



Nahuel Moreno

Speeches in the First Congress

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1985

First Spanish Edition: Editorial Crux, Buenos Aires, 1991

English translation: Daniel Iglesias

Cover and interior design: Daniel Iglesias

www.nahuelmoreno.org

www.uit-ci.org

www.izquierdasocialista.org.ar

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Buenos Aires, 2017
cehus2014@gmail.com



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First speech

REPORT ON THE WORLD SITUATION

Introduction

First of all, because there have been so many contributions, suggestions, modifications of form, and so on, I want to clarify the character of the Theses¹ and at the same time the character of my answers. They are well-condensed Theses, very brief, made and written intentionally so.

We had prepared a report on the world political situation that was huge; I suspect of one or two volumes. That is, much larger than a book. And suddenly we realised that for the IWL² grassroots militants they were overstated, they were too documented. We embraced every sector of the world revolutionary process extensively and with quotes. Contadora³ alone was almost a book. We would contribute quotes of all kinds to show why Contadora was an unspeakable betrayal. In another chapter we brought quotations to show the counter-revolutionary front, and so on.

And suddenly we realised that we were sabotaging the understanding of our militants, especially the younger militants because in the midst of such a number of events the most important ideas that we wanted to demonstrate were lost. We showed them so exhaustively that they were lost in that multitude of facts.

In the IWL Secretariat, we radically changed the approach and decided to make theses as short and concise as possible, in order to centre the main axes and to allow us to read them with our rank and file members, to discuss the theses with a clear understanding of those centres, those axes.

In general, very interesting contributions have been made. I want to point out, for example, the comrades in the United States: Comrade Perez, Comrade Harry, who coincides in some points with Comrade Perez; [the contributions of] the Swedish comrades on the problem of youth and other similar problems; also the contributions of the Brazilian comrades, even if they disagree with the Theses; the comrades of Argentina, where many contributions have been made both in the national and international Internal Bulletins. I also have received — and I have read only the first part— the document by Comrade Roberto, from Chile, which is very interesting. Today I will rebut it only in its first point and tomorrow in all its points. I have not been able to read the contribution and criticism of the comrades from Mexico because they gave it to me just a while ago. We have also received contributions from Portugal, from a small group of supporters, or friends — I do not know how to name them — that split from us and now they seems to be approaching.

Well, there are plenty of observations, for all tastes. There are formal corrections, proposals to modify the wording of some parts... I will not respond to these issues of detail and form. For me, in the cases in which propose, for example, “instead of writing it this way, we should write it in

1 It refers to the “Theses on the World Situation”, Draft Resolution of the International Secretariat of the IWL, 20 October 1984. They were published in Spanish in *Correo Internacional*, Year I, No8, 31 October 1984, [Editor.]

2 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. Currently, Moreno’s followers in that organisation, and the keepers of the web page www.nahuelmoreno.org, are grouped in the International Workers Unity – Fourth International (IWU-FI). [Editor.]

3 It refers to the **Contadora Group**, formed by Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Venezuela 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 January 7, 1983. [Editor.]

such a way” we must go to the Secretariat or the Executive Committee of the IWL. When we agree with the content of the Theses, the formal question must be passed to the Secretariat or a special Commission that we name here. If there are comrades who consider that the changes are very important, they can propose to be members of that Committee for final drafting of the Theses.

But let us not forget that we want synthetic Theses, the more synthetic the better because we have the goal that they can be studied as such. Let us not forget that the Theses are going to be accompanied by a Manifesto that is nothing more than the other side of the Theses, their popularisation, and that it will be more extensive, more explanatory.

In addition to these formal issues, there are important questions, suggestions and proposals, some of them of fundamental importance.

We will try to be more or less in agreement and facilitate the discussion. For me, there are three fundamental issues in the Theses, which are questioned by some comrades: on the revolutionary situation and its implications, on the revolutionary united front and on the minimum revolutionary program. I think these are the most important issues of the Theses and that we have to discuss them in that order. I will put the motion to discuss first in general and then by points —that is, revolutionary situation, revolutionary united front and minimum revolutionary program— [so that the issues do not get mixed].

There are also several other issues that have been questioned by different comrades, which are not the fundamental issues of the Theses but are important.

One: on the definition of countries as independent, which is an issue raised by Comrade Perez and others. Two: on democracy for the whole population. This has been criticised from different angles, saying that we abandon our polemic with Mandel; the Portuguese comrades, in relation to the famous discussion about the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Socialism, say that we are approaching Mandel. Three: on the allies and our policy and insertion with reference to them (I think this is the first issue that comrade Robert of Chile touches on). Four: on revisionism and the Sandinista leadership and the Frente Farabundo Martí, there are comrades who say that we have to give an enormous importance to this, to add a chapter or something like that. Five: pacifist movements in the East. Six: religious and national movements — Comrade Perez believes that religious movements are reactionary and nationalist movements are progressive.

It is quite possible that the comrades, when speaking, add other points. But I believe that the three fundamental, essential — revolutionary situations, the revolutionary united front and the minimum revolutionary program — and the six that I have enumerated are roughly the most important issues under discussion. They are the issues I intend to answer.

Revolutionary world situation (I)

Let us go first to a revolutionary situation.

Already almost all the comrades have heard the discussion in the Argentine party and our answer, our report to that party.

We believe that there is a relationship between the character of the epoch, the character of the revolutions and the definition of the revolutionary situation. To agree on the character of the epoch is very important. Why should we have little discussions when maybe the discussion is very big?

For us, from 1943 until now a new epoch of humanity has opened. Let us not [discuss] whether it opened in 1917. In principle we also agree; we do not want to hold discussions by numbers or dates. We think that from 1943 onwards the epoch is diametrically opposed to that of 1923–1943. That is to say: from 1923 to 1943 the only thing that triumphs in the whole world is the counter-revolution, although there are revolutions, there are civil wars. But the only thing that triumphed from 1923 to 1943 is the counter-revolutions. And from 1943 onwards the epoch is diametrically opposed: in general the only thing that triumphs, that survives, is great revolutionary triumphs.

That is why we have insisted on the world map. On seeing how the map of the world was in 1941 and how it is today. This change in the world map was achieved by the revolutionary masses. In contrast, the world map of 1941 was the product of the world counter-revolution; this world map was a triumph of the world counter-revolution.

From 1943 the norm, the Trotskyist program of making the world socialist revolution, in a sense, in one-half of the world, was already fulfilled because from 1943 the masses began to make the world socialist revolution and not to defend themselves from the imperialist counter-revolution. That was the greatest, the most colossal confirmation of the founding of the Fourth, of Trotskyism and of the theory of the Permanent Revolution. Trotskyism's bet that the working masses of the world were going to defeat the counter-revolution and open a revolutionary epoch as never before has been totally and completely confirmed by history.

This epoch had elements that we could not foresee, but which were in a sense favourable to Trotskyism. We tried to coin a theoretical phrase that we want you to tell us whether it is correct or not: reality was more Trotskyist than the Trotskyists themselves had thought, because the mass movement was so powerful, so tremendous, so colossal in the whole world that what Trotsky had written as a very exceptional conditional hypothesis was the law. Trotsky, who wrote so much, wrote only once that he had not ruled out that, under exceptional conditions of crack, crisis and revolutionary rise of the mass movement, petty bourgeois parties may go beyond what they wanted and entered a dynamic of going towards the dictatorship of the proletariat through the workers' and peasants' government as a stage. This, which for us was to be an exception, was the law, by the colossal power of the revolutionary rise.

This, comrades, note the paradoxes of history, caused a tragic situation for Trotskyism. Because we were the only ones who said: The world revolution is coming. [But] that world revolution, by catching us so weak, caused the masses in some places, in many countries of the world, to force the treacherous, bureaucratic and counter-revolutionary leaders to take several steps forward. And those various steps forwards turned against Trotskyism, [because] they aided world Stalinism, Maoism and the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist currents to maintain their prestige in the mass movement.

One of the fundamental laws that we thought it was going to happen was not fulfilled — that the rise of the revolutionary movement was going to destroy the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. That law was revealed as true on a historical scale, but not as true on a conjunctural scale, of 10 or 20 years. It then turned against Trotskyism. This is one of the explanations of our marginalisation; perhaps there are others that we have to continue studying.

The reality is that the great crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, especially of the centre of all the counter-revolutionary apparatuses that is the Stalinism of Moscow, has taken several decades to be expressed. It is in full development, but it has not finished destroying the sinister, evil apparatus, the syphilis of the world revolutionary movement — Moscow's Stalinism.

Along with this, we have to point out that both the nationalist petty bourgeoisie, limited, reactionary, like the Stalinist apparatuses, were able to head revolutions also because new types of revolutions arose. Or they had already existed before, but Marxism, based essentially on Europe, had not studied them, nor studied certain revolutionary methods; we must acknowledge this.

For example, within the great bourgeois revolutions, not only did the French Revolution exist, which is the point of reference for all Marxist theory of the state and the revolution of Lenin and Trotsky. Before the French Revolution took place the American Revolution, which was a bourgeois-democratic revolution, but anticolonial. That is a bourgeois revolution against the centre of the bourgeoisie, which was England. This was not studied. After this, at the beginning of last century, the great Latin American Revolution took place, which was similar. It was never [studied]. There are some small and pitiful references of Marx, touching on the subject that Bolivar stayed in a great party in a city, instead of studying the great political and sociological problem. Marx looked at us from afar, as European. That quotation from Marx about a colossus of the revolution like Bolivar is shameful. And not because it is Marx we are not going to say it.

Something similar happened already in this century with the Mexican Revolution. The [Russian] Revolutions of 1905, February and October [1917] were very much studied. But there was no study of the Mexican Revolution, which had a method similar to that used in the North American, Latin American, and in the defence of Spain from the French invasion. It was a method as important as the method of urban insurrection that had taken place in Europe — the guerrilla.

So we must point out in all honesty that all these colossal revolutions were not studied deeply, nor incorporated into the theoretical, political and programmatic heritage of Marxism in the whole world. [This took place] as a consequence of their own uneven development.

We say this because of the character of what we have called “political revolution”, which is the change of one political regime by another by the mobilisation of the mass movement. Because what happened in the United States was a change from a political regime from colony to independent, but not a change of property regime. Slavery and bourgeois property continued existing. We, [Marxism], did not study this problem.

What happened in Mexico, or in Latin America, or in Spain, is a change of political regime. If [we say that] in Spain the guerrillas did not achieve a change of political regime, it would mean that the Spanish guerrilla was a feudal guerrilla against the French capitalism of Napoleon, which would be an aberration: it was an extraordinarily positive change.

In other words, Marxism did not comprehensively study the political revolutions because the most important democratic political revolutions had already taken place in Europe since the French Revolution, and those that remained to be done were already combined with the struggles of the proletariat.

Trotsky is the one who rediscovers and retakes this category, without drawing all its conclusions, for the workers’ state. He points out that there are political revolutions. But there were also political revolutions under the imperialist and capitalist regime. A colony freed from imperialist domination is not a revolution that changes the property regime, although we all know that it is part of the permanent revolution, of the world, and the country itself. [It is a revolution] that by its immediate objectives is democratic, but it does not stop there.

We are Trotskyists because we do not believe in the historical stages. But we are also Trotskyists because we believe that there are different types of revolutions that combine. If we did not [believe] we would be ultra-leftists, Luxemburgists and not Trotskyists. Trotskyism, as Peng⁴ taught, is the combination of different kinds of revolutions in the process of socialist revolution.

We say all this because for us all that has happened in the last 40 years is a colossal process of world socialist revolution that has acquired different forms, that has been expressed in different revolutionary processes.

We believe as we said in the report for the Argentine party, that bourgeois democracy in Europe — Portugal, Greece, Spain, everywhere — by a direct or indirect way, even when we have called it “Bismarckian” is the product of the revolutionary mobilisation of the world masses. We deny that it is a manoeuvre of the monopolies or imperialism. The monopolies and imperialism want totalitarian states. Where there is a democracy, it is a historical conquest of the world mass movement.

Bourgeois democracy in the United States is a historic, revolutionary conquest of the American masses since Independence, the Civil War, and the colossal battles of the American mass movement to prevent the process of imperialism towards a Bonapartist state of totalitarian type.

So, let us understand well what we say when we say that [this] is a revolutionary epoch. It is revolutionary because there are all kinds of revolutions, even in Europe.

In Europe, there is a frozen revolution, which is the one that opens when the Nazi, fascist armies are defeated. They are frozen by the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. That is why our present denunciation of counter-revolutionary apparatuses is not like the pre-war period [before

⁴ Peng Shuzhi (1896–1983) was a leader of the Communist Party of China and later a Trotskyist.

World War II] when we said that the Socialists and Communists were traitors because they were unable to unite to confront fascism. Today they are a thousand times more traitors because they freeze, split, divide the world revolution, and prevent to finish defeating imperialism. That is to say, today they are traitors to a colossal revolutionary rise that lasts for more than 40 years, and before they were traitors because they were incapable to stop the development and advance of the world counter-revolution.

This is how we have to place the discussion on the revolutionary situation.

Let us agree on what we mean. Why do we say that there is a revolutionary situation? Because we think there will be an October revolution in some country in the world? No. Because there will be great revolutionary mobilisations, civil wars, revolutionary crises, even if they do not win? Yes. We believe that there are revolutionary crises that will continue to exist. That for 40 years there have been revolutionary crises and revolutionary situations in the most disparate countries and regions of the world. [This situation] covers the whole world. It is all we want to say.

[Does it mean] that there will be, of conjuncture, in a year or two, a revolutionary situation in Western Europe, or the United States, or in the proletariat of the USSR? We think not.

What do we mean then? That there is an uneven development of the world revolutionary process. But the thing to note is the broad brush. And not just the broad brush — any definition that is not dynamic, that is [which does not point out] where the situation is going, is not a Marxist definition.

At the beginning of World War I, Lenin made two definitions, to us very correct. In one he was completely mistaken as a prognosis: [he said] that for several generations there would be no revolution in Russia. The other, we believe was extraordinary: [he said] that there was a revolutionary situation at the beginning of the war. He was of the opinion that there was a revolutionary situation when all the masses supported the opportunist parties, when all the masses supported their imperialist governments, when all the revolutionaries of Europe could fit into a waggon, when the masses went to the carnage, when they were social-chauvinists, when they were totally divided.

Why do I point this out? Lenin's was not a definition [based on] the revolution breaking out in Russia. The definition of a revolutionary situation was very objective. Because [Lenin] said: the masses do not want to be massacred; if they go to the carnage, in six months or a year they will be against that imperialist carnage; the sufferings that come to the masses are unheard of; the crisis that comes to capitalism is going to be incredible; the destruction... This is a revolutionary situation.

And today we say that the current revolutionary situation is greater than that defined by Lenin in 1915, infinitely greater.

Why did I say that Lenin did not see the possibility of the triumph of the revolution in Russia? To prove that his definition of the revolutionary situation did not depend on whether there would be a triumphant revolution or not but on the state of consciousness of the masses and the objective situation of the bourgeoisie and imperialism itself. And as Lenin saw dynamically that the situation of the bourgeoisie, as a crisis, was going to get worse and worse, and the situation of the masses too, with misery and horrible suffering, he said: This is a revolutionary situation. And nothing else. It does not lead directly to the revolution. The masses are going to have to move, they will have to struggle. And that alone is a revolutionary situation.

We believe, comrades, that today we have a revolutionary situation much larger than that of 1915 and, in turn, this revolutionary situation is the expression of a revolutionary epoch far superior to that defined by Lenin in 1915.

If we take the years 1875-1880 as the beginning of the rise of the European workers' movement — and relatively the world, but especially the European at the end of the last century — the 40 years from 1875 to 1915 are a thousand times different from the 40 years from 1943 until now. There is no comparison between the two epochs. And yet, there being no parallel between the two epochs,

Lenin said in 1915 that there was a revolutionary situation. Today we have an epoch infinitely superior to that other epoch, full of revolutionary triumphs.

If we are to be rebutted it has to be done based on how we ourselves define.

Coming down to earth, why do we think that there is a revolutionary situation since 1968? We are of the opinion the effects of the economic, social and political crisis of the capitalist regime of the whole world begun then, accompanied by the world bureaucratic regime. There is a qualitative leap since 1968. First objective phenomenon: A total crisis, whose axis, its red line — as Labriola⁵ said — is the economic crisis. The chronic economic crisis of the great imperialist metropolitan powers began, accompanied by a total crisis, in all aspects. Second: a colossal revolutionary rise begins, with its tides and ebbs; from the French May to Czechoslovakia, the Cordobazo in Argentina, the rise in Latin America, and so on, and so forth. We believe that the Cultural Revolution was also a reflection of this process — and we have an extensive documentation in this sense - [although it was] manipulated by Mao Tse-tung.

But a world view shows that it was a general process — it happened in Mexico, everywhere. An ever richer rise begins. But this rise has a setback, until 1975, when the greatest victory of the world proletariat takes place. It depends on how you look at it. If you look at it geographically, comparing it with China, [the USSR] or Eastern Europe, it is not. It is a small slice of land — South Vietnam. But what happened in 1975 is something terrible, a completely new phenomenon. It is the first workers' revolution that triumphs in the military field directly against Yankee imperialism, comrades. It's no small thing. It is the product of a direct defeat of Yankee imperialism.

This gives a colossal boost to the revolutionary world rise. Imperialism is up in the air; it does not know what to do. The mass movement within the United States and the Vietnamese with weapons in hand defeat Nixon, defeat Yankee imperialism. This is a new fact. It is the first defeat of Yankee imperialism and capitalism in all its history. They had never lost a war. It changes the whole relationship [of forces].

We are surprised that you are frightened because we speak of a revolutionary situation. [The revolution] accelerates enormously. All the triumphs: Nicaragua, Iran, Southern Cone... That today there is democracy in the Southern Cone is due to Vietnam. That there is democracy in Europe is due to Vietnam. That there is democracy in the United States is due to the Yankee masses and to Vietnam together. That Nicaragua has not been invaded is due to Vietnam.

[If we do not see this], then we see nothing of the world situation. Or are we not aware? Or what do we believe? That they are isolated phenomena? The Yankee bourgeoisie trembles thinking of another Vietnam. They tremble, they do not sleep! They feel terrified that Nicaragua — which if they want they can defeat in three minutes — become another Vietnam. A second Vietnam is an end. There is a revolutionary situation more than serious! But do not we see what Nicaragua is? Look at the map again, Comrades. Read about Star Wars. Everything Reagan tries and cannot; they have already confessed that they cannot. It's even coming out in the papers. And why cannot they? Because there is an "atypical pre-revolutionary situation that I do not know how it is"? They cannot because in 1975 they received the beating of the century from that guerrilla! What a beating!

