. Years ago — many — we got Lefebvre's Logic, which had been banned by the CP, from Paris, through copies. Reading it, a sentence surprised us: knowledge is a fact. Countless philosophical currents discuss whether knowledge exists, and Lefebvre began by saying that not only it exists but is a fact. As simple as that. He began by not even admitting that its existence be questioned.

Mistaken or not, we start out in a similar way: The existence of a single orthodox world current or tendency, a frontal enemy of the revisionism of the United Secretariat (USec) and of the OCI (u) [*Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (Unifié)* – International Communist Organisation (Unified)] is a fact. And this fact, that this current exists and is unique, is corroborated by another fact — this Conference, which is of this united tendency. This is the background, in my view, of what we have raised in this Conference, and specifically in the two documents that we put to your consideration. In other words, this Conference is a political fact that reflects the existence of a single Trotskyist current on a world scale, formed by the former BF [Bolshevik Faction], enriched and fortified by the presence of comrades from other sources, mainly from the former OCRFI. Like any new fact, it is the product of a combination.

So the first question we must answer is whether we have reunited the only organised Trotskyists (weak or strong, full of mistakes or successes in their past) who are for the intransigent defence of Trotskyism. That is, we must begin by defining the character and meaning of this meeting. To paraphrase Lefebvre, we say: consequent Trotskyism is a fact expressed in this meeting.

The second thing is something we have said before this conference — we do not want to regress from the FI (IC) to the Bolshevik Faction. It was a wish. Today, that ambition has been

fulfilled. We are facing something qualitatively superior to the Bolshevik Faction at the level of leadership and of the organisation. We have not regressed to the BF, not at all. Why? First of all, for the American comrades, who, despite being a small group, we must vindicate, because they are part of the rich historical experience of building Trotskyism in that country. It is a group of accomplished and experienced comrades, who have already travelled a long and bumpy road. They are not here by chance.

Still more symptomatic is the presence of Comrades Napuri and Franceschi. Beware of deceiving yourself! They reflect by far the best of the highly contradictory phenomenon that is the OCRFI and the OCI (u). They are the tip of an iceberg. The contradiction of the OCRFI was between its ritual as Trotskyists and its politics. They were full of Trotskyists who hated revisionism and fought it.

From this current, we have here two of its most representative leaders. This makes it qualitative. A leadership and an organisation with Napuri and Alberto [Franceschi] are no longer the same as the BF.

When I met with them a few days ago and told them what I am telling you now, Alberto said: “Did you see Napuri? What we were talking about”. The two comrades had come to the same conclusion. The Conference is qualitatively superior to the former BF. If it were not so, my report would have to start by saying we are facing an unfortunate situation, we have had to go back to the old BF. But this is not the BF conference since it comprises the vast majority of the former FI(IC) and the militants, leaders and organisations that do not accept the revisionism of the OCI (u).

The third problem is whether we should form an international organisation, with statutes, leadership, and the norms of democratic centralism. Like any oral report, mine is schematic. The written form, if it is political or theoretical, allows another subtlety and level of abstraction. The oral report, on the other hand, has to be schematic. What is important is whether this schematism puts in black and white what really has to be in black and white. We unequivocally affirm that, according to Trotskyism, when there is a program there must be an organisation and a leadership. And when there is no program there should be no organisation but front, movement or group of friends.

We want to discuss this axiom. We believe we have a program — the theses of the FI(IC) updated in relation to the popular-frontist governments. We must then provide ourselves with the international Bolshevik organisation that defends and implements that program.

That Lambert and Mandel are able to do what they are doing in France is because our international current is not very strong, but not because it is unnecessary. On the contrary, it is indispensable. A consistent Trotskyist policy cannot be applied in France or Peru because of the weakness of the International and its leadership and because of Lambert’s and Mandel’s revisionism. To respond to these challenges, an international organisation and leadership are necessary more than ever.

And now let us turn to the problem of the mistakes. Many say: “You have made many mistakes, who can guarantee us you will not make them again?” Let us look at the facts because, like all Marxists, we start from them. We made many mistakes, it is a fact, and we are going to make many mistakes, which is also another fact, not a hypothesis or futurology. I guarantee that as an international leadership and as national leaderships we will continue to make mistakes. If someone believes it will not be so, we feel sorry for him. We do not do demagogy — we will make mistakes. Less than before, but we will be wrong. Of this, I’m sure. We believe we have a superior leadership to the one we had before, but do not ask us for the guarantee of not making enough mistakes often. This guarantee could be given by Trotskyist leaders who take power at the head of big parties, but not by us, products of the crisis of the Fourth. Our merit is to have resisted — well or badly — the revisionist offensive. We are Marxists and we do not believe in witches or miracles. Just to take only two places on the Southern Cone, in Argentina we had great possibilities of making a strong party and we could not, because of the serious mistakes we committed; in Peru, the same happened. I do not know whether Comrade Napuri shares this opinion. Precisely, the comrade insisted on the strength of *Vanguardia Revolucionaria* [Revolutionary Vanguard]. I corroborate