And our [opportunity] was opened. We can do whatever we want. It is the leaderships that prevent us from doing whatever we want.

Does anyone doubt there is a revolutionary situation? Do you know what happens in Colombia, which is hidden by the world press? In Colombia, a third or half of the territory is freed. Do you know what it means in this Congress the presence of the comrades of *Pan y Libertad* (Bread and Freedom) and *A Luchar* (To Fight)? They charge taxes. All the agrarian bourgeoisie, anyone who earns more than 5,000 pesos in Colombia has to pay taxes to the comrades who are here representing *A Luchar* — like a comrade who is here and others who unfortunately are not here. And Colombia is a key country. If there is no revolutionary situation in the world I want you to explain to me what this means.

⁵ Antonio Labriola (1843 –1904) was an Italian Marxist theoretician. [Editor.]

We say this of Colombia because we know it. This is true all over the world. We had to study hard what is the peasant struggle in India. We could not believe it, it's a complete civil war. And because we defined that there was a [world revolutionary] situation, we discovered that there was an India in Brazil. The process was reversed; [I say this] to see the importance of political theory. We said: There is a colossal revolutionary situation since 1975. In Brazil, there is a colossal peasantry. And we asked our Brazilian comrades when they visited us:

"In Brazil, nothing happens with the peasantry?"

"Yes. There is a deadly battle in the field."

"How? What's up?"

"Pitched battles."

"And why don't you give it importance?"

[The comrades] were of the old Trotskyist stock, like us: only the city. I believed that [the traditional] peasant struggle was that of the northeast, but I was told [those struggles] were in the south, in the most capitalist zone. [The process] is entering the interior of São Paulo, [which is as if in the United States we spoke of] the State of New York, or of California, Texas or Philadelphia. And some wonder whether there is a revolutionary situation! We see this way the whole world.

What happened in Lebanon is incredible. It seemed that Israel had already swallowed it. And we said: No, it's the crazy fireman's law; there is a revolutionary situation.

Of course, there is a counteroffensive of the bourgeoisie, but what they get is very little. Look at the map: The great victory is Grenada! It's pitiful. It looks like Cassius Clay, Joe Louis, plus all the world heavyweight champions, all together beating a year old baby saying: Look at the great victory we got. Imperialism is in very bad shape, it is nobody, although [is carrying out] a counter-offensive.

This is the situation. For us, since 1968 there is a revolutionary situation due to the economic crisis, the rise and the struggles of the mass movement, which are increasingly growing.

And there have been three stages. It goes up and down, but the line is rising. [The first stage is] 1968, [the second is] Vietnam and the third, which is what we are living now, is Iran, Nicaragua, the Southern Cone, which has led, in my opinion, to already having a revolutionary process, a revolution underway throughout Latin America. We have to stop [with separating] the Southern Cone and Central America.

[The situation in] Colombia is far superior to El Salvador. [Regarding] the comrades of *A Luchar* and *Pan y Libertad* we have to have revolutionary objectivity and modesty. The comrades have a high spirit of revolutionists, [in the style of] the old school. Behind *A Luchar*, without us, there is 30, 40 or 50 percent of the revolutionary masses in Colombia. Not [behind] us. We modestly want to be part of them. The great political task is to unify in a single front. To propose what? The seizure of power, comrades. This is the situation in Colombia. The only thing we ask is to be the most honest of that front that already exists and that we have helped to form being almost nothing.

[This] is the third stage. We do not need to be frightened by the specific occasions. There are an imperialist counter-offensive and a recovery of the Yankee economy. For us, the counter-offensive, for now, is weak. It achieves successes, it is a counter-offensive, but it is weak. It cannot behead any fundamental sector of the revolutionary workers' movement. It manages to burst the reformist proletariat controlled by the bureaucratic apparatus of Europe and the United States, which is not in revolutionary struggles [and where] there is a great backwardness.

But here comes what we have to define through dynamics. [Regarding] Yankee economic recovery, where are we going? We think this is conjunctural because we believe we are going to a much worse crisis. We prepare for that. We do not prepare for this month; we do it for two, three, four years. Part of our perspective is the economic crisis of Yankee imperialism, which paralyses the counter-offensive: nothing remains; neither of the counter-offensive nor of anything. This is the dynamic we see.

Then, [there are] two factors to define the situation as revolutionary: crisis and colossal revolutionary rise. And in a whole continent, which is the entire Latin America — except for Mexico — there is a total and complete revolution in progress.

But there is a third factor that makes the situation for imperialism frightening, which is the crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. Now, indeed, took place what we, the Trotskyists, were waiting for. Guevarism and Maoism, some Stalinist apparatuses, some sub-apparatuses that from 1968 were great powers that dragged the best of the vanguard [of that period], have disappeared. Maoism and Guevarism disappeared as currents of the world workers' movement. There are countless great revolutionaries, fighters and groups who vindicate Mao, the Uninterrupted Revolution, etcetera, and etcetera. But they are in the line of making the revolution against the bourgeoisie, not in the line of unity and the block of the four classes. Among other things, because in Latin America, where these Maoists are, even if they look for the other three classes, they will find nothing more than one, the super-exploited workers.

The Stalinist counter-revolutionary apparatus and the Second International subsist, but also in complete crisis, leaving aside the votes they get. It has not yet happened as with Maoism; they have not disappeared. We will not say that the crisis has caused them to die, but they are in a colossal process of crisis.

This is what leads us to define the situation as highly favourable for the IWL and as revolutionary on a world scale. That is to say, as an uneven process on a world scale, but characterised by the revolutionary situation: the crisis of world capitalism, the rise and the revolutionary struggles of the workers of the whole world and the irreversible crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses.

The Revolutionary United Front (I)

Comrade Perez in regard to the revolutionary united front says: "The construction of the International of masses is, therefore, happening nowadays through the construction of workers' revolutionary parties of masses. They will emerge, perhaps, from our own development in some countries, and in others, they will be the product of the Trotskyists' work as a faction within Labour parties or the like, and in some other cases, they may emerge from the revolutionary united front with other currents that detach themselves from the counter-revolutionary apparatuses".

To well clarify the discussions — I made this quote because I do not agree with it. For us the revolutionary united front is not one more tactic, among other conjunctural ones, to construct revolutionary mass parties. For us, it is the privileged tactic at this stage, which we define as increasingly serious, more severe, and which combines with the crisis of counter-revolutionary apparatuses. We see an increasingly large revolutionary upsurge of the masses, with a crisis of counter-revolutionary apparatuses also increasingly large. Faced with this situation, which is combined with our extreme weakness, we believe that the revolutionary united front is the privileged tactic because different groups will inevitably occur and currents of fighters who will put forward revolutionary positions will emerge.

What do I mean by "revolutionary positions"? That their proposals against the bourgeois state and against all bourgeois politics will be categorical.

We say that it is a privileged tactic because we do not see the slightest possibility that our parties alone will develop, develop, develop, and eventually lead the revolution. The comrade considers it as a possible tactic. We at this stage see this variation as impossible.

Some comrades see this tactic similar to that of the unity of fighters, or weird names, [as] the "new vanguard of masses" that Mandel was looking for. Mandel argued that we had to join the new vanguard of masses. What was the new vanguard of masses? It was the vanguard of 1968 that had become Maoist or Guevarist, that is to say, that had adopted a non-revolutionary program. For example, in Portugal, the new vanguard of masses supported a military lodge that was in government, a bourgeois government to the marrow, saying that it was a progressive government

that could become like the one of Castro. They were not revolutionaries. It was a strong vanguard, of prestige, that fought, but that fought at the level of its factories, or of its regiments or even of the agrarian zones; but for a counter-revolutionary policy of unity with sectors of the bourgeoisie.

We fought hard this position of Comrade Mandel, saying that a vanguard is revolutionary when it has a revolutionary program, that is [a program] for the destruction of the bourgeoisie in all its aspects, and not of unity with a bourgeois sector. What we put forward is the opposite of Mandel's. We want unity with all those who fight on the workers' front or those who fight against imperialism on the anti-imperialist front. But this is not the revolutionary [united] front.

The revolutionary [united] front is unity with all those who raise the revolution against the capitalist regime. Why are we pessimistic about us alone doing it? Because not even the October Revolution was made by the Bolshevik Party alone. This is a good thing to say because few remember it. First, they joined with the Inter-District Organisation in St. Petersburg, where Trotsky was, and which had several thousand of the best workers' activists in the Capital and which later on was of the best of the Bolshevik Party. There was a unity between February and October. They entered the Bolshevik Party, [in the same way that] they could have united. It was not just the Bolshevik Party, but to seize power, they joined with the Left Social Revolutionaries.

This does not mean that the revolutionary united front can be applied everywhere. The revolutionary united front applies mostly when the situation is more revolutionary because the revolutionary problem is clearer. In Colombia it is very simple — either you are for Contadora, for the truce, for the support to Betancur,⁶ for everything; or you are against them and for the overthrow of Betancur and the bourgeoisie. The program of the revolutionary united front is clear because it is feasible.

Elsewhere, there may also be [revolutionary united fronts], but it is more difficult, because the crisis of the apparatus, for the moment, has not yet given strong currents such as Maoism or Guevarism were on a global scale. And who knows whether [they will appear], to the extent that we grow stronger.

But they can occur anyway. At a scale of the countries, the distrust of the apparatuses, the crisis, they cause the emergence of a myriad of groups that discuss, outline positions (sometimes even of the right). If these conditions can be seen, the revolutionary united front line forces us to be very patient to know how to discuss but trying to find the points of agreement. That is why we believe it is a privileged [tactic]. For us, entryism itself is a variation of the revolutionary united front — it is the attempt to agree or enter into a current that outlines revolutionary positions within an opportunist party.

Minimum revolutionary program (I)

First of all, I want to do a bit of history in order to explain why we call it "minimum". There is a comrade who argues, apparently correctly, why we do not call it directly revolutionary program. Comrade Harry, without knowing the history, has made observations that approach very close reality. He has done a very fine analysis when he says that they seem to be elementary socialist principles. We call them "minimum" for this reason because we believe that they are elementary principles.

But here comes [the time to do] history. In our struggle against Pabloite and Mandelist revisionism, of Barnes⁷ also but above all of Mandel, we find incredible surprises. We made a discovery that took us a rather long time.

⁶ Belisario Betancur (b., 1923) is a Colombian politician and former President of Colombia from 1982 to 1986 for the Colombian Conservative Party. [Editor.]

⁷ Jack Barnes (b. 1940) is the top leader of American Socialist Workers Party (SWP). He turned off Trotskyism to Castroism and finally he and his party broke with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International led by Mandel and with Trotskyism in general. [Editor.]

The Simon Bolivar Brigade discusses with Tomas Borge. A comrade asks for the floor and argues with him strongly. Borge gives the order to lay down the weapons. There was a violent situation. Humberto Ortega says: "There is no more discussion here, my weapon is ready", or something like that, to [threaten with it] that as soon as a comrade speaks he would be killed. The Sandinista government puts the Brigade in jail and deliver us to the Panamanian police, who beat them, torture the comrades — everything agreed with the FSLN. And a statement from the Unified Secretariat says this is very good.

We could not believe what we read. We could have been ultra-left or ultra-right-wing, whatever, but we had gone to risk our lives. The only thing we did was founding unions and it turns out they almost killed us. They put us in prison; they kicked us out of the country and told the Panamanian police to torture us. And on behalf of the Fourth International [and] the Transitional Program comes out a public statement [stating] that doing that is very good.

We said: but this is no longer either Marxism or Trotskyism or Leninism. I recalled that when I was young, the anarchists, the reformists and the Trotskyists — Stalinism already justified anything — we all fought against the police. It was sacred not to surrender [comrades] to the police.

I recalled that I was a member of a reformist socialist party closely linked to Peron. At that time there was discussion [because] Peron had given all the oil to a series of oil companies. We argued that Peron was handing the country over to the oil companies. At a time when I was not on the Executive Committee, the father of [Armando] Cavalieri⁸ — I even give the name because it seems to be [an inheritance] from father to son — a great union bureaucrat, a socialist Peronist, bought by Peronism, said: "I propose that here among all of us we make lists with the addresses of the counter-revolutionary agents of British imperialism, the Trotskyists, and pass it on to the Peronist revolutionary police to get them arrested". There was a railway engineer, ultra-reformist socialist, who during the controversies was mocked being called "milk cup socialist", because he always asked for claims such as serving a glass of milk or some food in factories, and he never fought hard for wages. [And this man] said [something] that could mean imprisonment for him, because Peron's regime was hard: "Comrades, they are Trotskyists, their policy is ultra-leftist and sectarian, but I was not born to deliver anyone to the bourgeois police".

Mandel was. Mandel, in a way, was born to deliver people to the bourgeois police. And not only that: [also] to get press releases out congratulating them. This is why the Fourth was divided.

Then I recalled that this principle of not surrendering [comrades] to the bourgeois police and being against the torture of the prisoners, is a principle that, when I was young, even the most reformists had. Now Mandel does not have it.

That is why it is "minimum". It is more than the minimum; it is [also] an anarchist principle. Bernstein was against it. Juan B. Justo, the Argentine Bernstein, was against. Mario Pedrosa, the great [Brazilian] anti-defencist Trotskyist, was against. To a bourgeois policeman: nothing. Torture a revolutionary? None of it. They were all against it. [But] there was an organisation that was in favour: the Unified Secretariat.

[This] is an issue of principles. Almost previous to Marxism; of the time of the First International, of 1848. It was a principle of principles that had to be defended, and how! because we found that there were those who fought for the opposite principle.

And another [principle]. Everyone — since Lenin, since the Russian Revolution, since the Second International, since Bernstein — has always been against secret diplomacy. The Russian Revolution, by the hand of Trotsky, eliminated secret diplomacy. It is a minimum of the minimum proposal. And in Mexico, against our only vote, the Unified Secretariat, united with all kinds of imperialist, capitalist, reactionary, torturing delegations, voted to support the plan of French imperialism and Mexico for Central America. Correct me if I'm confused. The only vote [against] was ours. We said: We are against putting trust in an imperialist government [like the French] and in an ultra-reactionary government like the Mexican — it is secret diplomacy, and in addition, it

⁸ Armando Cavalieri is a trade union bureaucrat of the Federation of Commerce Employees. [Editor.]

is diplomacy of our class enemy. The Unified Secretariat voted [for] it and said that unity of action with all kinds of imperialism and bourgeoisie was extraordinary. And we found that it was a very old principle, much older than the Transitional Program.

And we found much more terrible things. All Marxism at the end of the last century was made against intervention, of being an official of the bourgeois governments, of Millerand,⁹ of Millerandism. You cannot be a member of the bourgeois governments. Kautsky, everyone, agreed on that. And the Unified Secretariat was very proud that Socorro Ramírez was a member of the Government Peace Commission in the government of Belisario Betancur, almost in the category of minister of that government. I repeat, one of the four or five most important officials in the repression of the guerrillas and in the truce that imperialism was negotiating for the guerrilla to surrender the arms and to crush it. And the Unified Secretariat was very proud that one of its most colossal figures on a world scale, its greatest leader [in Colombia], member of the Executive Committee, was a high official, a direct agent appointed [by the government]. Every day she appeared in the newspapers of the Conservative, ultra-reactionary, Catholic, of the sacristy, of John Paul II to the bone marrow, government. Only the IWL and the comrades of *Pan y Libertad* and of *A Luchar* denounced that political and moral scum that Mandel sheltered.

This is minimal. Kautsky agreed we must not enter [a bourgeois government], and they entered a position almost as a minister. It was at the centre of political life.

And in Contadora they supported the bourgeois governments. The FSLN, if it wishes, has every right to sign [the pacts] of Contadora; that is not the discussion. The discussion is: how can we say that we trust in Betancur, or in the Mexican or Panamanian governments, which are class governments? That is, we cross the class line. We place trust in our class enemy. Nicaragua has the right to sign whatever pacts it wants. What Nicaragua or the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador cannot tell the masses, because it is treason, is that our referee, the person we trust, is Betancur. [When] José N. Duarte said that he did not want Betancur, then they said: "The Bishop". [They called the masses to trust] on the Bishop! That is treason!

And it is treason for Mandel to tell us that the leadership of the FSLN is better than Lenin and Trotsky; that it teaches us lessons; that we have to learn from them, from our brothers. That is to say: [we have to learn] to torture the Simon Bolívar Brigade, not to call a Constituent Assembly, not to develop the mobilisation, etcetera, etcetera.

This is why we call it "minimum", comrades. Eighty or 100 years ago they were the basic principles of the whole workers' movement: reformists, ultra-leftists, followers of Pannekoek,¹⁰ of Rosa Luxemburg, the anarchists in their different kinds — terrorists, cooperativists or collectivists led by Kropotkin¹¹—... the whole rainbow of the workers' movement had sacred principles. And suddenly we made a great discovery: the rot of the apparatuses, the rot of Trotskyist revisionism had reached such nauseating extremes. Stalinism had managed to corrupt the workers' movement, the other parties, and Trotskyist revisionism, and there was just one international organisation that defended these minimum principles, ours. And that these minimum principles now have to be part of the Transitional Program, because there is no one to defend them.

That's why we call it "minimum". Because today they are connected with the Transitional Program. Today there is no one who denounces those who do secret diplomacy, except for us. Or for a national exception, because there are precisely sectors arising: sectors of the guerrilla in El Salvador, this phenomenal and colossal process that is taking place in Colombia, the comrades of

⁹ Alexandre Millerand (1859 –1943) was a French socialist politician. His participation in the cabinet at the start of the 20th century, alongside the Marquis de Galliffet who had directed the repression of the 1871 Paris Commune, sparked a debate in the Second International about the participation of socialists in "bourgeois governments", which opened a crisis in the Social Democracy. He later became Prime Minister and President of France.

¹⁰ Antonie (Anton) Pannekoek (1873 –1960) was a Dutch Marxist theorist, and social democrat. He was one of the main theorists of council communism or councilism. [Editor.]

¹¹ Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin (1842 –1921) was a Russian activist, scientist, and philosopher, who advocated anarchism. Kropotkin was a proponent of a decentralised communist society free from central government and based on voluntary associations of self-governing communities and worker-run enterprises.

Lutte Ouvrière or Lambertism in France (who at the time said: “It cannot be, how can Trotskyists be handed over to the police”). Lambert has now abandoned this; he already supports the FSLN and everything he once swore to fight. But we still have the comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière* at a national level and many other national sectors that we do not know. But on a global scale and as a policy, not as a statement, [only we are left].

In *The dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist democracy*¹² Mandel strongly insisted that, even in a civil war, to a counter-revolutionary who is shooting us, one grabs him and tells him: Who is your lawyer? Where do you want to be detained? We told him that in a civil war this could not be done. But when we were kicked out of Nicaragua, Mandel did not ask where we wanted to be tried, nor did he criticise the FSLN because it grabbed us without lawyers and kicked us out of Nicaragua. Not at all. He forgot.