it. If Napuri, when he led *Vanguardia*, would have been Trotskyist, and if there had been a true International, power would have been seized in Peru. Something similar would have happened in Argentina if we had seen the importance of the Labour party in 1945. In that year there were four socio-political phenomena: the elimination of Stalinist and socialist unionism and the emergence of Peronist unionism, the emergence of a Labour party, of a socialist left, and of a large student left. Of these four decisive phenomena, we only saw the one of Peronist unionism and none of the other three. I was against the Labour party because I thought it was a conservative party. That is, I am responsible for not having seen three fundamental processes, thus losing decisive opportunities.

We must recognise the mistakes we make so that young Trotskyists learn to think and criticise us with their head, while nevertheless continuing to respect us. And, in that sense, we vindicate ourselves, because since we were youngsters we made a “subliminal” propaganda about this. Back then we did not see the new problems, except on exceptions. In fact, the Fourth International did not exist to support us and guide us. Fortunately, we realised our orphanhood and inability to give correct and fast answers. That is why we have called our formation and our Trotskyism “barbarian”. We were formed in a semi-colonial country on one flank of the world, which was neither revolutionary nor a cultural centre, like China or Europe. When we started, few Marxist books existed in Spanish. Be that as it may, we had a certain sense of proportions. We saw ourselves as what we were — an insignificance in the Trotskyist movement. Perhaps what most frightened us was reading and listening to Posadas.<sup>1</sup> He was much more ignorant and mediocre than any of us, and he had the luxury of talking about everything, about values and flamingos or about the law of relativity, convinced that he was absolutely right. We were frightened and we said — we must try by all means never to become idiots like Posadas, who knows nothing and thinks himself perfect.

Later, we met the great Trotskyist leaders. Those of the SWP, whom we admired so much, never mentioned their mistakes. Theirs was a history of geniuses, full of successes. Mandel acted in a similar way. The leaders of the world Trotskyist movement considered themselves to be colossi who never were wrong. However, Trotskyism, led by them, was pitiful.

We resolved, then, to reverse the problem. We would try to prepare the mentality of those who come, teaching them our mistakes, our colossal limitations. This is why we changed the way of doing the history of our party, so as to force them to think on their own. The parties and the leaderships wrote their history to show they were always right. We did it by showing the huge number of mistakes made. This is why the courses on the PST (A) are divided by mistakes and not by successes: the petty-bourgeois centrist stage (in 1948); 2nd stage, propagandist, unionist and sectarian in the national field. And so on. All negative definitions, because we believe we have progressed through overcomings and negations.

This boring experience of always walking among geniuses led us to make indirect propaganda on our ranks to convince them by all means that we are often wrong, that they must think and think for themselves because our leadership is not a guarantee of brilliance. We want, by all means, to instil in them a self-critical, Marxist spirit and not a religious devotion towards a modest leadership, provincial for its formation and barbarian for its culture. This is why we believe in internal democracy and see it as a tremendous need. We have lived and learned a lot by hitting walls. A very similar process to the one lived by Napuri but within Trotskyism. We advanced through mistakes and blows. We are not embarrassed to say so. But for the same reason, do not ask us, to the new organisation or its leadership, that we be always right because we are going to make mistakes and many.

The problem is, qualitatively and quantitatively, in what way mistakes are made. In my view, we move towards fewer and fewer mistakes if it is done within an international organisation, with a leadership and on the basis of democratic centralism. That for me is a fact. I categorically assert that every national party not part of a Bolshevik international organisation with an international leadership commits more and more mistakes and a qualitative one — for being a national Trotskyist

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<sup>1</sup> **J. Posadas** was the pseudonym of Homero Romulo Cristali Frasnelli (1912-1981) an Argentine Trotskyist leader. When in 1953 the Fourth International was split between the International Secretariat and the International Committee, Posadas sided with the secretary Michel Pablo.

party, it inevitably ends up denying the Fourth International and moving onto opportunist or sectarian positions; and then it disappears. The party is Trotskyist and then it lives within an International or it disappears.

Nin believed himself to be a revolutionary Marxist but, as a national Marxist, he led the POUM to annihilation. Its 30 or 40 thousand militants, where are they today? In contrast, the ten Spanish Trotskyists affiliated to the International in the late 1930s have multiplied, they exist. International Trotskyism is a reality. Weak, with plenty of mistakes, but it exists thanks to the method, the program and the organisation. Because there can be no program in the abstract, as there cannot be a human being with a brain and without a body.