[Also in relation], for example, to the problem of the independence of trade unions from the State. Today, on a global scale, we are the only ones who defend it. There is no one, absolutely no one, to defend it systematically. Mandel speaks of a mysterious grassroots superdemocracy in Cuba, combined with bureaucratic elements in the leadership. But the Fourth of Mandel never makes a statement and never raises a systematic policy for the independence of the Cuban unions with respect to the Cuban State.

Precisely for this reason, we believe that a minimum revolutionary program is necessary. We have reached such a degree of corruption that we must see where the first line is drawn to separate ourselves from everything that serves the counter-revolution.

We have followed Trotsky's advice to Mateo Fossa:¹³ when workers, revolutionists or whatever meet, if there are no resolutions, points for working together, time has been wasted. According to Mateo Fossa, once Trotsky made a fierce criticism of him because they went to a rally in which nothing was voted. Trotsky remarked: “Whenever revolutionists meet, common resolutions have to come out to develop the revolution”. Our first proposal on a world scale is this minimum revolutionary program that, although it may seem a lie, we are practically alone fighting for it:

- Independence of the trade unions [from] the State in all countries of the world.
- Workers' democracy in all countries of the world.
- Total and absolute distrust of the bourgeoisie in all countries of the world.
- No support for any bourgeois government in all countries of the world.
- Against secret diplomacy in all countries of the world.
- Against delivery to the bourgeois police — or to any police — and against torture in any country in the world.

From Nicaragua to the USSR, from Panama to Kenya.

I conclude this [speech] by saying that this issue of the minimum revolutionary program is transcendental. It's our identity card. The only ones who defend today the first principles of the workers' movement are the true Trotskyists. Mandel, unfortunately, is on the other side of the barricade, covering himself with Thesis like *The dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist democracy* to send comrades to the tortures of the bourgeois police.

12 Full paper can be found in: www.ernestmandel.org/en/works/txt/1985/1985.htm. [Editor.]

13 **Mateo Fossa** (1896-1973). Founder and leader since 1917 of the Timber Workers Union in Argentina, he was in the Communist Party and broke away in 1927, becoming follower of Trotsky. In the last years of his life he became a member of the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (Socialist Workers Party, PST). [Editor.]

Second Speech

South Africa

[Comrade Mark poses] “South African socialist revolution”. It is a South African socialist revolution, yes. But there is also a democratic revolution, which for me is “black republic”. In this I am with Trotsky and with all the polemic on Angola that we made against the SWP, defending the position of Trotsky. “Black Republic” is democratic. It is not ruled out that the democratic revolution is part of the socialist revolution; that there be two [revolutions] and they be joined. But [it is possible] that there be a democratic revolution: that there be a government of blacks, even middle-class blacks. Beware with an ultra-leftist line for Africa, because we are left with nothing and we play into the hands of Stalinism.

World Revolutionary Situation (II)

As far as I know, in the USSR there is a counter-revolutionary or a non-revolutionary situation. I insist: there is an uneven process of the mass movement. It may be that this process evens up when the revolution triumphs in the United States. When in the United States the working class and a Trotskyist or Trotskyist-like party take power, I do not rule out that taking power in several countries be done by telephone calls: in Paraguay, I am sure; in Grenada too... Many comrades believe it is a joke, but I do not know if perhaps it will happen.

[But] we're not discussing that. We are discussing the revolutionary process today. And today this process is uneven. There are non-revolutionary situations. In the advanced countries, there is a non-revolutionary situation. The revolution has been frozen or reversed in Greece and Portugal, which are the latest that took place in Europe. In the United States, the most important phalanx of the world proletariat, as concentration and in importance, has not entered into a struggle.

Anyway, I do not want to discuss this because I do not know whether this is the case or not; I do not know whether the majority of the world proletariat [is in the advanced countries]. Marxist economists [argue] that the vast majority of the proletariat today is agrarian. [It is said,] for example, by Gunder Frank,¹ who is a very serious economist, whose documentation is exhaustive. In other words, there is an extraordinary capitalist development in the backwards countries. As was the case in Cuba [when the revolution was made]. There is a famous self-criticism by Hubermann and Sweezy,² stating that in Cuba it was almost all proletariat, and they had not realised that it was so. A proletariat of a backwards country, which worked a few months in the sugar harvest, but was not essentially a small peasantry but a proletariat.

¹ Andre Gunder Frank (1929–2005) was a prominent German Marxist economist who since the 1960s devoted much of his research work to the situation of the semicolonial countries, particularly in Latin America. In 1984 he visited Argentina and took part in a talk-debate with Nahuel Moreno, which has been published under the title *On the Historical Subjects*, and can be downloaded from www.nahuelmoreno.org. [Editor.]

² Leo Huberman (1903–1968) was an American socialist writer. In 1949 he founded and co-edited *Monthly Review* with Paul Sweezy. He was the chair of the Department of Social Science at Columbia University; and author of the popular history books *Man's Worldly Goods* and *We, The People*.

Paul Sweezy (1910–2004) was a Marxist economist, political activist, publisher, and founding editor of *Monthly Review*. 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. [Editor.]

It seems that this has been a worldwide phenomenon for 20 or 30 years, according to Gunder Frank. He says that most of the world's workers belong to agribusiness, and he devotes to this subject, with exhaustive documentation, one of the most important chapters of his book. And it's not just him, there are others.

In any case, [the American proletariat is the most important phalanx], without any discussion as far as the industrial proletariat and the advanced countries.

But here the issue is how we define. Let's discuss it again. Do we define descriptively and by sector? In Latin America the situation is not even revolutionary; to me, it is a revolution.

I am going to bring down [to earth], to de-sacralise the term "revolution". For example, in all Latin American countries, except in Mexico, there are revolutions between 10 and 50 times greater than the strike with factory occupations of France in 1936, of which Trotsky said: "The revolution began". I say this because with foreign comrades sometimes we do not understand each other. For example, they tell me excited about May 1968 in France — to name a case — or the colossal, extraordinary strikes in Italy. But I do not know whether they know that in my country and in many Latin American countries there have been 40 to 50 general strikes as large as the French May, with insurrectional characteristics. In the last two or three years, there were several.

I say this so that we have a sense of the magnitude of what we are talking about. The same in relation to the magnitude of the crisis, the inflationary process... So, how do we define? Analytically and descriptively? In this place is it so, in the other so and in another so? To define descriptively and analytically is the negation of Marxist analysis. The definition has to be global and dynamic. It [cannot be] only structural: here it is not revolutionary, there it is. Rather, the situation [must be defined] globally.

We believe that there is a chronic crisis in the world economy. It is a theory that we have for a long time and we discussed with Mandel for almost 10 years in a row. There are some famous theoretical works by Mandel, I think of 1973 and 1974, stating that misery and unemployment had disappeared forever and that the revolutionary process went through the psychological path in the fight against alienation. We have quoted it exhaustively in our polemics with him because we told him that capitalism had already entered into a chronic crisis. Well, even Mandel, who until about 1980 said that there would never be an unemployed in the capitalist world, today says that [the crisis] is chronic.

We take these factors. It is similar to the war of 1914, which for Lenin by the mere fact of being war provoked a revolutionary situation. We follow Lenin. Yes, we do think Trotsky was wrong.

So the problem is global: the world situation. Worldwide, is there a chronic economic crisis and is this crisis getting worse, even though the economy picked up in the United States? We believe that yes, this is the main objective factor. We believe that the workers' states entered a chronic economic crisis. We believe there is no possibility they will advance their economy, although now, since 1982, they have achieved a slight upturn. But for us, they are small curves in a descending process.

Then, when we talk about the revolutionary situation, we refer to this global process, even though there are many countries in which there is no such economic crisis.

Throughout the world, the masses, as a whole, are on the offensive. Solidarity could not be defeated. Or, rather, it was defeated but not a historic defeat; its resistance continues. This is a colossal fact, comrades. It is the first time [it happens]. The Polish revolution is to me a political revolution that began in 1970-1971 and has its tides and ebbs. It is different from Hungary and Czechoslovakia, where they crushed historically. There is such a revolutionary situation that it is the first political revolution that they have not been able to crush historically. And you don't give it importance! Do you know what that means, not [just] for the revolution against the bureaucracy, [but] for the European revolution? That imperialism and the bureaucracy have not yet been able to defeat [Solidarity]. I insist — not a historic defeat. For me, it means that the political revolution continues. It is the opposite of East Berlin, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

This was also thanks to Vietnam; it is a reflection of it. It confirms what we say about this stage and this revolutionary situation and it explains why [the Polish proletariat] has not been defeated. It suffered defeats, but partial, not historic defeats. The phenomenon of the Polish revolution is qualitative in relation to the other political revolutions. They were able to defeat the others, not the Polish. There were defeats, but they are partial. The Polish proletariat is intact; they have not been able to defeat it.

The regime has a tremendous economic and political crisis. It has had to judge and imprison those who killed the priest. It is a total crisis, comrades. I was in Europe when two Lambertists fell in prison, and they had to release them. Can you get in your heads that the bureaucracy had to release two Trotskyists prisoners? And Baluka,³ who had to be released? But do you realise? Only if there is a colossal revolutionary situation in the world in Poland you can give freedom to a convicted and confessed Trotskyist who entered clandestinely. And they gave him freedom.

Comrades, these phenomena are global. That is to say, in all Europe, the situation is not revolutionary, but in Poland, the [political] and also the economic situation is very serious for the bureaucracy. There is a revolutionary rise, resistance. They cannot inflict a historic defeat to any proletarian sector, and in Europe, they cannot defeat the vanguard of the European proletariat, which is the Polish proletariat. The European revolution is one. So when you talk about the European situation you have to take the tip of the iceberg and no need to go underwater. [There is no need to] go below to see what is happening, but to see above what is the symptom or symbol. The symbol is that in Europe there is no historic defeat of the proletariat, although [our enemies] have achieved partial victories. And there is a proletariat that continues to fight in great form, systematically. That fight is revolutionary because it is against the regime. In this, it is different from the fight of the English miners or the rest.

We rectify an old story: Trotsky's four conditions, especially the last — [the existence] of a revolutionary party — as the four conditions for victory [of the revolution]. [This] is not new. We have been seeing for many years that there had been revolutionary triumphs without the fourth condition. We have been studying this problem for a long time. We have advanced fumbling. We have raised it. It is a great theoretical problem, like many others.

The revolutionary problem is so huge that we have to be modest theoretically. We began to write about this problem on two lanes, for about 20 years, since the Cuban Revolution. We have advanced, yes; the Mexican comrade is right, every time we have made more progress. In Argentina, we have already done courses on this.

We believe that a pre-revolutionary situation exists when there is a total crisis of economic type of the bourgeois regime, which affects all other aspects of the regime, a social economic crisis of the bourgeois regime; and the proletariat, although it may not in a great mobilisation or anything of the sort, is not defeated. That is, we have greatly reduced what we call pre-revolutionary.

It's about pinpointing reality. This reality, I insist, is more Trotskyist than we, the Trotskyists, believed. We have to study, see the reality, have a deep analysis, in-depth, etcetera, and etcetera.

³ Edmund Baluka, President of the strike committee in the Szczecin shipyards in 1970 and founder of the Polish Socialist Workers' Party (PSPP). In 1981 he was put on trial in Bydgoszcz, charged with "conspiring to overthrow the Polish People's Republic by force". [Editor.]

Third Speech

REPLY TO COMRADE HARRY

On the theory of the permanent revolution

I am afraid that we have differences and that we do not express them thoroughly. [We must do it] to discuss in depth and to avoid the slightest theoretical manoeuvre.

First: Not to build today in all countries of the world revolutionary mass parties, Trotskyist parties of the Fourth International, is a political crime. [So we have raised it] in the great discussions with Mandel regarding Central America, specifically with respect to Nicaragua, [where] he demanded that we dissolve our section. That's a crime. We totally agree with the comrade.

Secondly, when I make reference to the United States, I do not believe at all that [in the revolutionary process] will be the ultimate or the penultimate thing. I just believe in the uneven development of the revolutionary process. At any point, the United States may be the first. We are discussing [for the next period of] two or three years until the next Congress of IWL-FI. We do not believe that the possibility of the seizure of power by the American proletariat will be raised two or three years from now. Nothing more than that. We believe that at this point the American proletariat is behind schedule. Absolutely nothing else. It's the only thing I wanted to say, and we agreed so far.

This is the whole discussion against the Maoists and the guerrillas. We totally disagree with their characterisation that the revolution goes from the countryside to the city and from the backwards countries to the advanced ones; that [the backwards countries] have to besiege [the advanced ones]. We believe in the French May and in many French Mays in all the advanced countries of the world and at any time. But specifically, we do not see that possibility open in the next two or three years. But it just may open, although it will be a qualitative change, a leap from the current American situation. That's all we say.

On the other points, we do have discrepancies.

Trotsky was of the opinion that the Fourth International was to be minority Trotskyist. It is part of the oral tradition of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. Hansen and Cannon, [who held that this was Trotsky's conception], have died. I consulted with Mandel, Lambert and Pierre Frank to see whether it was a lie, which would be very rare because Hansen was a very serious man, and I was told that it was indeed part of the tradition before 1940 that Trotsky systematically said: "We are doing poorly because we are Trotskyists; the Fourth will be great when the vast majority is non-Trotskyist, and we are a minority tendency within it". What do I mean by this? That the emergence of large revolutionary parties of masses that take power is not ruled out. Why are we going to close that possibility?

We totally disagree with what the comrade quoted from the Permanent Revolution. We believe that the law was that great revolutions were made with petty bourgeois parties, and even in countries where the proletariat did not take part, such as China. We totally disagree with Deutscher's [position] that the Chinese Communist Party reflected the Chinese proletariat. The Chinese Communist Party reflected the Soviet bureaucracy and the Stalinist Chinese bureaucracy, not the proletariat.

We must not refuse to [see] the social processes. For example, according to the quotation by the comrade, the agrarian problem in Bolivia is solved only if the proletariat makes the revolution

and takes power. It depends on how we take that. If “solution of the agrarian problem” is to expropriate the lands without payment and to give them to the peasantry and its organisations in totally gratuitous form — that is to say, what the October Revolution did — in Bolivia this was done in 1952 with a bourgeois government.

[This] confirms what we say: reality is so Trotskyist that the masses achieve incalculable victories that in our papers could only be achieved with certain conditions. [But those victories] were achieved without those conditions.

In Bolivia, all Bolivian landowners were expropriated without being paid anything at all, and the entire land was distributed. It was as a consequence of the revolutionary rise; the bourgeois government did not want to even think of it much less to do it. It is part of the Bolivian workers’ revolution. The workers destroyed the army, which disappeared. The weapons were left in the hands of the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB). The proletariat told [the peasants]: “Take the lands and any landowner who resists kill him”. And they took the land. We are tired of writing that.

According to the comrade’s schema, what does this mean, how do we define it? Do we say to the Bolivian masses: “See what can be achieved using the revolutionary method, which with this counter-revolutionary leadership managed to take the lands; you have to continue mobilising”? Or do we say, “You didn’t take the land”?

Let’s talk clear, as we did with Stéphane Just.¹ Stéphane Just believed that the global counter-revolutionary process had culminated with the triumph of Mao Tse-tung and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in China and that the revolutionary rise had begun in 1953 because [in that year took place] the first movement against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In his discussion with Chen Tu-hsiu,² Trotsky predicted that the Maoist guerrillas would end in a semi-fascist state, which had no possibility of absolutely anything. And Chen Tu-hsiu told him no, that the proletariat had disappeared socially and he predicted what happened next. The reality was more Trotskyist than the analysis of Trotsky, who wrote systematically that Mao Tse-tung would end in a reactionary bourgeois government. This is the truth and it must be said.

We do not know whether in this we agree with the comrades.

We believe, for example, that the bourgeoisie and the landowners were expropriated throughout Eastern Europe. We believe [this was done] without fulfilling any of the points of the Theses of the Permanent Revolution, which say that none of these problems can be solved without a Revolutionary Communist Party at the head. We say that this did not happen. Do we agree or disagree?

That’s our opinion. We are of the opinion that in Bolivia the permanent revolution is so strong, so great, and so powerful, that it transcends its traitorous and bureaucratic leadership and achieves marvels as it expropriates the entire landed class under bourgeois rule. For us, that was the solution of the agrarian problem. A relative solution, because being the bureaucracy, it freezes the revolution and turns it into counter-revolution. As the bourgeoisie heads it, it returns to the bourgeois regime. The Bolivian peasants are in a disaster because they follow the capitalist regime. This is why counter-revolutionary apparatuses play a dreadful role.

But we cannot discuss the reality because then nobody understands us. If in 1952 we went to Bolivia and told the peasants: “You have to take the land, because the program of the Permanent

¹ Stéphane Just (1921-1997) was a Trotskyist leader of the French Internationalist Communist Organisation (OCI) and the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI), organisations whose main leader was Pierre Lambert. In 1980 these organisations agreed with the Bolshevik Faction (BF), led by Moreno, in repudiating the expulsion of the Simon Bolívar Brigade from Nicaragua. OCRFI and the FB were united in 1981 in a new world organisation, the Fourth International (International Committee). A short time later, in 1982 these organisations split up when the Lambertist OCI completely capitulated to the popular frontist government of François Mitterrand. [Editor.]

² Chen Tu-hsiu (in modern Romanisation: Chen Duxiu) (1879–1942) was a Chinese revolutionary socialist, who co-founded the Chinese Communist Party (with Li Dazhao) in 1921, serving from 1921 to 1927 as its first General Secretary. In 1929 Chen associated with the International Left Opposition of Leon Trotsky. [Editor.]

Revolution says that with non-revolutionary leaderships, unless the proletariat leads and unless it takes power, you cannot [take the lands]”, they were going to see us as crazy. If they had already taken the land! We have to speak a language they understand, comrades, which is the one of reality.

We insist absolutely on this, which is one of the reasons why bureaucratic leaderships lasted so long. Otherwise, it is not understood.

We are totally marginalised because at one stage the great triumphs of the mass movement were mixed up with leaderships who went beyond what they wanted. Lechin said: “Did you see that we delivered the lands”? When Lechin never wanted to hand over the land. It was the workers’ and peasants’ masses who shared the land, and when they saw that, they said, “We are in favour”. Because of these great triumphs, confusion ensued. The masses said: “It is these leaderships that gave us these triumphs”.

I say this in order to better combat bureaucracy. Else, we are confused. The masses have achieved colossal triumphs. [Also] there have been incredible defeats: Indonesia, Brazil, Argentina, the bureaucracy establishing counter-revolutionary Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and later in China. In all places where the bureaucracy triumphed, it ended up imposing counter-revolutionary systems; but always on the basis of diverting and freezing great triumphs. After the triumphs, they have managed to turn back. They reluctantly led these triumphs to better divert, slow down, and crush the revolutionary process. But the process is so great that they have not been able to achieve that. Today there are very few places where there are directly counter-revolutionary regimes, of bourgeois type.

We have to insist that reality was more Trotskyist than what Trotsky believed. He believed that, by way of exception, hypothetically, petty bourgeois parties could expropriate the bourgeoisie, or achieve agrarian revolution, or national liberation. And national liberations, agrarian revolutions and expropriation of the bourgeoisie were achieved with petty bourgeois leadership and sometimes without the leadership of the workers’ movement.

We may be wrong or not. But this is, quite clearly, what we think. This is what allowed us to take part in Nicaragua. And it is no coincidence that our organisation was the only one that saw the Nicaraguan [process]. This was what allowed us to predict that the Nicaraguan guerrillas would win when the Unified Secretariat had totally abandoned the Nicaraguan guerrillas because it believed that in Latin America there were no more guerrillas. And we, those who were totally against the Guevarist guerrillas in 1969, in this case, we said: “Yes, since the death of Chamorro it has been transformed into a non-proletarian mass guerrilla, it goes towards victory, it goes towards the defeat of Somoza”.

Fourth Speech

Independent countries

Between yesterday and today came out Bulletin No 6 with two very important contributions: one of comrade Roberto from Chile and one of the Mexican comrades. They are two documents full of suggestions and very rich theoretical concerns, which I will also have to take into account in my response.

There are observations of various kinds on the independent countries. For example, one: they are relatively independent. Another, by the Mexican comrades: countries are to be defined by their social economic as well as political structure. I think we have to agree on the character of our document. It is a thesis as summarised as possible. There are comrades who make us objections based on old documents of our tendency, or the PST or the Argentine party, which we all know and will not repeat. In the Theses we want to give the substance of the current situation and not, for example, to make a definitive definition of the character of the different countries. The definitions we give in the Theses are so that they may serve us to understand the current reality and give ourselves a policy.

The same with the revolutionary situation. We do not want an etymological discussion or anything like that. Nor [do we want to go into] the different definitions of revolutionary crisis and a revolutionary situation. We want what we say to be taken in: there is a chronic crisis of the economy; there are great struggles of the workers' movement and also a crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatus. We call this revolutionary situation. If someone believes that there is no chronic crisis, that there are no major struggles of the mass movement in the world — that is, that imperialism cannot dominate the masses — and that there is no crisis of superstructural apparatuses, [he may come] to chat with us and tell us: "We are against the situation being as you say". But we do not want etymological discussions.

The same with respect to the [countries: whether they are relatively or absolutely] independent. For example, in this discussion of whether it is relative or absolute, there are comrades who say they have to be "relatively independent" because they are economically dependent. Everything is relative. The workers' states are also independent of imperialism, but relatively [dependent], or dependent on the capitalist world market. This way, each definition would be one page long.

From the Marxist point of view, any definition is a relationship. It is defined in relation to what. Like Lenin's famous mistake — relative in my opinion — when, in a discussion regarding trade unions, he says that the USSR is not a workers' state. [It is not] that Lenin held that the USSR was not a workers' state. He wanted to emphasise all the non-working class aspects of the State, the USSR because he was discussing the definition and giving it in relation to the trade unions, the Russian workers' movement. And since Lenin believed that the Russian workers' movement had to defend itself against the bureaucratic features of the proletarian dictatorship itself, it even went so far as to say that [the USSR] was not a workers' state. At fortnight later, or within a few weeks, he himself rectified the minutes of that discussion but clarifying it. Instead, when he compared, when he related the USSR to the capitalist world, he said: "Homeland of Socialism", "Workers' State" and so on. And without being the homeland of socialism, because, in turn, when making theoretical documents, he clarified that they were not yet in socialism, they were far from the goal. We went crazy discussing [Lenin's definitions]. When referring to the imperialist countries he said "Homeland of Socialism"; when referring to the poor workers who had to defend themselves, he said that it was no workers' state, that it was filth.

For a Marxist, any definition is in relation to something. And it is instrumental for a policy.

What do we mean when we say that [a country] is independent? First, we believe that we are giving a concept, a correct category. So correct that it means that imperialism is looking how to burst all these independent countries. This is why we include them with the workers' states. They are being directly or indirectly attacked by imperialism. This phenomenon must be explained. If we say that they are "relatively" [independent], we do not understand the contras in Nicaragua, we do not understand the South African and imperialist guerrillas in Angola, we do not understand the guerrillas and the bombing of the ports of Mozambique, we do not understand the downing of Libyan aircraft, we do not understand the Iraq war against Iran, we do not understand absolutely anything from current international politics.

There is a systematic policy of imperialism [towards] all those countries, in order to try to overturn existing regimes or force them to go backwards. That's why we call them independent; because they are the ones which are suffering or at any moment are going to suffer the imperialist aggression. It seems that the comrades did not notice. It is a qualitative [phenomenon]. It is totally different; it has nothing to do with Argentina, Brazil or Tunisia, which are semi-colonial countries, which are [also] economically dependent. All countries of the world are economically dependent on the world market to a greater or lesser extent. These [last] countries, the more.

In saying independent we mean that they are not servile to the political orders of the imperialist front. For example, we have many doubts whether today there is a full blown attack of the whole Latin American bourgeoisie against Cuba, Nicaragua [would be part of it]. We think not. That is total independence from imperialism, not relative. It is being in the opposite trench.

From this analysis, from this definition, slogans emerge. Defend independent Nicaragua; Defend Libya from the attack of French or American imperialism; Hands out of Iran; and so on and so forth. Regardless of the ultra-reactionary governments that almost all these countries have. They are all product of the mobilisation of the masses, not of the leaderships they have. This is why we believe they are independent.

This characterisation must be reinforced. [It is] transitional; it cannot remain independent.

We like the analysis of the Mexican comrades. [They say] many of these regimes are similar to Nasser and Peron, but much more advanced. Not only do we like it, it's the same as we do. Except that in a stage of colossal revolutionary uprise, as great achievements of the revolutionary movement and not like Bonapartist governments that went to look for the support of the mass movement. It is the masses who have achieved these colossal achievements and it is the leaderships that put them in danger, they negotiate them every day with imperialism or the Stalinist leaderships. That is to say, not only [the definition of] independent but, for the IWL, a policy — the defence of that independence. Against imperialism: Long live Nicaragua free and independent!

To summarise the above: to put "relative" or [some other] adjective, to qualify them, eliminates the magnitude of the problem. They have counter-revolutionary leaderships, but as a phenomenon, as a country — we are defining the country, the nation — they are a type of country qualitatively different from the others, which do not follow imperialism directly. The world revolution has brought them out of the imperialist orbit. For example, I do not think that imperialism has told Khomeini and his movement to kidnap the Iranian hostages. Nobody convinces me that to be negotiating for months and months to see if the hostages were returned was a parody of Carter. For me imperialism and Iran were strongly opposed; even with its government, with a quite reactionary government in Iran.

Democratic rights

We are moving to another problem, of democracy for the entire population, which ties in with our polemic with Mandel in *The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat*.¹ I make it clear we believe that we remain consistent with this polemic.

The Mexican comrades make an interesting formulation on this problem, with which I do not agree. They say that this part we should write it like this: "We fight for workers' democracy. Instead, freedoms for the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will be limited by the proletarian dictatorship or the workers' and peasants' government, as limited by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky, or directly annulled when they take part in pro-imperialist armed actions against the internationalist revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat". We disagree with this. It resembles the criticisms that Perez makes. All the same, it is a careful formulation; a good formulation within a wrong analysis.

You see what a contradiction between the program and what the comrade says! He says that we must put out a program of three fundamental points, for the whole IWL, for the entire world. In point two he raises "democratic freedoms without limits", which is the same as we say. We see the following contradiction in the Mexican comrades: that they propose this for the PRI regime in Mexico. And if we really are Fourth Internationalists and do not lie to the masses, we say: "We want boundless democratic liberties under the bourgeois regime and democratic liberties with many limits when our regime comes". If we really say what the comrades think, I see them badly enough able to convince someone. They might get someone in the madhouse; even several, who are going to say that they can advise us because they are Lenin or Trotsky, and can do a theoretical expansion.

[This proposition], of boundless democratic freedoms [under the bourgeois regime] and with many limits when the proletariat and we come to power, is quite confusing.

First of all, we must distinguish between norm and reality, program and theory. This problem, this mess that Mexican comrades have, as all those who make these criticisms, is because they do not distinguish between norms and reality, program and theory.

Trotsky touched on this problem a lot. The NEP was not part of a single line of the program of the Bolshevik Party and yet it had to be done. The first to see this was Trotsky, who took a year to convince Lenin to apply it.

The reality disturbs or forces to apply the norms with modifications, with rectifications. But does it mean the norm is not important? No. It's precisely a norm. When we deviate from it, we explain why. But because it is a norm, it has to be a guarantee that we return to it as soon as possible, that our whole policy is to go towards it.

The same with respect to norm and theory. For example, it is not ruled out that when we take power in a super peasant country and with a very backwards peasantry, we give five votes to each worker and one vote to each peasant, or some such variation. The Bolsheviks made a Constitution giving primacy, or tending to give it, to the working class. But Lora in Bolivia says he does not run for election because the workers would need to have more votes than the peasants. Bolivia is a peasant country. Conclusion: logically, the peasants want to kill the Lora's Trotskyists. Because no one persuades any peasant — except some peasant who become Lora-supporter — that five [peasants] have to put a single vote in an urn, while instead the worker does go alone and does vote on his own account. Imagine among other things the fight between the five peasants to see who decides which candidate to vote for.

Reality may force us to this, but today we will never say: Elections with qualified votes, each worker has five votes and the peasants a single vote — or variations like those of Lora. It is not our programmatic norm, it is not our program. In theory, if we did a theoretical work, we could point out the different hypotheses, variations, scientific combinations, and so on. For example, all of the analysis by Comrade Mandel on short-term socialist democracy with electronic telephones

¹ Available for download in: www.nahuelmoreno.org/textos.php?i=en

through which [the whole population] is consulted, and so on. They are hypothetical theoretical disquisitions. Of course, I justify this from a theoretical point of view, but I would be totally against a hypothetical theoretical document with cyber-phones and stars democracy, etcetera, etcetera... I am totally against, in Bolivia or Argentina, where the phones never work, to state that democracy is going to be through the telephones, that before voting we will get an answer to all the questions we want, as [does] the famous document of Mandel on socialist democracy.

Our discussion with Mandel on the dictatorship of the proletariat was in a theoretical terrain. In that theoretical document we said that, as a theory, it was a crime to believe that there would be no civil wars, that for the dictatorship of the proletariat there would be no problems and it would be all peaceful, reformist, and if there were problems the dictatorship of the proletariat had to defend itself by curtailing democratic freedoms. But we ended the book and the document — which was a document of the Bolshevik Faction — saying that the norm, the tendency, the line, was to give absolute freedoms to the workers and all possible, relative, freedoms to non-workers.

On the other hand, the Mexican comrades in their citation speak of Lenin and Trotsky. When Lenin and Trotsky took power they gave all sorts of freedoms, including to the Kadets. That is precisely what we vindicate for a backwards country. Our discussion with Mandel was of a theoretical type and we continue to vindicate it more than ever; especially the final conclusions.

But this is the most general and least important aspect. Around this discussion, there is a fundamental political problem, of life or death. The comrades say that we must raise now the program that when we take power we will remove almost all democratic rights to middle class and bourgeois sectors. If we set the norm that the comrades say, we believe that we are almost doomed to failure. This is a fundamental discussion, of political, programmatic, not theoretical nature. [To suggest] that the dictatorship of the proletariat and the working class are going to give more freedoms than those given by the most democratic bourgeois democratic regimes is not a tactical problem. That is the essence, the fundamental programmatic norm. Around this fundamental programmatic norm perhaps the future of the world revolution is played because it has to do with the proletariat of the most advanced countries. We will never be able to convince the American and European proletariat in favour of the socialist revolution, or the Russian or Polish proletariat of the political revolution, if we do not show that our struggle is to expand, rather than limit, the democratic freedoms they have under the bourgeois and imperialist regime. Around this point — and also of the Transitional Program, of the answer to its deepest needs — will be played the possibility of winning the consciousness of the western workers on the one hand, and on the other of the workers who, in the totalitarian bureaucratic states, are under the domination of the single party, of a totalitarian regime without any freedom.

That is why within the USSR or China we are also for national self-determination. Because we are the champions of maximum development of all democratic freedoms on a planetary scale. And this is not a demagogic position, but it is really the programmatic norm. If reality forces us to leave it is in order to return to it.

It is a programmatic norm like the right to faction or tendency, that the Bolshevik Party was forced to limit by the civil war, to re-establish it in a short time, according to Trotsky (Stalinism used this later not to ever restore it again). But the programmatic norm is that in a Marxist revolutionary party there is an internal democracy, an absolute internal democracy to discuss and form factions and tendencies.

That is why we reject this second observation of importance to the Theses. We continue to believe that when the proletariat, and especially in the advanced countries, ends finishing off imperialism and capitalism when it strikes the death blow, the stage of greater freedoms that humanity has known will open. We fight for that and that is our program in the field of democratic freedoms. So we say it and we will do.

In addition, there is also a freedom that is sacred to the dictatorship of the proletariat: freedom of the press, of expression. Because it becomes a barometer to know how the mass movement is and measure the influence of the different sectors. The more widely the freedom of the press and

expression is guaranteed by the dictatorship of the proletariat itself, the government will be better informed.

Semi-colonisation of the Workers' States

The document of comrade Roberto raises considerations on the semi-colonisation of the workers' states and the political revolution that in general, I take as mine. That is our criterion, our opinion. If the opposite is evident from the Theses, then the Theses will have to be corrected.

We believe that there is a process [of semi colonisation] initiated. [But] we believe that for the moment there is no possibility that imperialism will succeed in semi colonising any workers' state, precisely because there is a revolutionary process. This process is of semi-colonisation, and in another sense of sub-metropolis. Neither process can reach its end, culminate, and take the qualitative leap if there is no counter-revolution, i.e. the triumph of a counter-revolutionary coup. We believe that we are far from it, [rather it is] quite the opposite: the penetration of imperialism, which is not yet absolute or anything of the kind, will accelerate the contradictions of the bureaucratic regime. We disagree a little — I do not know whether in this document or in another — with the analysis of Jaruzelski's government as Bonapartist. We believe that there is already a little of imperialist influence in Jaruzelski's government. But they are discussions of detail. In general, I repeat, we totally agree with what Comrade Roberto proposes. It is the criterion of the Theses. We cannot incorporate everything because the Theses are small. We will see how we write them so that there is no doubt.

The class politics of Trotskyism (I)

We have discrepancies with the first point of the document by Comrade Roberto of Chile, on the world revolution and our construction.

This is a very important discussion. I think it is the other side of some sectarian comrades who continue to say that Trotsky's predictions took place exactly.

You know — we have repeated it countless times, we have the recording — that Stéphane Just believes that Trotsky's forecast was met exactly as foreseen, that in 1948 we were going to be millions and millions of militants. In 1948 I was in France. This section had entered into crisis and had 25 militants left. All the Trotskyists in the world would be about 800, or 1000; 80 or 90 percent of them in the United States. Our group was one of the strongest in the world and had 100. Other large sections were the French — which had been reduced to 25 — and the English. When we did the FI (IC), we were stunned, because we pointed out that this prognosis had not been fulfilled, even now, and Stéphane Just explained in detail how, unconsciously, millions and millions in 1948 were Trotskyists.

We insist that reality was more Trotskyist than what we Trotskyists anticipated, and we insist that counter-revolutionary apparatuses led revolutions; unfortunately all the revolutions. We also insist that there were non-workers, or semi-proletarian sectors, which were the social basis of the revolutions. But not the industrial proletariat. For example, China. And in another revolution, the north of Vietnam was the non-workers' zone. Trotskyism was strong in Saigon; all of northern Vietnam was small peasantry. That was the social basis of the revolution.

We continue to believe that [what] took place was an expression of uneven and combined development: a class fulfilling or developing the tasks of another class. Today the class historically destined to take the destinies of humanity is the proletariat. At the global level, any exploited sector — small peasant or another — that is advancing, is opening the way for the proletariat.

We believe that the law of uneven and combined development took place.

And we are against sectarianism. We also believe that there were many guerrillas and that the Transitional Program did not touch on that method. We continue to believe [this] was a very important gap because there were great revolutions through guerrillas.

It is very important to note this because if we do not do it, we are very badly placed to fight the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. We have always believed and continue to believe that the counter-revolutionary apparatuses are increasingly counter-revolutionary, and they don't cease to be so because they lead revolutions. This is the element whereby Mandel and Pablo (who hates us more than to anyone else) always called us sectarians, orthodox maniacs, fanatical Trotskyists, and so on and so forth.

Because we have to see the worldwide, global role [of those apparatuses]. Just as to see whether there is a revolutionary situation is necessary to see the world, Stalinism must be seen within the world. If capitalism and capitalist counter-revolution exist in the world, if Europe is not socialist, it is for the Stalinist counter-revolution. That is Stalinism.

Not for nothing we have engaged in this ultra-theoretical discussion with Comrade Mandel on why the [postwar economic] boom took place. According to him, it was created by Nazism, which lowered the wages of the German proletariat by a third, and by the war, which lowered the standard of living of the French proletariat. We say these two facts are very important but not the decisive ones. The boom was produced by a party and bureaucracy counter-revolutionary to the marrow, which is called world Stalinism. It was Stalinism who in France and in Italy said "first to produce" (*d'abord produire*). It was they who told the working class: "Work to give capitalism and world imperialism a lot of added value". It was they who prevented the working class from taking power and starting to build socialism. They played a major economic role in the boom. It's not Kondratiev² waves. It was Stalinism that made the cycle and not the mechanical laws of Kondratiev.

Counter-revolutionary apparatuses expropriated [the bourgeoisie] in Eastern Europe, first to stop the revolution in this region, lest it be permanent — they expropriated the bourgeoisie because they had no choice. But also to better do the counter-revolution in the world, including Eastern Europe, but fundamentally in Western Europe. This is what Trotsky said about Finland and Poland: they expropriate there but for worldwide, global, counter-revolutionary politics. That is our analysis: global.

Precisely for this reason, we believe this is a revolutionary epoch: because the only thing that has prevented imperialism from being defeated is the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, so great is the revolutionary epoch.

We must not be schematic or sectarian, so we do not go to the other side. What does "the other side" mean? To lose our historical orientation, which is the orientation of the proletariat, our class policy.