In short: there can be no international program without a party of the same type. The founding of the IWL-FI<sup>1</sup> is the most urgent and imperative of our needs. If we did not find it, it would mean that international revisionism is organised, structured in the USec or around Pablo and Lambert, while we orthodox Trotskyists are not. It would be a way of facilitating the victory of revisionism and of ensuring our defeat, for without a centralised organisation there is no chance of defeating our revisionist enemies, let alone the great bureaucratic apparatuses.

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1 Following on Moreno's death in 1987, the International Workers League – Fourth International (IWL-FI) went into crisis and in 1990 it began to split. Moreno's followers in that organisation, and the keepers of the web page [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org), are grouped in the International Workers Unity – Fourth International (IWU-FI).

## II

# The centre of revisionism is the USec

To begin with, comrades, I want to make two clarifications regarding the documents of this conference and the most important articles published in recent months. All of them focus on the controversy with the leadership of the French OCI (u). This can lead us to a misunderstanding; to believe our fight against Trotskyist revisionism centres against the OCI (u). This is not the case. The target of our controversy remains the USec. In this sense, we are heirs of the FI(IC). The fact we were in the same organisation caused that, by breaking with it, the centre of the controversy would move momentarily from the USec to the OCI (u). But this is temporary while we finish separating from Lambertism.

It is the USec that, for three decades, has been practising this policy we fight today in the OCI (u). There is almost no difference between the two organisations and Pablo in the political course for France. It is difficult to determine which one is further to the right or to the left. We thought, in an introduction to my article “The Betrayal of the OCI” or in another work, to point out how there is an almost total agreement between the Lambertist, Pabloite and Mandelist organisations in France, and after having fought each other for decades, today, faced with the Mitterrand government, the three pull together, have the same program and almost the same tactics. Therefore, our old battle with the USec continues, to which it has been added as an appendix the OCI (u).

A second clarification; as we already said, we intended to write an introduction to the article that, for reasons of fatigue we did not do. We wanted to show that the policy of the OCI (u) for France is qualitatively equal to the policy of the USec for Nicaragua but, in many ways, much worse. That is, that the whole attack we carried out with Lambert, Just and Favre against the policy of the USec in Nicaragua is exactly the same as the one we carry out today against Lambert in France. But with the aggravating factor that in France we are dealing with a popular-frontist government of an imperialist country that emerged through an electoral process. That is to say, there is no justification — which would be, in any case, inadmissible — that it yielded to a revolution as could be argued in the case of Nicaragua. That is, the capitulation of the OCI (u) is much worse; including the human types to which it capitulates. Tomas Borge or any of the great figures of the FSLN have nothing to do with this disgusting gentleman<sup>1</sup> of Mitterrand and his partners, prepared for 40 years by the French bourgeoisie to fulfil their current role as its government agents.

With these two clarifications, I want to point out in passing that in truth we are a little stunned by the position of the OCI (u) since we never believed that it would betray Trotskyism in this way. We have encountered shocking phenomena. Investigating *Informations Ouvrières* we discovered that since Mitterrand took office they had never, ever, defended ETA prisoners in France. Yet, this does not mean that the comrades who rely on this unexpectedness and surprise of ours to conclude it was a mistake to have built the FI (IC) are right.

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<sup>1</sup> The word “gentleman” is in English in the original. [Translator]

Yesterday, the comrade from Sweden pointed out that the unity was positive because we learned from the OCRFI. He is right, we learned several matters, and one of them was and is of fundamental importance — the issue of the state apparatus and the bourgeois regimes. The leadership of the OCI (u) had developed more than the BF what means the state apparatus and the regimes in the revolutionary process.

Comrades, I do not want to make an exhaustive report for the simple reason that for a Trotskyist the basic principles of a revolutionary policy in the face of popular-frontist governments are more than known. It is a question more than known, it is ultra-known. I still believe there can be no Trotskyist who claims to be such, who do not think if one denounces every day the socialist and communist parties as traitors when they are not in power, as they rise to imperialist and counter-revolutionary government, they must be denounced more than ever — if we used to do it daily, now must do it every minute of the day.

Trying to delve deeper into this issue, we found Lenin and Trotsky had had an identical analysis and policy regarding the popular-frontist governments, but they had not done a finished elaboration in any work. We found this problem, which we thought so simple, was full of subtleties. For example, Lenin wrote countless works in which he pointed out that no support was to be given to any measure of a government such as those of Russia in 1917, and that there was no agreement or front with the traitorous workers' parties that formed part of it. Regarding support for measures of bourgeois governments, from Trotsky, there is only what Comrade Earl quoted, the answer to Shachtman and the policy of the French section in relation to Blum's measures in 1936, which had his support or advice. Both positions of the Old Man are very clear — to support measures of popular-frontism is treason. Unfortunately, there is no pamphlet or work by Trotsky dedicated specifically to this subject. Whereas, in relation to the popular-frontist governments and the traitorous parties that made it up, there are clear-cut and categorical articles by Trotsky in which he demands their permanent denunciation and the need to mobilise the masses against them. Due to this temporary and journalistic nature of the works of Lenin and Trotsky on popular-frontism and Kerenskyism, there are open theoretical problems we must discuss.

For example, the workers' front, which we should study not only in relation to this discussion but to the theses themselves. We have prepared a paper on the workers' front, but as we see that the comrades are very exhausted, we will leave the discussion for the next conference.

Comrade Alberto said in passing something very important — to what extent the transformation by the OCI (u) of the tactic of the united workers' front in a principle and a strategy is one of the fundamental keys to understand its capitulation to popular-frontism? I am inclined to believe that the comrade is right.

Like this, there are other problems. But all this problematic is grounded on a series of fundamental principles of Trotskyism which are those we have defended in the three documents we put to discussion and to vote in general terms. I say in general terms because — I insist again — there are theoretical issues to be discussed. But there are principles that remain unshakable, the programmatic basis of Trotskyism. Those principles are those we knew but, as Hegel said, they were known by all but not acknowledged. In this meeting, they will be enshrined in normative form as fundamental principles of Trotskyism.

Well, what are we going to vote in this conference? The draft thesis of the letter to the POSI [*Partido Obrero Socialista Internacionalista* – International Socialist Workers Party] and the summary of those general principles which I will list.

We will vote that under a popular-frontist government, as under any other bourgeois government, our policy of principles is:

- That under popular-frontist governments, Trotskyism's central goal, its first task, remains the same as under other types of bourgeois governments: To convince the working class and its allies they must take government and power into their own hands; that there is no solution to any of the scourges of capitalism — from poverty to fascism — if the workers do not make a revolution against the government and the bourgeois state to impose its own government and state. All our strategy and tactics are aimed at teaching the workers these basic and fundamental truths.

- That, therefore, it is our duty to systematically and relentlessly denounce imperialist bourgeois governments and the capitalist state, whoever may be at their head. The hopes of the masses and all the other phenomena, which we take into account for the tactical adaptation of this denunciation, can never mean a change in the policy of attacking the bourgeois government minute by minute, whether popular-frontist or not.

- That any support for measures of a bourgeois imperialist government, therefore counter-revolutionary (including the popular-frontist ones), is a betrayal of Leninism, whatever these measures might be. The policy of "supporting anti-capitalist measures and rejecting the capitalist" or "supporting progressive measures and rejecting



the reactionary” is pure Menshevism, as it instils among the workers the traitorous view that the government is not counter-revolutionary, bourgeois, and imperialist, but a hybrid that at times can be bourgeois and at times anti-capitalist.

- That, on the contrary, it is our duty always to denounce bourgeois governments and never to support a measure of them, however progressive it may seem, because this, in addition to deceiving the masses, gives political weapons to the government to implement the whole of its counter-revolutionary policy, of which its “progressive measures” are an indissoluble part.

- That, nevertheless, we defend the “progressive measures” from any bourgeois and imperialist attack when they are viewed with sympathy by the working class and they are threatened by other more reactionary bourgeois sectors. We also use them. We carry out this defence or utilization without failing to criticise the bourgeois government whether popular-frontist or not.

- We Trotskyists do not “advise” a bourgeois government (even if it is popular-frontist), nor do we believe it can have an anti-bourgeois and anti-imperialist policy. To think otherwise is a reactionary utopia that serves the counter-revolution. It is a utopia because it purports that a bourgeois government can have an anti-bourgeois policy; and reactionary because it disarms the working class by creating false expectations regarding its mortal enemy, the government.

- We Trotskyists do the opposite. We explain to the masses the chronic, of class, inability of a bourgeois government — even a popular-frontist one — to go in favour of the working class and its inevitable need to defend capitalism and imperialism, whether it is a government of the bourgeois right or of the pro-bourgeois workers’ parties.