I think that this discussion that is just opening is very interesting and very serious. The comrade's document is very good. His analysis — if I do not misunderstand it — is the following: We are the party of the world revolution; we are the party of the proletariat; while the proletariat of the advanced countries rises, or the industrial proletariat in some country, we have to see which sector is the one that fights, we see who is in the vanguard, and we get there. That is to say, the limits of class begin to be separated — every sector that fights is our sector.

It is an intelligent, Marxist way, but of assimilating Fanon,³ Guevara and the guerrilla theorists with their "new man". They also understood this of the new humanism, that it liquidated the class character of our politics. We had to fight with the "new men", the new human type that emerged

2 Nikolai Dmitrievich Kondratiev (also referred as Kondratieff, 1892 –1938) was a Russian economist, who was a proponent of the New Economic Policy (NEP). He is best known for proposing the theory that Western capitalist economies have long term (50 to 60 years) cycles of boom followed by depression. These business cycles are now called "Kondratiev waves". [Editor.]

3 Frantz Omar Fanon (1925 –1961) was a Martinique born Afro-Caribbean psychiatrist, philosopher, revolutionary, and writer. As an intellectual, Fanon was a political radical and Marxist humanist concerned with the psychopathology of colonisation, and the human, social, and cultural consequences of decolonisation. [Editor]

above the classes. Who was this new human type? The guerrilla, the man of revolutionary praxis. This was where an entire methodology and a pre-Marxist, humanistic conception, independent of the classes was sneaking in. If those who fight are the semi-lumpen of the shantytowns and the big cities we go there and fight, we make guerrilla warfare with them, and then they take power and we accompany them, trying to get our party there to promote its class policy.

We do not agree with that, at all. We consider [these sectors] allies of the proletariat. It seems to us very good [to take into account] who fights, but we believe that our policy is of class. We are not desperate to come to power. Because if we come to power on behalf of the agrarian petty bourgeoisie or the semi-lumpens of the cities, there is no way to carry out our politics, because ours is class politics.

The individual peasantry, the small peasantry, leads to Bonapartism, leads the Bonapartist guerrillas. This was already analysed by Marxism in relation to Napoleon Bonaparte. Where there are isolated individuals, the only way to achieve an organised movement is with a bureaucratic, Bonapartist centralisation. There can be no workers' democracy in classes that are not workers. These classes will respond to their needs and structure. They are allied with the proletariat, and our politics is a proletarian policy. Trotskyism, Marxism, is the revolutionary policy of a definite class of society: the proletariat. This is very important because to believe that you can change the character of class to a movement because we enter it is delirious, it is to go against the class character of the movements. That [these sectors] can come to power has to do with a special conjuncture of the process of class struggle — it is not the proletariat that is at the vanguard.

Trotsky set the example. Or do you think Trotsky could not stay in power? Stalin had absolutely nothing, not a toothpick. Trotsky had everything to stay in power. Why didn't he give a coup? He had the Red Army — all the weapons, all generals answered to him. And yet he relinquished power. Was it a romantic gesture? No. Deeply Marxist. [He renounced] because the power of the bureaucracy was coming. The proletariat was being defeated and he retired with the proletariat.

Trotsky gave similar advice, albeit on a different scale, to Farrell Dobbs and the American trade union leaders, who were all great leaders. He saw that the war was coming and with it a ferocious crusade, a terrible pressure on the union leaders that would paralyse the propaganda of the party. Trotsky advised them to leave [their union positions] to continue the class task before they were compromised.

Our politics is class politics. If it is not the working class that goes to power, we are not going to power. It's that simple. We do not go, we do not want it, nor do we accept it if they offer it to us. Is this clear? It is Trotsky's policy: the bureaucracy is removing power from the working class; I'm leaving; let me be thrown out with the working class. An example of class — he preferred to lose power. The bourgeois journalists, the Sovietologists, the non-Marxists, do not understand at all; they paint him like a delirious man.

Deutscher, despite the fact his biography of Trotsky is very good, gave it a horrible title: "*The Prophet Armed*", "*The Prophet Unarmed*"... What "prophet"?! A revolutionary, ultra-armed Marxist. With what? Nothing less than with Marxism. What "prophet"?!" Marxist!

We stay with our class. There are many arguments being raised here — that the working class is diminishing, that it is becoming smaller [numerically], and so on and so forth. They are relatively true statistical arguments, [although] they forget the agricultural proletariat and of other sectors. But suppose it is true. In most of our backwards countries, in almost all of Latin America — except Paraguay, Haiti, and some other countries of that type — we have an organic proletarian composition infinitely superior to that which originated the Paris Commune or the one that made the Russian Revolution. Although the proletariat was a tiny minority in the USSR, Lenin and Trotsky did not abandon class politics. Their politics was not of the peasantry.

All these, which are general considerations, in the case of the IWL is aggravated by the relationship between the subjective and the objective that the comrade names. For example, we advised from every point of view to the Salvadoran comrades, when they were in prison, to leave El

Salvador and not to return, and under no circumstances to enter the guerrillas. We did it for a very simple reason: we want them to be alive. If they fell under the leadership of Stalinism, which in the guerrilla is a large majority, they were going to be killed. Are we going to send our small groups to risk their life based on a schema that [the guerrillas] are the sector that struggles the most?

The comrades in Colombia can tell us how things are handled in the guerrilla. While I was in Colombia, they killed the sister of one of our great leaders while sleeping. They shot her I do not know how many times because of internal discussions, for a factional fight in the guerrilla. It was a national scandal. Fortunately, in recent times, this has been eliminated. Some of the Colombian guerrillas are among the few guerrillas where there is a great internal democracy. But that was achieved by eliminating those who liquidated all internal quarrels with corpses.

[The same thing happens with the Sandinista National Liberation Front.] We must write the history of the Simon Bolivar Brigade. The line given to them was that under no point of view they were to comply with the discipline in the sense of penetrating Nicaragua wherever the FSLN commanded them. That's why it was an independent brigade. It split in two because we could not get a [geographic] sector to act independently. It is no coincidence that the side where they depended on the discipline of the FSLN was where we had the dead because the FSLN sent all ours to the death. They were more skilful. They were sent to the South Front, that famous impassable place in which Somoza had two military colossi. One of them was a Yankee, the brightest of West Point, who had been bought with a lot of money as if he were a baseball player. He had at his side a very capable Nicaraguan, a fascist monster. It was terrible. He did not give up. To fight against him was to go to death. Well, they sent our people to face him.

I read again the resolution we adopted in the Theses and it seemed sober and serious. We argued that [if there is] democracy we can change [our line of not entering the guerrilla]. If we see democracy we will study [whether or not we enter]. If we do not see democracy and if we see that they are not proletarian, we are not going to enter. This does not mean that the revolutionary party cannot work on the peasantry and other sectors, but here come into play the stages [of development] of the revolutionary party. In all countries of the world, the first stage of our parties is to concentrate on the working class in our class. Once we lead important sectors of our class, once we achieve that, the great manoeuvres and agreements with other sectors of class begin. Everything else is to deviate, to enter an environment that is not ours.

Nothing better [to exemplify this] than what the comrade indirectly criticises: Why don't we propose revolutionary positions to nationalist movements, such as ETA?

Recently in Spain, there was a naval strike. The ETA said: "Even if all the shipyards in Spain sink, the only thing that interests us, the only thing that we are going to go on strike for, is the Basque shipyards; because we are Basques". The essence of the ETA program is that they are Basque and that they are not interested in the rest of Spain. What are we going to tell them? If we tell them to fight for the Spanish workers, they will answer: "It is not our program, why do you ask us to do something that is not in our program?" We can try to convince them, but being petty bourgeois nationalists it is difficult we will convince them. The most we can demand is that they be consistent with the progressive principles that they raise.

It is not just us who say this; it is the analysis of Trotsky on Haya de la Torre, on the Peruvian APRA.⁴ Trotsky has a great article on this — we get it from there — where he says that we do not ask Haya de la Torre for anything that is socialist because he is not a socialist. But he is anti-imperialist. As he says he is anti-imperialist and Yankee imperialism dominates Peru and Latin America, we do ask him to go against Yankee imperialism, for him to be consistent against Yankee imperialism.

We learned it from Trotsky — how to deal with the allies. We in Argentina to a woman who is for divorce but she clarifies: "I am not a socialist, I am for private property, I find it fabulous that

⁴ Victor Raul Haya de la Torre (1895–1979) was a Peruvian politician and philosopher who founded the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), and his historic leader. President of the Peruvian Constituent Assembly in 1978–1979. He is recognised as one of the most important political thinkers of Latin America, and key figure in Peruvian and Latin American politics. [Editor.]

the workers are exploited”, we are not going to tell her: “You are a traitor to your principles”. She will answer: “What principles? If I just told you that all I fight for is the divorce!” Ok, we’ll hold a demonstration together for the divorce; which does not mean that when there is a strike in that woman’s factory, we will break her head, her manager’s and everyone’s, if the strike is violent. What we cannot ask that woman is to accompany us in our socialist approach. These are two distinct problems.

Beware! The fact that phenomena have taken place that had not been contemplated by us does not mean that we capitulate to these phenomena. [We can capitulate] on two levels. [The first is that of] Mandel and Pablo. They are revisionists because for more than 30 years they have a political line of systematic capitulation to the counter-revolutionary leaderships that have led revolutions. In 1951, when they make entryism *sui generis*, they said that the [Third] World War was coming, [that] Stalinism was going to make guerrillas and all of Europe was going to go into the hands of Stalinism, which is going to do the world socialist revolution. Then there were Mao, Tito, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, the FSLN... all those who led revolutions. Pabloite-Mandelist revisionism said: “Because they lead revolutions they are revolutionary”. And we said: “Because they lead revolutions they are more dangerous and more counter-revolutionary than ever” because what we need to see is global politics. From that point on, the total division of the Fourth International takes place, because Mandelism-Pabloism is a clearly delimited political current of capitulation to the counter-revolutionary or petty bourgeois — non-working-class — leaderships who led revolutions.

[The second level is the one consisting in] another capitulation as dangerous as the first but not to the leaderships but to the ranks: even if we are a small grouplet we put ourselves in any sector that fights and we abandon the working class, because our role is to accompany those who succeed and make revolutions. In other words, the new man, the revolutionary, who eliminates the characteristics of the class. We believe that it is the other face; rankist, mobilising, selfless, fighter but fatal because it also loses class character.

Comrade Harry touches the point of revisionism, Sandinism and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front [FMLN]. It is quite possible that we have to incorporate this point [in the Theses]. Indeed, Pabloite and Mandelist revisionism, continuing its trajectory of more than 30 years, has completely capitulated to Sandinism and the FMLN. They capitulated to the degree of leaving behind the basic principles of the workers’ movement, as I said yesterday. For example, they think that FMLN is fabulous, an extraordinary leadership with a formidable program; they think that the program they have for the truce is fantastic. I don’t know whether you know, comrades, that point 14 of the Program proposed by the FMLN for the truce and the organisation of a Government of National Unity in El Salvador is the payment of the foreign debt of the whole Salvadoran dictatorship. Literally! Item 14 of the Program: “The debt of all previous governments will be paid”. Mandel had said that the line of not paying the foreign debt is very good, but now he says that the FMLN line of paying the foreign debt of one of the most sinister dictatorships, and at the same time to make a government of national unity with the bourgeoisie is very good. [He says] that it is the great revolutionary program.

We do not know where we stand anymore. That is revisionism of the worst kind. And this revisionism is general. Hence, we have to dwell a little more on this problem, to see whether we incorporate the observations of Comrade Harry in this respect. Because everything that is happening to Nicaragua — that it has the Contras in Honduras and Costa Rica, that it has a disastrous economy — is due to the fact that Sandinism is a petty bourgeois leadership beholden to counter-revolutionary Castroism; because they did not hold a Constituent Assembly, because they did not deepen the revolution, and because they did not make a Brigade to develop the revolution in El Salvador as proposed by the Simon Bolívar Brigade. We were thrown out [of Nicaragua] because we proposed that the revolution had to be developed in El Salvador and Honduras. We have numerous quotations in which the FSLN says: “We could have intervened in Honduras, the people were against the dictatorship, but we have kept our word and we have not made any political intervention or given any support to the Honduran people to fight against their dictatorship”. We denounced this since the rise of the Sandinista government. We said they were going towards

disaster with that policy, and they're already in the disaster. However, revisionism says that the FSLN is the greatest example of revolutionary leadership, superior to Lenin and Trotsky.

I reckon all this is said in the Theses, but in bits and pieces. Perhaps we could incorporate it in a much summarised form in a thesis. What is important is that we Marxists [define with] clear words the phenomena that are crystalline. And for more than 30 years there has been a current of the Trotskyist movement called revisionism, which we have fought without pause and without truce, which is characterised as revisionist as a general definition because they are the ones who systematically capitulate to the counter-revolutionary leaderships that head revolutions.

Pacifist movements

On the pacifist movements in Eastern [Europe], I confess it is not my speciality. I have read the good article of the comrade, although I have some doubts about it. It seems to me that what we are going to put forth in the Manifesto rounds off and nears positions in the sense that every proposal for disarmament, both from the USSR and from the United States, is a reactionary slogan. But we will not qualify the movement for the slogan. We have to say that the movement has positive elements and the right to express itself. That we fight for the democratic right to express ourselves, even with reactionary slogans. But we are going to delimit ourselves. I do not know if we will reach an agreement to express in the Theses this problem of the democratic right to express oneself, as part of the process of political revolution, because we are not going to fight for the right of expression of only those who agree with us.

Nationalist and religious movements

Lastly, on the need to distinguish between nationalist and religious movements, I have some doubts. I do not see why [it is said that] nationalist movements are progressive and the religious reactionary. I do not see why there cannot be some progressive religious movement and some reactionary.

Many years ago, in 1958, the Orthodox Trotskyists, the anti-revisionists, held a congress in Leeds. There I was able to meet a comrade who was an anthropologist of note, who is now a well-known Marxist in England. He was a great theoretician of Healy. We became close friends and talked about some studies on some Pacific islands (I don't remember which ones) and their religion. The anthropological studies and the memories of the settlers at the beginning of last century told how these religions were. In them appeared an evil man, with characteristics of the devil, brown skinned, of the Tahitian type in the Pacific islands. To evict him, religious ceremonies were done to burn him, fetishes, and so on. During the century in which these islands could be studied, this evil, monstrous being had transformed himself into a blond man, with blue eyes and ultra-white skin. In other words, religion had become a formidable weapon of struggle against imperialism. They did everything to any white man who fell into their hands because he was the evil man of their religion. Surely an unfortunate Yankee worker, who was also attached to it, would also fall, although I do not think very many... Trotsky said that when he was spat upon as a pupil, it was also a form of class repudiation. When he wrote "My Life" he did not complain about this.

Hence: [religion may be] progressive. In general, both religion and nationalism, in the long run, are all reactionary, they are limited. The only thing progressive is revolutionary Marxism, Trotskyism. It is a wholistic conception, progressive because it is global. Ultimately religion is reactionary; it is the opium of the peoples. It may be that the case of the Sikhs of India is like this. I also have doubts. We must study it. It may be so because Sikhs are a very rich sector, but I do not know enough about it. The comrades in their work quote a phenomenon that I have known for many years, which is the phenomenon of Muslims in Indonesia. There worked [inaudible] and made a left and religious party. Lenin and Trotsky took it very much into account in the Third International, considering him a specialised man. But religion, like nationalism, ultimately has a

reactionary background. At some point, they can play a relatively progressive role. In the long run, they are always reactionary. Internationalism is our theory.

Fourth Speech

The class character of Trotskyism

I have not been able to prepare my reply well because I had to listen to all comrades all the way. I will make an effort to respond in the best order I can, trying to answer even in one or two sentences to the different concerns of the comrades. I want to respond first of all to the comrades who represent non-IWL organisations — the comrade of *Pan and Libertad*, the comrade of *Lutte Ouvrière* and its sister organisations, and Comrade Joaquin, who is ours, but whose organisation has not yet decided [to enter the IWL] — and who have had the fraternal attitude of bothering to come here to accompany us and help us. I will do so in an attitude of fraternal correspondence with theirs.

I will respond in general to the speech by the comrade of *Lutte Ouvrière*. (When I touch on revolutionary situation I will refer to the different points that he and other comrades raised.)

We begin by thanking you for your wishes that our successes will be yours. We listened to the whole historical intervention of the comrade with real enthusiasm. At the same time, I want to make a criticism of what, for me, is an oversight of the comrade. But I think that in politics, oversights are not by chance. His speech was a story about how the comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière* have systematically fought against petty bourgeois and intellectual Trotskyism. The comrades quoted works by Trotsky (*In Defence of Marxism*) in which Trotsky tells the Socialist Workers Party that it has to stop being petty bourgeois or disappear; that to be Trotskyist the party has to be working class and be full of workers. We came into the history of the Fourth International without knowing the works of Trotsky that the comrades quoted.

Trotsky also has that exciting document, not only dedicated to the American party, but to other parties, where he says that the parties of the Fourth International were going to be great when at the head of its leadership were leaders who spoke badly in their own language. Not leaders who speak many languages, but those who speak poorly their own. When the Fourth International and the Trotskyist parties are led by this type of leaders, it will signal that we have great parties and faced towards the revolution. (When I told Comrade Eduardo Exposito about this, about a year ago, he was very moved, because he stumbled a lot while talking in the tribunes.)

In 1944, without knowing the works of Trotsky that the comrades quoted — and this the comrades did not know — we began our [political] life by writing in an internal bulletin a pamphlet of no importance that was called “The Party”; [which addressed] how to build the party, how to overcome the endemic crisis of Argentine Trotskyism. There we wrote that the problem was social — either Trotskyism worked with and towards the worker’s movement or it was going to live from crisis to crisis because Trotskyism and the workers’ movement have an immediate relationship. Because the Trotskyist Transitional Program is the program for the worker’s movement. We want to be the historical, internationalist consciousness of the worker’s movement. And that cannot be achieved from outside the workers’ movement.

But the comrade who spoke already knows much better (the rest of *Lutte Ouvrière* may possibly not know) the tremendous battles of Comrade Ernesto González and mine, no less than of 1969. A fierce battle against the petty bourgeois and Stalinist leaderships, against Castroism. I was very surprised he didn’t say that [we] have a long history of fighting Pabloism; that we broke with the International against the entryism *sui generis*; that we had a parallel history of struggle against petty bourgeois and intellectual Trotskyism. We even used the same term. From 1969, when we wanted to form a Bolshevik faction [within the Unified Secretariat], the SWP made it a

question of principles — if we wanted to [form with them] a faction or a tendency we had to stop calling [Mandelism] “petty-bourgeois and intellectual tendency”. Today we had a very fraternal and fruitful discussion with the comrades in which we clarified this historical problem.