- Nothing of the above means that the Trotskyists do not take part in the physical struggles between bourgeois sectors. The Fourth International is for the “transformation of any imperialist war into civil war”. In the same way, the Fourth International takes part militarily in the civil war in the more “progressive” bourgeois camp, in the camp of Kerensky against Kornilov; in the camp of the Chinese semi-colony against the Japanese colonial invasion; in the camp of the Spanish Republic against Franco. But these military interventions are mere tactics to get the working class to understand that it must seize power now, snatching it from Kerensky, Chiang, or Negrin.

- To carry out these tasks, it is essential to building a Trotskyist party, and this must be explained systematically to the masses. Only by building this party will they have a leadership that will not betray them and that will lead them to seize power.

- As an essential part of these tasks, it is essential to wipe out from the mass movement the traitorous workers’ parties and, for this, we must instil that no confidence can be placed in them and to systematically denounce them. And when one of these traitorous workers’ parties rises to a bourgeois imperialist government and manages the capitalist state, we must attack it more than ever. It is at this moment, when the masses may believe the presence of the workers’ party in the government makes it their own when we must denounce it has become more counter-revolutionary than ever.

All this becomes concrete in a fundamental methodological issue, which comes from the discussion with all the revisionist currents. To differentiate between objective reality and our norms and political line. What does this statement mean? Let’s look at an example.

The OCI (u) could only resort to two quotes from Trotsky in defence of its position in France. One says the masses should not be aroused, that we must explain to them. The second says the French workers, in their second wave, will fight against the enemies of the Blum government and not against Blum, and, therefore, we must put ourselves at the head of that struggle. The leadership of the OCI (u) makes a false interpretation, to say the least, confusing our politics with the adaptation to reality.

Suppose that the Colombian masses decide to fight against Belisario Betancourt<sup>1</sup> (conservative) and not against the liberals who are in the government. This is a fact and as such we take it but without adapting to it since our policy is not that the masses fight against the conservative bourgeoisie and refrain from attacking the liberal bourgeoisie. But if the masses tend to make a great strike to expropriate the conservative bourgeoisie, it would be sectarian to deny this fact and not be the best fighters and leaders of that struggle. But the action of the workers is not our policy or, rather, does not exhaust our program for that struggle. We go to that objective process to bring the masses towards our program, whose axis is always political — to destroy the state and the government. And everything we do has a goal, to educate the masses in the conviction that unless they pull down the state apparatus

<sup>1</sup> **Belisario Betancur** (b. 1923) is a politician, former President of Colombia from 1982 to 1986 for the Colombian Conservative Party.

and the government of the day to impose a state apparatus and a government of themselves, there is no possibility of overcoming any problem.

It is a question of starting from the reality that the masses go to a general strike only against the conservative bourgeoisie to bring them closer to our program — the struggle against the whole bourgeois system, including the liberal bourgeoisie, especially against its state and government.

This contradiction between what the masses believe and what we believe is first and fundamental, we solve it in a tactical way, but with a tactic that continues to uphold the principles. What does this mean? The leadership of the OCI (u) interprets that Trotsky asserts (in the second of the mentioned quotations) that we don't have to attack the popular-frontist government of Blum, but only its imperialist enemies. But for Lenin and for Trotsky, the principle is "always to attack the bourgeois government, whether or not popular-frontist". The tactic only shows how we should make this systematic attack, taking into account, among other phenomena, the consciousness of the masses.

For example, if the workers believe the great enemy is the anti-Mitterrand, anti-Blum or anti-liberal bourgeoisie in Colombia and that we must mobilise only against it, we will be at the forefront of that struggle, but without ceasing to attack for a single minute the governments of Blum, Mitterrand or Liberal. How? By telling the masses that with the Blum government it is hard for us to defeat de la Rocque because he does not give us arms, because he capitulates before the bourgeoisie, because he does not really face it. And regarding Mitterrand, we will tell them we do not trust him to face the bourgeoisie because he is their servant. This is tactical — to systematically attack the popular-frontist government, but starting from the fact the masses believe we must fight only against the enemies of that government and not against it, raising the problem of power and state in a way understandable by the workers. We tell them: "The government in which you trust will do nothing against your bourgeois enemies, only your initiative and mobilisation will defeat the bourgeoisie."

This confusion by the OCI (u) between objective reality and our program and principles is deliberate and characterises every revisionist current which believes there are no principles or, if any, they are for the holidays. However, the struggle for our principles and for our program is daily; the only thing that changes every day is the tactics, that is, how to express or explain them. If instead of taking reality to develop our program and principles we adapt to that real process of the stages of the mass movement, we are committing a betrayal — capitulating and tail-ending the popular-frontist government or any bourgeois government in which the workers believe.

In this discussion, there are class problems that characterise the OCI (u), the LCR and Pablo. Marxism has not only a class policy but also a class analysis. If we say — as the OCI (u) and the LCR do — a government made up of bourgeois can practice class struggle for the workers, adopt "progressive measures", or follow an "anti-capitalist course", we are committing a political crime. I touch on this point to counter the vulgar, revisionist argument that the door must not be closed to the possibility or hypothesis of a bourgeois government becoming anti-bourgeois. Vulgar, because in thinking this way we lose all scientific sense, of class, just as it happens with pacifists who tell us, "How nice that we all love each other, that there are no wars, etc.", without seeing that there is a class which hates the workers and inevitably carries out wars and exploits humanity. There are also those who, using vulgar thinking, think we could support "progressive" measures and resist those which are not because perhaps the Mitterrand government will take the path of class struggle. From the methodological point of view, of Marxism, this is the total abandonment of class analysis and politics. It is pure revisionism as analysis and as politics because every bourgeois government inexorably practices the class struggle at the service of the bourgeoisie and is, for reasons of class, totally and absolutely prevented from practising it at the service of the proletariat. The character of a government — bourgeois or proletarian — is not an amorphous or secondary phenomenon. If bourgeois it practices class struggle at the service of the bourgeoisie, and therefore we have to denounce it as such; since offering it means by approving its measures is a betrayal of class policy. There are no governments of indefinite sex: it is either bourgeois or proletarian. And when the OCI (u) says the Mitterrand government has a dilemma, "either class collaboration or class struggle", and that its policy is to push him towards the "class struggle", the OCI (u) is committing two crimes: one in analysis and another in politics.

I wanted to emphasise this methodological character in the ongoing discussion, because to make a class definition of the government and, from there, to elaborate our policy, is also a question of principles. The leadership of the OCI (u) will try to present us with Trotsky's quote about the possibility of the workers' parties breaking with the bourgeoisie and establishing a workers' and peasants' government, or the history of all the communist parties or of Castroism that broke with the bourgeoisie in this postwar period. It will insist they are practising the tactics of the workers' and peasants' government of the transitional program, of demanding from the workers' parties they break

with the bourgeoisie and they constitute a workers' and peasants' government. In our last work, we have already explained that this is a smokescreen of the leadership of the OCI (u) to hide its revisionism. They are not advising or demanding from workers' parties but from a bourgeois popular-frontist government, which is not the same, but the opposite.

### III

## Workers' Front: the origin of a tactic

Before anything else, I must clarify that our new approach to the subject debunks what we wrote in the theses of FI–IC regarding the workers' front. We will not resort to manoeuvres like Lambert and will tell it like it is.

At the time, we considered what the thesis on united workers' front said was correct, and a contribution from the comrades of the OCI (u). They insisted on such content, and we approved. We were not mature enough.

Now it is different. Mitterrand and Nicaragua have led us to make a new reflection on this tactic and what we write now is a discovery for us.

We have long suspected that there were problems in the tactic of the workers' front. We had been working on it without finding a solution. Many years ago we thought it was a strategy. It was a mistake we later corrected — the united front is a tactic. During the Russian Revolution, this tactic only applied for a fortnight. Trotsky says it categorically, according to quotes we have contributed. The reading of Lenin corroborates it. He asserts we should not make any agreement with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries throughout the stage, despite the fact that the workers' front — as we all know — is a special agreement proposed to reformism. During the Kornilov uprising, he changes and proposes to the social-traitors an agreement or front, only for a fortnight, as Trotsky said.

That is, the Bolshevik policy of 1917 was carried out without using the tactic of the united front. On the contrary, Lenin's great slogan of 1917 is "no agreement" with the opportunist parties, because they are part of the government or support it.

The workers' united front tactic arises between the Third and Fourth Congresses of the Third International. It is, therefore, a tactic subsequent to the Russian revolution.

For those who agree with the OCI (u), this poses some problems — perhaps the Bolsheviks found in 1921 a permanent strategy or tactic, which because of ignorance they did not use before, and which, had it been applied, it would have facilitated the Russian Revolution?

We do not believe so. It is a tactic and it applies at certain times. This tactic arose when the Third International found that, because the European revolution had failed, the social-democratic parties were still widely majority. This forced to change the tactics developed by the First and Second congresses of the Third International.

During these congresses, the Comintern had followed the policy of Marx and Engels, “one working class, one party”. All Marxism — since Marx — is developed in the notion our parties should not be Marxist, but the whole working class had to have a single party, with its own language and ideology, to such an extent that Marx argued in his famous letter to Sorge that the workers’ party of the United States should speak and think as the class itself, despite its semi-Masonic views.