This is the point I wanted to emphasise. I would like to congratulate the comrades for having brought to the IWL as a presentation card, as a fundamental fact of their life, so that we know what they are, having been for 30 years fighters against the Pabloite revisionist filth that has taken the Fourth International from tragedy to tragedy and from defeat to defeat, and that has wasted the greatest opportunities we had, including taking power in Bolivia in 1952. Specifically, we have been for 30 years on the same side of the trench. With great differences, errors, tactical variation, but with this principled position: [the Fourth International] must be workers’ Trotskyism and Trotskyism of principles.

The agreements between revolutionaries

The comrade of *Lutte Ouvrière* said at the end of his report — if I understood correctly — that it will be long and difficult to understand each other or something like that. I disagree completely. Either we do not understand each other, or we do understand each other. I do not know why “long and difficult”. I do not see what impossibility there is, as far as I know they do not speak Chinese. One presents a program and says “I agree”, or not; we either agree or disagree. That is, there can be no policy of understanding each other in the long-term. I do not understand that way of expressing ourselves at all. The documents are read, explored; in three months of study, it is known whether there is agreement or no agreement. We must be absolutely clear: if there is no agreement, the only thing there can be is relationships. We shake hands [and that is it].

I remember an old comrade who was almost my teacher and who appears in the history of Argentine Trotskyism that was made in Brazil. One day I met him on the street, we walked four blocks and when we were going to say goodbye, I told him:

“Well, comrade, give me your phone so I can call you.”

I was very young and wanted to learn from him. And he answered me:

“Look, Moreno, we had to walk four blocks to go to the same place, but I will not give you my phone or my address. I will not see you ever again. If we find ourselves walking to the same destination, I’ll shake hands and talk, and when we say goodbye I’ll shake hands again. But [we will only be together] for the exact blocks on which our paths coincide. Because that will be the second time I see you and I may not see you ever again.”

And I never saw him again. Is it understood? He did not say, “It will be difficult for us to understand”. I understood him right away. And I was very happy because I did not waste my time calling him on the phone.

Among revolutionaries, I do not understand this language of “it will be difficult to understand”. It is very easy to understand. Trotsky says: “The program comes first”. And we read the program and we say, “We agree” or “We do not agree,” and we understand each other. I do not know any other method. From the Marxist point of view, I do not understand that “it will be long and difficult”. Among Marxists, among Trotskyists, it is easy to understand each other. One is revolutionist or revisionist; one is opportunist or revolutionist. We can have the same program and discuss tactics. We are scientists. Can you imagine two doctors — and we are [like the] doctors — in front of a patient and one telling the other “it will be difficult to understand each other, we need four to five years”? What kind of medicine is that? Medicine is a science. I do not understand. We are scientists. Unless it is a policy of preservation. That can be.

First of all, I want to say that I was impressed by the speech by the comrade of *Pan y Libertad* when he pointed out the theoretical differences that we have. He did very well. We loved it. We like the discussion like this: very strong, hard, as we ourselves love it. If he had told us that we have a revisionist tradition, I would have loved it.

With the same frankness, I say that I still believe that in general Trotsky was right, among other things in favour of workers' democracy. If Mao had imposed the method of workers' democracy in China, Mao's wife would not be in prison. She would have made a tendency and she would be arguing.

We are so Trotskyists that we made in our press a passionate defence of ["the gang of] four"¹ saying that they had every right to express themselves and that it was a political crime to get them arrested. But we also fought for Liu Shao-chi's² right to express his ideas under Mao.

I point out this anecdotal aspect. The problem is much deeper, but I totally agree with the comrade that it is a totally second-order problem, better said very important, but it has to go through another lane, as the same comrade insisted.

[In relation to how to work in *A Luchar*], we have to put out a magazine and discuss it in depth. But the important thing is to see whether around a common program we can work in depth [together] as the comrades are working [in Colombia].

From conversations that I had with the comrade and from what they have told me, we agreed on this one thousand percent. In this, the comrade is as much or more lucid than some delegates to this Congress who have talked about the revolutionary united front. I, at least, feel identified with the comrade — and not so much with some comrades of the IWL — in the line of making a revolutionary party. Because the only party that can lead the revolution and the seizure of power is a revolutionary Marxist party with mass influence. This is why in general terms the program of *A Luchar* — which the comrade vindicated so much — seems to me formidable. It is also theoretically and programmatically deeper. Goes much deeper, ploughs much more.

First: it is the struggle against the government of Belisario Betancur and all bourgeois and pro-imperialist governments. Second: independent mobilisation and struggle against national dialogue, truce and class conciliation. Third: support the struggle of the workers of the world and the need to coordinate their struggles, led by the working class.

But there is more. There is the line that the whole bourgeoisie should be expropriated. There is the line that the revolution is socialist. For the first time, there has emerged a guerrilla group that calls itself socialist guerrillas. *A Luchar* is a strong mass movement, it has almost the strength of the CP in France, but it is more: it is a mass movement in the struggle. In that sense, it is stronger than the French CP.

Along with this, there are very serious problems. Let us not deceive ourselves. Let us not believe — as the Russian Marxists used to say — that we are on Nevsky Avenue, which was a straight, wide, beautiful avenue to ride a car or skate or ride a sleigh when it snowed. It is a very difficult problem and full of twists and turns.

This is the reason why the speech of the Colombian comrade contributed and gave tremendous strength to the whole debate on the revolutionary united front. This is how it must be done: thoroughly pointing out the differences — not for the long term — and insisting on the need, on the urgency of a common action of all those who want to make the socialist revolution.

Why "Fourth International"?

Comrade Joaquin, from the Dominican MPS, brought us a good document, which excited me a lot. But I confess that as I read it I was tremendously scared. It was the opposite of the speech of the Colombian comrade [of *Pan y Libertad*], who hit us hard, and that was what I liked, and

1 The Gang of Four was a political faction composed of four Chinese Communist Party officials. They came to prominence during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) and were later charged with a series of treasonous crimes. The gang's leading figure was Mao Zedong's last wife Jiang Qing. [Editor.]

2 Liu Shao-chi (current romanisation Liu Shaoqi, 1898 –1969) was a Chinese Communist Party leader. For 15 years, President Liu was the third most powerful man in China, behind only Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai. Liu antagonised Mao in the early 1960s before the Cultural Revolution and was criticised, then purged, by Mao in 1966. [Editor.]

when he later indicated that we have to join to be active together I fully liked. Instead, I confess that in Joaquin's document I read a half-hearted thing. But frankly, Joaquin's speech was also of a high political level, which raised a problem that many IWL comrades are facing: [if our privileged tactic is] the revolutionary united front, why don't we get out of that of [calling to build] the Fourth International? Or something like that.

I will respond to the "Fourth International" issue, starting with the number. This question of number — First, Second, Third and Fourth International — is not capricious. Just as it is not capricious that one says how old he is when asked; it is to know exactly how many years one has lived. What do I mean by this? Do we propose or not to found the Fifth International? The two problems are intimately linked. The first thing that has to be agreed on is whether we must have an International. The second thing to agree on is the name. Everyone has a name, name and age. We must see the name and the age that we give it. Is it the Fourth or is it the Fifth?

Internationals are founded because they obey deep needs of the class struggle process.

The First was founded — almost independently of Marx — by an objective process. At that time Germany was very backwards and France quite a bit. The workers went to England, particularly the Germans, although also Italians. Germany exported labour, as at present [do] Colombia or Bolivia, or as it happens with the Turks, Portuguese or Spaniards.

A year before the founding of the First International, there were many immigrant workers in England. It was French workers visiting England; they met with the English trade unions and began to establish relations around a major problem, which were the migrant workers from Europe to England. It started as a relationship of this type and came to the foundation of the First International.

The First International then is the result of an objective process, the birth of the world proletariat, in this case, European. It is the first international organisation of the national workers' organisations that existed. It was formed on the basis of trade union and political leaders, not just politicians. That was the First International. This workers' movement suffered a terrible defeat in the Paris Commune. It was its first tremendous defeat, it staggered. And as a result of that first historic defeat, the First International disappeared.

And as part of an objective process, the Second International emerged; all the capitalist countries of the world were filled with socialist and Marxist parties. It was the International of the socialist parties, of the Marxist parties. At first many were not called Marxists. The word "Marxist", fanatical, orthodox, is imposed by Kautsky (one day we will have to vindicate the young Kautsky, who was a great chief of the proletarian current).

Why does the Third International arise? Because the World War of 1914, another objective fact, destroys the Second International. Each party of the Second International fights against the other. They fought with guns in hand in different camps. That is to say, the German Socialist Party supported its government in favour of the war. In fact, objectively, the militants of the International were killing each other. Look how it was destroyed. It was destroyed by an objective fact, in addition to reformism, the labour aristocracy, etcetera.

The Third International was founded because of this objective fact. [And it is destroyed because] Stalinism allowed Hitler to rise to power and provoked the greatest historic defeat of the German proletariat. The problem of the triumph of Nazism in Germany is not just another thing. It is not the rise of the military like Pinochet in Chile or something like that. It is the biggest historic defeat suffered by the world proletariat. The German worker was the vanguard of the world proletariat, together with the Russian. Shortly after Hitler, the other big defeat of the proletariat is that of the Russian at the hands of Stalin. This means that the two fundamental phalanxes of the world proletariat are defeated by the counter-revolution — one by the capitalist counter-revolution and the other by the bureaucratic counter-revolution. This objective process gives rise to the collapse of the Third International.

[The collapse of] the Third International and the need to found a Fourth is part of this counter-revolutionary process. That is, they are periods. Why found the Fourth International? In order to lead the world socialist revolution, the permanent revolution, and to save the principles of Marxist internationalism: workers' democracy, the Transitional Program, proletarian morality... (Which was what the Third International, the Communist International, had begun to do in its four First Congresses). To save the legacy of Marxism and the first of all — that of having an International. That this line was correct is demonstrated by the fact that Stalin later dissolved the Third International, leaving aside the fact he did not hold Congresses. Under Stalinism, Congresses were becoming more and more distant from each other. In the heat of civil war, Lenin and Trotsky held an International Congress per year. Since Stalin took the Third International, Congresses were held every five, six or seven years.

The Fourth International is, then, a necessity, it has to do with the current epoch. [It does not matter] whether it is weak or not — it is not a programmatic issue. And it has to be called Fourth International because it is the international of the world socialist revolution that was to open after the second imperialist war. That is the essence of Trotskyism, of Trotsky's call to found the Fourth International. So important [is this] that Trotsky wanted to found it when [the internationalists] were almost nothing.

This confirms an issue in which we insisted today; chatting with the comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière* — there cannot be Trotskyists who do not belong, who do not found, do not act or do not intervene or tend to intervene organically in an international organisation. A league [even if it is] of 60 — ten in one country, four in another, etcetera, but international. The example shows it to us. Before the First International [existed] the League of Communists and other variations. This makes to the essence of Marxism because there cannot even be correct national elaboration if there is no international organisation; otherwise, we believe we are gods.

If I have to lead the Argentine party without the International, in all my reports to the party I would say: "This isolated leadership, without a world party, must have committed an enormous number of errors; let's look for them because we are a very poor leadership because we are only the leadership of a national party. I have done this. The comrade, who is the old guard, knows well this is how we informed and Posadas³ laughed at us. He put out bulletins saying, "Who can go to an organisation where the leadership itself says it's a disaster for having those characteristics?"

The problem of the Fourth International is not [as simple as] taking out or putting in [the name "Fourth International"]. The problem of the Fourth International is a historic task to be done. We need to put it because it is programmatic. It is the other way around: what we can get out is the name of "International Workers' League". Maybe. We can look for any other name. What we cannot take out is "Fourth International" until there are deep reasons of objective type.

Let us suppose that large revolutionary mass parties, non-Trotskyists, call for an International. According to Trotsky's advice, we would go; but only if they are of the masses, even if they had errors or an opportunistic program. We would because we must have a different policy towards the mass parties than towards the vanguard parties. The theoretical-programmatic problem is very important but not decisive because the masses control everything. But we would fight for it to be called Fourth. And if they do not accept it, we would demand they give it a number. That is, to say whether it is the Fourth or Fifth and explain the succession, explain from what family tree it comes, because this family tree is part of science.

World Revolutionary Situation (III)

The comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière* made, in my opinion, a rather good description of the current situation when they said that they did not see the possibility of revolutionary crises in Europe,

³ J. Posadas was the pseudonym of Homero Romulo Cristali Frasnelli (1912-1981) an Argentine Trotskyist leader. When in 1953 the Fourth International was divided between the International Secretariat and the International Committee, Posadas sided with the secretary Michel Pablo. [Editor.]

that they saw the perspective of some or many defeats, which would lead to the triumph, etcetera, etcetera. I see it the same as the comrades, also for Europe. But I do not change the characterisation. I want to avoid the discussion of names — and in that the comrades have the same method we have. Discussing by names is important but more important is to see the content of the phenomena.

We see a revolutionary situation because we see the possibility of revolutionary crises. I do not know why they make so much trouble with the words “revolution” and “revolutionary crisis”. I already said that we have to de-sacralise them. In Ecuador, after seven tremendous general strikes, with struggles and deaths, a total political crisis in which it was not known who ruled — whether Parliament or the government — the country was a total mess, it was falling to pieces... and the comrade from Ecuador says that the situation is pre-revolutionary and he is frightened because in Colombia they laughed at that.

In Trotsky's time, in France, there was a general strike with the occupation of factories of quite a few days. Trotsky had already defined before [that strike] that the situation was revolutionary. And he considered that the general strike was no longer revolutionary situation but it was already a revolution, as important and as great as the February Revolution.

Bensaïd⁴ and Mandelism are criticising me for the category of February revolution, saying that the February revolution is an anti-feudal revolution. I am waiting for them with two categorical quotations from Trotsky. (I say them here, as a family, hoping it does not transcend.) One of them [I am going to use it] to ask Bensaïd and Mandel whether in France in 1936 there was feudalism for Trotsky to say it was a February revolution. That is to say, Trotsky desacralised the word revolution. The same as with the Spanish revolution, [which occurred] almost without even a general strike, and Trotsky considered it a colossal revolution, also of February, although it was going to march slower towards October. He was right, great analysis of Trotsky. For Trotsky, the word revolution was desacralised. He did not use it much just because it was a counter-revolutionary epoch. But if Trotsky were alive he would say that in Ecuador there were seven revolutions, not “revolutionary situations”. Seven revolutions because there are seven general strikes larger than the French. Let's desacralise some, then.

The same for that terrible discussion with the comrades of *Convocatoria*⁵ in Argentina. Trotsky considered that the Spanish revolution had begun, that it was equal to the revolution of February, and there had not even been a mobilisation anywhere. The army remained intact; it was one of the great obstacles of the Spanish revolution. It was very different from the [Russian] February, but Trotsky said: [it is February] with its specific characteristics. So let's desacralise the word.

When we say “revolutionary situation” we are [defining] situations where there may be general strikes such as that of France, revolutionary crises, mobilisations of two million people in a city — as happened in São Paulo — whoever may lead them. That is what we mean. As far as I know, in France the leadership was independent, the workers' movement occupied factories on its own. But later the opportunist leadership controlled the French workers' movement. However, Trotsky insisted [that] the French revolution had begun.

On the uneven development [of the world revolutionary situation]. In defining this situation we mean that — not that there are going to be victories of revolutions, beware of that!, but that they can explode anywhere.

It is very interesting the discussion we had with Gunder Frank. He is of the opinion that everything is a disaster, that capitalism is going to win everywhere, that we are crazy if we believe that the European proletariat will resist, that the Argentine proletariat and the Bolivian have no way out, that everyone has no way out and that in 1990 the economy recovers. The famous cycle

⁴ Daniel Bensaïd (1946–2010) was a leading figure in the French student revolt of 1968, while studying at the University of Paris X Nanterre. Bensaïd became a leading theorist of the LCR and the United Secretariat, and a professor of philosophy at the University of Paris-VIII. [Editor.]

⁵ *Convocatoria* was an opinion group formed during the discussion for the Second Congress of the Argentine party, the MAS. It presented and defended its documents during the pre-Congress discussion, presented a counter report to the Congress and it dissolved afterwards. [Editor.]

of Kondratiev is fulfilled in 1990. And with five years more of capitalism enduring, a new reformist era returns.

Talking with us, later on, he said that we were making a serious mistake in seeing tremendous situations and crises, and general strikes, and civil wars in the world because nothing was going to happen and those that took place would be dominated by imperialism. But he also told us that his in-depth studies — he has a team, he is a great teacher — told him that in three or four years the whole United States was exploding. He says that this is where the greatest contradictions are accumulating. [Compared to those] frightening contradictions [in the United States], the misery, and the contradictions of Latin America are nothing. He handles statistics much better than we do, and he said: “It’s like this, I do not know whether in two or three years but I think soon, and when the wick is lit nothing is left.” We were about to tell him: “Allow us, Gunder Frank, then the situation is more than revolutionary. If there is nothing left, there is nothing more than a revolutionary situation”.

What Antonio, the Portuguese comrade, said, that even in times of total crisis there are some countries that remain stable and some that still become richer, is a very interesting proposal from the theoretical point of view. It is part of the uneven and combined development. What do we mean by saying [that there are countries which have much] “fat”? [That global capitalism] creates uneven development.

The Portuguese comrade forgets a little of the advantage of being the first imperialist country in the world. Portugal is the country that made world capitalism, where modern capitalism arose. Since then we have suffered this scourge. It is true; capitalism arose there and they have accumulated incalculable wealth. Salazar, for example, left astronomical amounts of gold extracted from the colonies. Portugal is still an imperialist country, for centuries already in decline. Now it is the decadence of decadence, but it is still imperialist. That’s the “fat”. Although also in crisis, there is a still powerful middle class, which still has more or less privileged relations with Mozambique, etcetera. This is general throughout the capitalist, imperialist world: the “fat” of extracting surplus value not only to its proletariat but to all the peoples of the world. They have been extracting it for centuries. This does not exist in the semi-colonial countries.

We have a great discussion with Mandel about [the definition of] revolutionary situation in Europe. He has disagreed with our position. We have said that only once they have inflation above 100 percent it can be said that European capitalism has entered into its brutal crisis. I say 100 percent as a polemical argument, it’s a figure, and it may be 50 percent or 60 percent. I hope that in no IWL Congress someone will say: “You were wrong because there is a whole revolutionary process and the proletariat took power with nothing more than 90 percent of inflation; you must be self-critical”.

Europe is still relatively stable although some countries are in total decline. But for us, there is a process of Latin Americanisation, much like the Southern Cone (Chile, Argentina and Uruguay). Chile at the end of the last century was the most important country in Latin America. Look at the twists of history — some sectors of Los Angeles were colonised by Chilean merchants. I insist to the European comrades that they have to travel a lot to the Southern Cone to see it. There is going to be even bigger. Well, Europe is in decline, but a decline with that “fat” and with uneven development.