It was Kautsky, who was not a bad politician when young, who insists we must build Marxist parties. He vindicates Marxism to fight against the intellectual, petty-bourgeois wing of the German Social Democratic Party. Thus the concept of Marxist workers’ party emerged, which means if it is not Marxist it is not workers’, and which extended from Germany to all advanced countries.

The two conceptions, the one of Marx — “one class, one party” — and Kautsky’s — “one party, but Marxist” — were adopted by the Third International, when founded.

## A new tactic arises

The First and Second congresses of the Third International asserted that if the revolution triumphed in Germany and in one or two other countries, social democracy would be in an endless crisis and that there would be a single dominant workers’ party, the communist. But after the Second Congress, when the revolution fails in Europe, Lenin, Trotsky and the Third International face the fact social democracy is still widely majority.

This combined with the relative stabilisation of capitalism, the ebb tide of the European workers’ movement and, finally, although the workers’ revolution had failed, the communist parties became mass parties, although minority.

This new situation poses the imperative need to win the Social Democratic workers to make the socialist revolution. The united front tactic emerges from this conjunctural and specific need. As such, it is part of the strategy to sweep off the working class the socialist parties to achieve the hegemony of the Communist Party. It is a tactic to weaken the social-traitors through the proposal and implementation of joint actions, felt by both parties.

The tactic did not raise a unity or permanent agreements with the social-democratic parties. Its strategy and principle were to destroy them. For this very reason, the Third International alerts to the danger of trying to raise maximum slogans or programs of workers’ revolution with the treasonous working-class parties. It argues that doing so is betrayal and not a united front because it amounts to place revolutionary trust in them.

When Stalinism applied this tactic with the English trade union leadership, saying “let’s make a united front to help the English strikers”, Trotsky said it was one of the greatest betrayals and they should have proposed that the Russian trade unions directly support the mining strike through the revolutionary wing of English trade unionism, to defeat the bureaucratic union leadership. Never, during the great English strike, should the united front tactic have been applied, but rather the support for the strike to defeat not just the bosses and the British government, but the union bureaucracy too.

The united front tactic is an invitation. And it can only be raised when there are points in common between the reformist and revolutionary parties. If a workers’ party is in favour of the austerity plans applied by the government, it is impossible to have a united front with this party for an increase in wages. The basis of the united front is that at some point the reformist masses (who do not believe in the revolution) and their leaders (who want to readjust), taken by the class struggle, are forced to raise some slogan of struggle against capitalism. For example, when Isabel Peron’s government in Argentina cut wages by 40 percent and the working class and many Peronist leaders were furious, we invited the bureaucracy and the workers who followed them to fight together to recover the purchasing power. Thus an impressive general strike was carried out.

What does it mean that the workers’ front is a tactic? It means it is just a tool, a means among others, to build the party, winning sectors of the working class for it. Therefore, to say it is “*the*

*tactic*” or a strategy means it is the only tool or means the party has to build itself and achieve a wider audience in the working class. Or, at least, that it is the privileged tool or means.

Our strategy, our central task, to which everything else is subordinated, is to transform our organisations in parties with mass influence, with increasing working class influence, with more and more proletarian cadres in its ranks. This is the strategy. And whenever there is a talk of tactics it needs to be referred to this strategy.

The OCI (u) has been saying for years that the workers’ united front is a strategy or privileged tactic (which is the same). The thesis [of the FI-IC] said it is a tactic, a concession they made to us. We brought documents where Trotsky writes that the workers’ united front is a tactic. Then they found us a single quotation from Trotsky in which he says it is not a circumstantial tactic, which refers, specifically, to a moment of the class struggle in a country — the stage prior to the rise of Hitler.

If we take the workers’ united front as a permanent and privileged tactic, it means the permanent way to build the party or the tool or means preferred is the agreement with traitor workers’ parties. The OCI (u) is consistent when putting, in fact, an equal sign between party building and the tactics of the workers’ front.

## **A tactic for each situation**

For us, every stage of the class struggle demands different means or tactics to build the party. These arise not only from the class struggle but also of the relationship established between it and the party.

This relationship is not aesthetic or scientific. We do not study reality just to know it or for a thrill. Nor do we analyse the situation of our party as historians or sociologists.

We study the two realities, the class struggle and the party, to find ways to strengthen the party. It is an interested, political analysis. It is so much so that these means or tactics change, not only with objective reality but with the reality of the party itself. Assuming two similar objective situations, we will have very different tactics if our organisation comprises of 20 students or 20,000 steelworkers and miners.

This explains, among many other tactics, the entryism in the socialist parties of the 1930s. Had we been powerful workers’ organisations we would not have done entryism. This was our central tactic for two or three years, and not the workers’ united front because we were small groups. Entryism was the prime tactic in a given moment of Trotskyism, and was the negation of the united front tactic, although it served in France for a short time to take part in the united front that the Socialist and Communist parties had agreed on. It was a means to break the socialist parties, as fast as possible, from within. We entered them not to develop a united front with the leadership, but to denounce it and to make the socialist left break with it.