It is a revolutionary situation because of the economic crisis, for the struggles of the masses — and on this point perhaps we agree theoretically with the comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière* or with many comrades present; I’m sure. But few have touched on the decisive fact in which we insist. I get the impression that we are not really aware of the magnitude of the definition of the phenomenon: [the revolutionary situation occurs] at a time of total crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. It is precisely the reverse of 1943, 1947 or 1949 when there was a colossal revolutionary rise but at the same time, there was a strengthening of the apparatuses. That is a great contradiction — not now, there is now a colossal crisis of the apparatuses.

We must be aware of the specifics of this element, which has been increasing since 1968 until now, becoming more and more serious. The rise of the mass movement and the economic

crisis do not give cause for reformism and this causes that for the masses themselves the crisis of the apparatus is ever greater. It is easy to fight the bureaucracy, very easy. The bureaucrats tell the workers: "What are we going to do? We must endure the decline in living standards". And the Trotskyists — already almost alone — and the workers in the grassroots say: "What? We do not want our living standards to diminish". A terrible mess begins between the masses, the Trotskyists and the bureaucrats.

This happens today. In no country in the world the masses nowadays endure the Thorez line of first to produce. There are no masses that can withstand it. Try now to tell the French or English miners: "Let the mines be closed. First, close the mines." What do you think of this slogan? Imagine a leader, a bureaucrat who stands and says this. And the great thing is that they say it. That's unique, do you realise? It did not happen before. Before, the bureaucrat spoke and had an impact. The CP said "produce" and people went to work and produced. The French CP said "a single army, a single police", or the Italian CP said "disarm and hand over the weapons" and delivered them. Now in Colombia the apparatuses have said "surrender the weapons" and they are not surrendered. In 1958, the third part of Colombia was in the hands of the guerrillas. We were on the verge of one of the greatest defeats of capitalism and imperialism in the whole world, much larger than Cuba. The Liberal Party said "hand over the weapons" and only a small sector — the FARC, who left with the CP — did not do so. But most of the movement surrendered their weapons. Not now; the CP said "surrender the weapons" and the guerrilla was divided, they did not surrender the weapons. That is the new element that exists in a revolutionary situation.

Revolutionary United Front (II)

I do not know whether we agree. First of all, let's see whether we agree on the definition. The revolutionary front is not unity with those who fight, not at all. Someone who throws stones is not the revolutionary united front; he is a man of vanguard who may have good aim or not to throw stones. He is at the vanguard in throwing stones; politically speaking he may be a fanatical Stalinist. A man who makes pickets is not revolutionary united front. Otherwise, we do not understand each other. The revolutionary united front is an agreement with political organisations that adopt revolutionary positions.

This problem of the revolutionary united front is transformed into a terrible mess by reality. Let's bring it down to earth. First of all, it must be said that the crisis of the apparatuses began with the Chinese bureaucracy, the weakest apparatus. It is an apparatus that in its own country lives from crisis to crisis, in a permanent crisis; for me also an objective expression of the permanent revolution. The Chinese bureaucracy has no strength even in China. "The hundred flowers", the Cultural Revolution, and so on... They live from commotion to commotion. They split, they persecute, there is no stability, and each time there will be less. In addition, it never considered having an International. Maoism went into crisis, but its crisis was total. And with an immense advantage for the revolutionary process, which is that Maoism had won, like Guevarism, the best of the political vanguard of the entire world, of all those who wanted to make the revolution.

In the communist parties, in the universities, in the workers' movement, the vast majority of young people who felt themselves revolutionaries believed that the solution to the crisis of leadership of Stalinism was beginning and they broke with hatred of Stalinism. Guevarism hated Stalinism to such a degree that Guevara was a very good friend of us Trotskyists; he always sent us greetings, his first cousin was a militant in our ranks, we visited him in Cuba, etcetera, and he told us "let's meet in such a place, because the GPU follows me".

This was a generational issue. [These young people] became thoroughly Guevarists and Maoists. The best of that generation was there. Unfortunately, because of the USec, it did not come to us in Italy, Germany and other countries. There [the Trotskyist groups] adhered to the discipline [maintaining entryism in the communist parties] and they lost the possibility of disputing the vanguard to Maoism and Castroism.

In France, it came to us by chance. The USec cell of [the career of] Philosophy, led by Krivine against the opinion of the [Krivine] brothers, Pierre Frank and Mandel, broke discipline and left. They said: we cannot bear any more the Communist Party and entryism inside it. The French Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) was born by chance, by the mere fact of breaking with the Communist Party and facing it publicly, because they could not stand it any longer. They met the French May and suddenly they became the strongest Trotskyist party in the world and of the new vanguard. Then, with all their politics, they ruined that possibility, but [the LCR] reflected this generational phenomenon, all that formidable vanguard of 1968 or earlier, [which was] everywhere.

In Colombia this was very deep, a colossal Communist Party emerged. I ask fraternally the comrade to excuse me, [but this party] for being Maoist, did not cause the revolution in Colombia to have triumphed already. Or, at least, they would have remained united if they had had internal democracy. But [this process] was general.

The crisis of Maoism released these forces. Many went to the reaction, to Stalinism. Some have gone to Albania. I'm going to steal from the comrade a truly brilliant metaphor he has made — although if he authorises us, we'll say it's his — Albania has tried to do socialism by milking goats. That is to say, it is a country that doesn't go far at all, either politically or in any sense. Fortunately, the comrades have not been linked to the Albanians. In Colombia those who have been linked [to them] are in very rare manoeuvres — they make agreements, they make a truce, they do anything.

But groups emerged that began to think with their own head. That is, from Maoism, many groups split, like [a] grenade. There was no tendency. It is no coincidence that these groups have emerged because it was a generation that went to Maoism because it wanted to make the revolution. It was a hybrid.

In Stalinism so far the crisis has not originated any leftist current. I do not know if it has done so in petty-bourgeois nationalism. Things must be said as they are — Stalinism frees individual forces. That is to say, we take off a straitjacket, but it does not release until now [any left current]. For example, in the crisis of the Spanish CP, no current has emerged with a systematic class policy that suggests that the workers' revolution must be made. We have doubts that they [will emerge] in France. It seems a widespread phenomenon. Stalinism seems to be an already old party that survives itself, which has not recruited the new vanguard. Its crisis is much slower; but at the same time, it releases forces, albeit not very positive forces. We disagree very much with Mandel, [who holds that in the] interior of Eurocommunism there would be very interesting revolutionary possibilities. We do not believe that. From the beginning, we thought not, that it was going from bad to worse. We do not know what was worse [whether Stalinism or Eurocommunism].

I say this because there are no parties or currents; nowhere can we say [that the revolutionary united front] is with such a current. Yes in Colombia, because of that special circumstance. Perhaps in any area where there are many other former Maoist comrades, or who continue to vindicate themselves as such, and who develop increasingly more revolutionary positions; consistent with themselves because they entered Maoism to make the revolution. We have much to learn from them. And of all the rest, but especially of them, who are the most interesting sector.

But at the level of the trade union movement, other currents emerge. Driven by circumstances [emerge] those who say that there can be no class collaboration. Very interesting trade union currents arise, as in Brazil. Or as [in] the guerrilla: we want to know what happens with the current Clara Elizabeth Ramirez.⁶ Groups may arise in a locality. For example, in Argentina we want to work on very working-class Peronist committees and propose them a Socialist Argentina; down with the bureaucracy; for the socialist revolution; for a socialist revolution in Latin America. We believe that within a short time we may get some, but at least it is a policy. We also have in Argentina the problem of the *Partido Obrero* [Workers' Party]. We want to have the policy to see if we join.

⁶ Clara Elizabeth Ramirez Front (CERF) was a splinter group that broke away in 1983 from the Popular Liberation Forces, one of the five major groups united in the Salvadoran FMLN. [Editor.]

The revolutionary united front, then, is the attempt to achieve a front that is not an agreement to throw stones or anything like that, but a long term front for a joint activity, consulted between political organisations, today essentially local or national.

Fundamentally political organisations; many sectors that come from Maoism in crisis, few (I don't know them) that come from traditional Stalinism in crisis. Let them come towards left positions. It scares me the belief that the revolutionary united front is only against Contadora, not at all. It must have a clearly revolutionary program, of socialist revolution. And it is a tactic, no more, within our principled and fundamental strategy of making revolutionary Marxist mass parties. It has that purpose. It is a tactic nowadays privileged because of the crisis of the apparatuses.

It is a privileged tactic [in relation to other tactics]. For example, we believe that the tactic of the workers united front is very difficult to apply, almost impossible because the bureaucracy is increasingly counter-revolutionary; it does not even suggest resistance to austerity plans. Where they suggest it we agree to do so. But there is this very serious problem. Instead, the tactic of the revolutionary united front can be [applied], because the problem is concrete. That is to say, we believe that there is scope for dialogue with groups, with organisations — trade union or political — with tendencies not yet organised but considered by themselves as such, with the aim of seeing if we achieve a common Marxist revolutionary party. That is the revolutionary united front.

It has the advantages of liquidating sectarianism and the mania of recruiting one by one, and of instilling big Trotskyist truths that we systematically forget — a true Marxist party lives by making agreements, fronts, mergers and not just splits. And in a revolutionary stage fusions are much easier than ruptures because everything pushes in favour of the revolutionary program. And more at this stage in which the counter-revolutionary apparatuses are in crisis. We want to get used to this.

The comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière* made us very important and very dangerous questions. Not dangerous on the part of them, but they pose very dangerous issues. Both the minimum revolutionary program and the revolutionary united front represent a mortal danger that the Trotskyist nucleus will disappear before a new Bolshevik party has been formed. Let's see whether we can agree because not wanting to liquidate the Trotskyist nucleus can also be sectarian. When he entered the English Independent Labour Party, Trotsky was against keeping the Trotskyist nucleus; he suggested that it should be dissolved. What do I mean by this? Until there is a real revolutionary party with mass influence, it is a real political crime to dissolve the party itself; it is transforming it into a movement, and a centrist one. There is the grave danger of disappearing in centrism, that we get the impression that we have a multitude — and we have it — and suddenly we find we have nothing. This is the case of Liebknecht and the German revolutionaries, who spoke and had multitudes, and were a movement; but at the moment of truth, because they did not have a tightly organised Bolshevik party, they had nothing.

To dissolve or lose those characteristics is a political crime. Our party paid dearly for a very tactic for me very correct, for not taking this element into account. It was when we did entryism in the “62 Organisations”⁷ and created the *Movimiento Agrupaciones Obreras* [Movement of Workers’ Groups]. It was the brightest stage of our party in terms of mass influence in the workers’ movement, but we paid no attention to this and almost disappeared within centrism.

The other problem is the minimum revolutionary program. I do not believe that the minimum revolutionary program is the revolutionary united front program. These are general guidelines to start discussing a revolutionary united front.

For example, in Colombia Stalinism has given the list of all its militants and guerrillas who did not abide by the truce. This is widely known in Colombia. They have publicly informed the press to demonstrate their collaboration with the government. If we, when entering *A Luchar*, ask them if that seems to be right if they think right that the police or the army of Betancur kill the

⁷ The 62 Peronist Trade Union Organisations were the organisation of struggle of the Argentine workers' movement against the regime of the “Liberating Revolution”, born from the *coup d'état* that overthrew Peron in 1955. Later they transformed themselves into a grouping of the bureaucratic leadership of Peronist trade unionism. [Editor.]

dissidents of Stalinism... The Mandelists will tell us that they think it is brilliant and that it is a very good line of the Communist Party (I say this because Socorro Ramírez was a member of that Truce and Peace Commission that is calling for arms to be surrendered), and we — we regret to tell our comrades in *Lutte Ouvrière* — we are going to kick them out of that room. We won't be talking about a revolutionary united front; we are not going to even greet them.

That's why [the program] is minimal. If we ask that and they say yes, we do not talk anymore, we do not even greet them. But that does not mean it's a revolutionary united front. I have said it before, even a fairly honest reformist says "nothing is given to any policeman; the police are the worst and nothing is given to them". Today we have that particular case in Colombia. You will wonder what we put it for. See what we put it for. From that tremendous discussion, in Colombia waters were divided. From there will be many reformists who do not come to the revolutionary front, but from there we know who cannot even step on the revolutionary front. That is, we have nothing to do with those who tell us that Stalinism does very well in delivering the list of guerrillas who refused to surrender their weapons. From the newspaper, we are going to say they are counter-revolutionaries, like the Mandelists in Colombia. I do not say they are so in the whole world, but in Colombia they are counter-revolutionaries, direct agents of the bourgeois government in liquidating the guerrillas and the revolutionary mass movement.

The minimum program then serves for that, to begin discussing.

The same goes for secret diplomacy. If we ask them: Do you agree, are you confident that Betancur's diplomacy is honest? Or because he is a bourgeois, he is exploitative and we never put trust in an exploiter? And they answer us "We have confidence in Betancur's secret diplomacy" — as the Mandelists say. We tell them that we have nothing more to do in terms of the revolutionary front with them. But that is not the revolutionary front. The comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière* are completely right. With this program alone, not taking it as a preliminary issue to introduce ourselves, we can go towards centrist deviations or dissolving the party.

About the church

The proposal of several comrades about the Church seems correct to me. I have learned from the proposal of the comrades. Even more: it seems to me that the Church has also understood the crisis of the apparatuses and tries to cover that space. We did not catch that. It is theoretical. I'll say at least a couple of sentences.

The Church is the greatest counter-revolutionary apparatus in history because it is about to reach almost 2000 years crushing revolutions. It's a good figure... I think it has had a colossal intuition. For example the PT that they drive so much is a manoeuvre to prevent the whole Brazilian vanguard going to the left and to Marxism. For me [this is so] clearly and everywhere. That is why they have brought this Pope Superstar; this Pope who travels as a Trojan and who in Peru is acclaimed almost like a soccer player. The same who in Peru already began to deliver his speeches with characteristics of a football [show]. He said: Peru is with the Pope and the Pope is with Peru. This is no accident.

The class politics of Trotskyism (II)

Well, Comrade Roberto from Chile was left with many doubts. He made a series of very good proposals. He is right the idea of the "new man" was of the Guevarist current, the most elitist sector of the guerrilla, and that today [instead] the guerrilla is popular. It is true what the comrade says that specifically, this is a category of the Guevarist student sector of the guerrilla focus.

The comrade says that the comparison with Trotsky is poor because Trotsky retired when the revolution fell. He says that my example of the Trotsky of class, that is, that he accompanied the retreat of the class — when the class was removed from power, he went with it — is wrong; because

that took place in a retreat and the policy that the comrade raises is for a revolutionary rise for the struggle for power.

But nothing changes at all. The issue is the class phenomenon. That is to say, the example I give is that when the working class was removed from power Trotsky did not make any manoeuvre to continue in power, but he left with the working class. If the working class advances towards power we have to fight to be at the head of it and to take power. What we are discussing here is whether we leave the working class to come to power. My point is, whether our policy is of the working class. For example, today in Nicaragua, what is important is that the comrades be in the factories — which they are doing — or is it going to harvest the crops or another variation that might give them prestige or something?

We want them to be there, even if it takes time. That is the future of Trotskyism and of the revolution. For if we go to power not at the head of the working class, if it is not the working class that self-determining itself in permanent mobilisation through its own organisms takes the power, that power is bureaucratic, deformed from the beginning. This [is so] by sociological law, by Marxist law. That is the only power we want. The other is of them, not of us. It is so much of them that we are going to fight politically to kick them out of power. And there are no manoeuvres [and no buts about it].

What the comrade says, that there was a retreat in Russia and in Europe, is true. But he forgets that there was a rise in the world; that when Trotsky was displaced was the moment of the great Chinese Revolution when the great uprising begins, when the Chinese Communist Party becomes a power. Anyway, let's be honest, I do not know whether Trotsky gave much importance to the Chinese issue at that time. There is this very confused discussion about whether or not he abstained from the issue of entryism [to the Kuomintang]. Trotsky gave some explanations. Later on, with Zinoviev, he came to a somehow confused formulation. But whether he gave importance [to entryism into the Kuomintang] and what he voted for is a matter for scholars. But there was a fundamental socialist revolution underway, which was China; in Europe there was decay.

The discussion with Comrade Roberto from Chile has to do with general laws and a strategy or a privileged tactic. Here we are discussing a privileged tactic; we are trying to give a general law, that's why it's a World Congress. For example, the comrade insinuated — he did not say it, we think because of lack of time — that we sometimes have advised some parties to go to the student movement and not the workers' movement. But that is neither the general law nor the privileged tactic of the party. We send them there to go to the workers' movement, as mediation, because we have to take into account the situation of our groups. Whether we know four working class comrades or any such variation, we have to be very careful; we have to take care of that capital. It is what we call the primitive accumulation of militants and cadres and we must see where it is achieved.

For example, in 1943–1944, when we developed the line that we had to go to the workers' movement, we did not go to the workers' movement, we went to a neighbourhood youth club in Buenos Aires because [in there] intellectual and political discussions were held. In 1951, when we realised that there was a colossal situation in the workers' movement, and we realised that we needed cadres of quite a political level because there was a break in the leadership of the Peronist workers' movement, then we went to give courses to a semi-existentialist theatre group. There I had the great joy of meeting with Comrade Ernesto González, my old comrade who is now going to be angry [because I tell you this]. The famous Trotskyist and historian Luis Vitale was also an actor there. I recruited them, but [to this] I had to study Ibsen as crazy. Our true goal was to see whether we could recruit two or three intellectuals to write the newspaper. It was a means, a roundabout way; because our group was so working-class that our 100 comrades were absolutely all workers, without any students.

There we understood that the students were useful for something. Among other things, to write a newspaper or to give courses, or other issues like that. But it was not our line [working

on the student movement]. The proof is that, as soon as we recruited them, they all went to the workers' movement. Comrade Ernesto was later a great leader of the slaughterhouses.

That is, don't tell me about the detours we take to go to the workers' movement, let's talk about the general law. The general law then depends on the size of our group; it depends on who our comrades are. There must be a thorough subjective study of the group itself. We are against breaking comrades. We do not want them to go to the workers' movement if we see that they are very petty bourgeois or students.

The same thing happens with risking life. It is an abstraction. In the Fourth, in the IWL, we all are for risking our lives. The Argentine party has set the example. But along with that, we are totally for the strictest measures of clandestinity. For example, imagine that [while] we are discussing clandestinity measures someone stands and says, "Why do we argue so much if our life is at the service of the Fourth?" I'm very sorry, but I swear I'm going to continue arguing for two or three more hours. Also about my life. I accept whatever luck brings me, but honestly, I prefer Moreno alive and not a hero.