The tactics of the revolutionary party are endless. They change according to the situation. For example, the PST of Argentina, when it ran for elections — the greatest tactical success of its history, it became a national party and allowed it to “own” a small part of the mass movement — practised the tactic opposite to the united front: the workers’ and socialist pole. This meant to unite the class-conscious and socialist activists to oppose them to the workers’ organisations and leaderships practising class collaboration. If anyone in our movement had told us not to present ourselves to the elections because the correct tactic was to raise the workers’ united front of the CGT and the workers’ parties, he would have committed a crime.

This is why, for me, the supporters of the united front as a privileged tactic or strategy commit the serious mistake of getting our leaderships used to not thinking about the true tactics that are required. They falsely believe they have solved the problem forever, repeating as a crutch “workers’ united front”. And this is a serious methodological error, which adds to the political error, of adapting to the counter-revolutionary apparatuses as the only valid interlocutors.

## IV

# Sui generis Bonapartism and popular-frontism

The Mexican comrade believes that sui generis Bonapartism of the backward countries and popular-frontism cannot coexist. We think there is no antagonism between the two categories.

Popular-frontism is a type of government and Bonapartism is a type of regime. The Bonapartist semi-parliamentary regime of the Fifth Republic, which exists in France, has sheltered a conservative right-wing government and now a popular-frontist one. The OCI says that if there is such a regime there can be no such government; there are comrades who say if there is sui generis Bonapartism there can be no popular-front government in the backward countries. This is true only when it is a totalitarian regime, because the workers' parties, not even the traitors can exist legally.

Even before the rise of imperialism, Bonapartist regimes were characteristic in all countries. There is a famous letter from Engels stating that the regimes that were not Bonapartist had ended. And this is a law, although it has exceptions.

On the other hand, there are different types of Bonapartist regimes: with or without parliamentary forms, with semi-parliamentary, semi-corporate or corporate forms, coming from fascism.

Every fascist government culminates in Bonapartism since there is no permanent Fascist government — as soon as it loses the support of the petty bourgeois masses, it becomes Bonapartist.

Let us now look at the differences and analogies between the popular-frontist and Kerenskyist governments.

I believe the definition of Trotsky and of the Third International, according to which every government in which the reformist parties are involved is Kerenskyist, is unilateral and dangerous. I consider that Kerenskyism is a type of regime that arises when the bourgeois state is shaken by a revolutionary process, which makes it extremely weak and causes the emergence of dual power. For the leadership of the OCI, all the popular-frontist governments are Kerenskyist, that is, they can only appear if there is an extreme weakness of the capitalist state, if it is on the verge of collapse. I do not believe so. I vindicate what I said in my article, that popular-frontism is a form of government and that, in my view, Trotsky's quotations and analysis of the 1930s confirm this interpretation. And I say this form of government can take place under a Kerenskyist or a Bonapartist regime. And also that under a Kerenskyist regime there may be a popular-frontist, worker-bourgeois or bourgeois government. That is, contrary to what the OCI says, popular-frontism does not always coincide with Kerenskyism.

For years, since the Portuguese revolution, I have shared the current position of the OCI (u)'s leadership on the identity of Kerenskyism and popular-frontism. What I said in my report should be considered a rectification. One more, among the many that I have done in my political life, such as the one of the anti-imperialist united front, since also for years and on several occasions, I have had similar positions on this subject to Lambert's and Favre's current ones. Mandel laughs a lot of my permanent eagerness to settle accounts first with myself. The man who supported

the MNR in Bolivia, for example, wrote that world war was coming in six months, in the early 1950s; that Mao and Tito were advancing towards revolutionary Marxism; that in the capitalist world misery and unemployment had ended and that there would only be alienation; he still believes he does not have to rectify anything at all.

I believe, instead, that the crisis of the Fourth International, of its leadership, influenced us, its leaders. For this reason, all of us, without exception, have been and are unilateral, let alone rather mediocre. The difference is that some of those mediocre leaders believe themselves to be geniuses. And others, like me, who know and proclaim — so that no young Trotskyist is deceived — that we are unilateral, malformed, mediocre, due to the crisis of our international.

In short, Kerenskyism defines a regime and not a specific government; it is the capitalist regime in crisis because of the revolutionary rise. Popular-frontism is a government made up of workers' and bourgeois organisations, and the worker-bourgeois government is one in which only the counter-revolutionary workers' parties take part. §