That is, they are concrete discussions. Sending a little group like the one of El Salvador to the guerrillas, where they will not recruit anyone, where they will be shot as soon as they say they are Trotskyists with the argument that life means nothing, I do not see it. They are our main political capital. If they are killed perhaps for 10 or 15 years, there is no more Trotskyism of our tendency in El Salvador. There I am against risking life. Risking life for what? If it is to build the party, yes.

This has to do with the way in which we place ourselves in relation to the progressive currents. For example, to take concrete examples, the problem of ETA. To ETA, I think we cannot propose a revolutionary united front. The comrade asked if we propose a revolutionary united front to petty bourgeois guerrilla organisations. It may be so because it is a political organisation, but as long as it ceases to be petty bourgeois. Let them be petty bourgeois because of their social composition, but let them become proletarians by their policy as we propose them the revolutionary united front, because our first point will be to be for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the proletariat to lead the entire revolutionary process, for having workers' democracy and for having a revolutionary workers' party to lead the revolution. If they are guerrillas and accept all these positions, although none of them has ever worked in a factory, the political foundations of a revolutionary united front begin to be present. But there is no possibility of proposing that to ETA.

That's why I insist: the only revolutionary united front is between political organisations. From the moment a guerrilla organisation is a political organisation, yes [we can raise it]. There were currents of the left social-revolutionaries that entered the Bolshevik Party, and I am very much in favour of that. If [this is not understood], it is not understood what the revolutionary united front is.

It's the same as going to work in the neighbourhoods. We may go to work in the neighbourhoods, but that is not the revolutionary united front. That's a neighbourhood organisation. We can go because, for example, there is no work in Chile. It can be an extraordinary measure that our Chilean group — and also the students — go to live in the neighbourhoods; those who have livelihoods or something like that. Take that into account. But the goal of going to the neighbourhoods is also going to be to go to the proletariat. And you are going to see how the only ones who excel as militants are going to be the workers, as a general law. You will be amazed at how the workers are the only ones who perceive structurally our concept of organisation and our program. They get it. You will be surprised how our organisation and our program are tailor-made for the workers. Being disciplined, organised, respectful, and discussing everything, all this fits perfectly with the workers; but not with the other classes. We insist this does not mean that we do not go to the neighbourhoods to win militants, but we do it to see if we turn to the workers' movement. It is tactical.

But the future of Trotskyism, of the revolution and of our party, in Chile as everywhere, goes through the working class, although it may decrease in number (and I insisted on this the other day).

[Returning to the guerrilla.] It is possible there may be proletarian guerrillas. The comrades in Colombia insist [this guerrilla] is proletarian and democratic. It means that the Theses are good, that the paragraph of the Theses that says we are willing to see whether there are other experiences is fine. It is possible that the guerrillas are more and more like Durruti,⁸ peasant but of that type. Leaving aside all his political barbarities, we must re-read Durruti. We must study how he managed to get the construction strike in Madrid to succeed, which is a very beautiful thing. We must study it, and see if we go there.

We agree, we have no problem in going to the guerrilla, but as a general theoretical proposition. We have always said that we must incorporate the whole issue of the guerrilla into the Transitional Program. I want to tell the Maoist comrade that I have read a lot of Mao and the greats of the guerrillas because I believe that they have contributed from the military point of view. We do not have any prejudice, but it is not the law, nor is it today the privileged tactic, because we do not see that democratic and proletarian guerrilla. We do not see those political organisations where to do entryism, what the comrade says, nor to do the revolutionary united front.

In my opinion, I see no possibility of a revolutionary single front with *Sendero Luminoso* [Shining Path]. I do not see any point in common. They are absolutely open to nothing, they are the negation of democracy, they have nothing to do with the proletariat and they have a directly reformist program.

[This] has to do with allies, such as ETA and all the others. What do we demand from the allies? The comrade forgot the two poles of our policy. Our policy towards the allies has two sides — one is that we demand they be consistent with their program as allies, as non-working sectors; and the other is we make them an implacable criticism and we tell the masses that if they follow those leaderships they are going to go very badly. That's the other side.

We say to ETA to be consistent in the fight against Francoism, and we write article after article saying: Woe the workers who follow ETA! Treason, capitulation, and disaster await them, because nationalism is, in the long run, reactionary. We have a contradictory, two-phase policy. Our policy towards ETA is to force it to be consistent in its program and hit it hard because its program is petty bourgeois, saying that it is a petty bourgeois program and see if we break it by this means.

Our goal is to destroy ETA, for it to have no more strength. It is not the revolutionary united front, which is a loyal thing. For example, we want all the organisations that form *A Luchar* to grow enormously. Our Colombian comrades have approved a resolution that we do not recruit any comrade of any sister organisations. And they resolved that after saying to them in the first meeting, the only one we have had so far: "For several years you should not try to recruit anyone; if someone [of a sister organisation] tells us that he agrees with us, we answer that please do not even tell us, because it is a fraternal relationship".

Instead, in the case of ETA, if someone comes to us we grab him and do not let him go. Let's see whether we make entryism and destroy ETA because it is a non-class, petty bourgeois leadership, which is going to be sinister for the future of the Basque workers' movement. Woe the Basque workers' movement! Every triumph you get under the ETA banner will be worse; it will be that dead-end road, that reversal path described by the comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière*. It will be possible to advance, but they are advances to retreat, for the problem of the leadership.

That is, our policy is twofold, we fight them for not having a revolutionary workers' policy because it is not of our class; we support the positive aspects, but it is a strategic fight against them.

I am also against making the revolutionary united front with the Clara Elizabeth Ramirez Front based on a moral problem. I am completely against making a revolutionary united front based on a moral court to try the charges against Carpio.⁹ I am against, among other things, because I see

⁸ Buenaventura Durruti (1896 –1936) was an anarcho-syndicalist militant during the period leading up to and including the Spanish Civil War. Durruti played an influential role during the Spanish Revolution and is remembered as a hero in the Anarchist movement. [Editor.]

⁹ Cayetano Carpio (1918 –1983), aka Commander Marcial, was leader of the Communist Party of El Salvador in the 1960s, until he quit the party to found the military organisation *Fuerzas Populares de Liberación* (People's Liberation

it as sectarian. It can be a very good deal, where any number of people comes into. Maybe Perez Esquivel¹⁰ agrees with that. This, for me, is an agreement like many others, which we have to learn how to do them as well. We must learn to stop being sectarian; we must learn to make agreements. Trotsky taught us with the Dewey Commission and with the famous tribunal that tried the Moscow trials. But they did not have to be revolutionaries, but just honest people. Revolutionary Front is based on a clearly revolutionary program.

On the economy

[In relation to] the Mexican comrade's criticism of Mandel on the economic problem, I think that we must study the periods of the crisis. I do not know whether it is as the comrade says, but possibly it is so. I think his contribution is important and we need to clarify it. The comrade criticises how Mandel sees the solution to the crisis. He sees the superficial aspect of the crisis, the problem of them selling to America and not the problem of exploitation as the ultimate element of overcoming the crisis.

Here there is a fundamental theoretical discussion, similar to the one we have about the origin of the [postwar period economic] boom: whether or not Stalinism has to do with that boom.

On the problem of the definition of the workers' economy as complementary to the world market or capitalism, I do not know what "complementary" means. For me they are antagonistic, but at the same time united in a totality. They are part of a whole but antagonistic. I do not think they are complementary. For example, the monopoly of foreign trade and the fact that there is no capitalism in the USSR do not make them complementary. That is why I do not see the word "complementary" as correct.

Fascism and the imperialist counter-offensive in the current revolutionary stage

With regard to the periods and to the insistence of the comrade on the year 1975, I agree that the year 1975 marks the climax, but also I believe that in 1967-1968, with the crisis and everything else, a whole new stage is opened, to give it somehow a name. This stage is to me a non-acute revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situation — let's not argue on the names. But it is worldwide. And I agree with the comrade that the decisive, qualitative, fundamental fact is the triumph of Vietnam in 1975.

I continue to believe that in 1943 opens the greatest revolutionary epoch. For me it is bigger, it is superior to the six years that go from 1917 to 1923. There were many more triumphs.

On the problem of fascism. The comrade touched here a very interesting point, which has to do with the character of the epoch. Note how the problems are global. Fascism has changed in character. As the epoch is not counter-revolutionary, it cannot acquire characteristics of masses nor gain the street. They use methods of civil war but through secret organisations. It is a product of the world situation.

As Yankee imperialism is terrified by Vietnam, fascism is terrified by the beatings they have received by the world workers' movement — the defeats of Hitler, of Mussolini, the guerrillas, the liquidation of the regime in Japan; the successive defeats of fascism by the masses in the entire world. As the Church has changed, it [adapted] to the crisis of counter-revolutionary apparatuses and to the revolutionary rise — it changed and gave us an itinerant Pope. Fascism has changed in the same way — now it doesn't win the streets but it commits terrorist attacks. It has become terrorist, not of masses. The world situation and the revolutionary rise have prevented so far large

Forces) in 1970. The official story of his death was that he committed suicide after being blamed by other leaders in the FPL for the murder of FPL second-in-command Ana María on 6 April 1983 in Managua, Nicaragua. [Editor.]

¹⁰ Adolfo Perez Esquivel (b. 1931) is an Argentine human rights activist. He was the recipient of the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize. [Editor.]

sections of the desperate petty bourgeoisie from going to fascism. They don't go to fascism because the crisis is chronic, there is no way out. This is in general terms, as a law. We can give it a different name — we can say that in general today there is no fascist party in the world. It can also be.

Let's define whether we can call them fascists gangs. We believe they are fascist gangs. Today there is terrorism and a method of the civil war of the state, of the armies, which employ fascist, genocidal methods. These are the new phenomena that this postwar period has given, as a consequence of the colossal revolutionary rise. Fascists act in the shadows, not in the open.

[As for whether there is a generalised] imperialist counter-offensive, I agree, but as long as we know that this generalised counter-offensive has very little success. Let's not get the impression that it is generalised in the sense it is achieving great successes.

On the drafting of the theses

[On the definition of regimes and governments]. There is an issue that we need to read and correct, but I am against including into the theses theoretical names, ultra-theoretical names such as Bonapartism sui generis, senile Bonapartism, etc. because our parties are full of young people. The story is repeated of when the SWP first visited the Mexican party and the Mexican comrades asked about the generations of SWP militants. Hansen — I believe — counted them carefully: first of Cannon, after 1935, then the one of 1940, and so on. It ended with a fairly large number of generations, five or six. And he asked the Mexican comrades:

“How many generations do you have?”

And the Mexican comrades told him:

“Two: those of last year and those of this.”

We are also close, we have four. There is no need to give names that resemble a pharmacy: senile Bismarckism calms a headache, the other is when one feels fatigued and nervous... On the contrary — we have to try to get young comrades to read and get closer to the more general truths we are trying to say.

On Afghanistan

Well, comrades, I'm going to complicate things. I will add some data, which I do not know whether they are correct. I have been studying the Afghan question and I am going to add objective elements, apparently in favour of comrade Mario, before arguing with him.

Socially the situation got very complicated; you will see what a monstrous mess there is, monstrous. The guerrillas, at the beginning, were made by the landowners and the chiefs of tribes and of peoples, what is called “the notables”. And at the beginning, there was little CIA influence. It turns out that Andropov¹¹ gave the line that the great ally of the USSR is the big landowning bourgeoisie — you will now see the complication that arose — and that they had to agree with the notables. And they agreed with the notables — today the great bastion of the Soviet occupation is the great landowners and the notables. This caused the guerrilla to be transformed more and more into a guerrilla of the poor peasants and the workers. On the one hand, there is a social change in the guerrilla. On the other hand, there is a very rare thing because the USSR refuses to expropriate the landlords — they are its allies — but it takes all youth to the USSR to educate them. It takes it in groups of 20,000, 25,000. It takes all the youth and makes it Russian.

But the complication does not end there. I do not know whether you know the monstrous mess in the USSR; one of these days the whole bureaucracy explodes. There is a monstrous mess because in the USSR Muslim churches linked to Afghans have begun to emerge, and they are a

¹¹ Yuri Andropov (1914–1984) was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from November 1982 until his death 15 months later. [Editor.]

power. They cannot be destroyed by the Soviet secret police; they work almost legally. There are three very important religious currents — one I believe of the eleventh century, another I believe of the twelfth century and another of the fourteenth century — that have now been revived impressively in the USSR. There is of everything, so much so that the bureaucratic government has changed the line and has resolved not to collaborate anymore. Then there is a terrible mess with the official Muslim priests, the mullahs I believe, who are men of the Stalinist bureaucracy within the USSR. In earlier times, in Brezhnev's time, the bureaucracy used to send these mullahs outside the USSR, and they were very successful. Now they are no longer received; when they are sent abroad, the Arabs kick them out. And religious currents have emerged in the USSR, especially those existing in Afghanistan, carried and strengthened by the Muslim soldiers that the bureaucracy sent there at the beginning. Now they have a monumental mess inside the USSR because it develops as a clandestine mass party against Moscow and the bureaucracy. The bureaucrats wildly cuss among themselves [blaming themselves] for why the hell they sent them there. Notice how things get more and more complicated. It is very complicated.

Well, clarified these facts — and there may be many others — let us go down to earth. This is not about abstract approaches. The comrade put it very well — there is a war; the Afghan guerrillas, in their vast majority, are paid and already totally controlled by the CIA. The CIA has just publicly voted 300 million dollars to give to the Afghan guerrillas. It is a very strong sum, almost as important as what they started spending in Vietnam. Note that to give 20 or 30 million to El Salvador or Nicaragua there are some terrible messes, and instead, for this, there was no problem — it was voted. And it seems to me that next year they will invest 500 million. They have grasped the opportunity.

This resembles the famous discussion with the Socialist Workers Party about UNITA,¹² about the famous, authentic tribes who had the right to express themselves in their language, but who at one point were manipulated by the South African and US secret services; it is a qualitative phenomenon. That is why the comrade's statement [regarding the Afghan guerrillas] is right. Is it qualitative or not? That is, at what point are they? Every tribal nationalist movement, progressive at a given moment, at a point in its path, always becomes reactionary. That was our great theoretical discussion with the Socialist Workers Party. Never can a nationalist, massive, interclass movement be systematically progressive — but can be so in a conjuncture — because it has neither the theory nor the program of world socialist revolution. Therefore it is condemned to be reactionary. One of the great political theoretical tasks of a Trotskyist revolutionary party that uses the Marxist scientific method is to know at which qualitative point what is progressive, relatively progressive, inevitably becomes reactionary.

For example, UNITA fought in great form against Portuguese colonialism, more than the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA); the MPLA got along well with the Portuguese government, with these rare military men, semi Castroist, as Saraiva de Carvalho & Co. Ltd. But when Portugal withdraws from Angola, UNITA goes on to serve US imperialism and South Africa. And we said, "This is a qualitative point".

Then let's come back down to earth. In Afghanistan there is no longer [the same] phenomenon [as when] the USSR invaded it. This was the first phenomenon. Today there is a more important, deeper phenomenon: there is a war. To say that "we are for self-determination", etcetera, etcetera, is a principle, but does not answer the fundamental problem: what policy do we have in the face of this war? Are we for the guerrillas to win or are we for the Red Army to win? Or do we say — as Trotsky used to say, "Thank you, I do not smoke"—: "This war does not interest me, Afghanistan has a very difficult language and we have no position"? Or: "It is very far, it does not affect our border", which is another nationalist [position], which we are against?

¹² UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) is the second-largest political party in Angola. Founded in 1966, UNITA fought alongside the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in the Angolan War for Independence (1961–1975) and then against the MPLA in the ensuing civil war (1975–2002). This war was one of the most prominent Cold War proxy wars, with UNITA receiving military aid from the United States and South Africa while the MPLA received support from the Soviet Union and its allies. [Editor.]

There is a war: we must have a position on the war. And to have a position on the war it is necessary to give the class and political character of the contenders. Here comes the problem of the guerrilla. The qualitative leap was made — in spite of this social character of the guerrillas, which today is less landowning than before, more popular, more of the workers than before, also younger... despite this social composition, do we have to define it essentially as manipulated by the CIA or not? If the answer is “yes”, we are not for them to win. Today there is a war — if we say “that such group leave”, let us speak plainly. If two boxers are fighting and I am asked “are you for the boxer on the right?”, and I say “no, I am for the self-determination of the two, and therefore for the left boxer to retreat”, let’s not deceive ourselves, I am for the one on the right to win.

If today in Afghanistan we say “For the immediate withdrawal of the Red Army”, let’s not beat around the bush, comrades: in the face of this war — if this war didn’t exist, it would be ok — we are for the guerrilla to win. It is so. And we should not be frightened: perhaps we, who hold that it is a very serious mistake that the guerrilla win, are wrong.

That is, we believe that the Afghan guerrilla is the same as UNITA, the same as the Guatemalan¹³ contras, only on a different, tragic way; a way for which the bureaucracy is directly responsible. This guerrilla gave the qualitative leap — from being progressive, nationalist, of resistance to the Red Army, it has become a CIA-manipulated guerrilla. That is the point to be discussed: the political characterisation of this guerrilla. And if today this guerrilla wins, the United States wins. That is why we are against putting forward “For the immediate withdrawal of the Red Army”, and we [are in favour of] raising the problem of the right to self-determination, denouncing their crime, etcetera, etcetera. Because the immediate withdrawal of the Red Army means the triumph of a guerrilla manipulated by imperialism. And the Red Army, what is it? It is the bureaucratic army, but of a workers’ state. If a Pinochet-type or Marcos-type government comes into Afghanistan, the revolution in the world would be weakened. And if [the guerrillas] win, if the Red Army is withdrawn, that’s what’s going to happen in Afghanistan. It is the impression I have. Nothing else, comrades.

¹³ We believe this is a slip of the tongue by the author, who meant “Nicaraguan contras”. [Editor.]

Close of the World Congress

Well, comrades, we have indeed completed this Conference. Although this is a closure, I would like to give it a somehow informal character; because in the remainder of this Conference I am going to propose a new amendment to the Statutes so that our world meetings cease to be called Conferences to be called Congresses, including retroactively this one. Because “conference” has a lesser meaning, inferior to the word “congress”. And in this sense, for me, this has been a great Congress. The own word “congress” is too small for it. As for the result, the environment, and so on, it has been the most important World Congress that I have attended in my life.

This Congress has been greatly benefited by the presence of several fraternal delegations: the comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière* and their comrades in arms; Comrade Oscar of Colombia, representing *A Luchar* and *Pan y Libertad*; to some extent also Comrade Joaquin, although in fact, he is already part of the IWL.

What struck me the most about our international organisation — the Bolshevik Tendency and the Bolshevik Faction — was a human phenomenon, that there was a human type that was the same in almost all countries, very different, for example, to those of the Unified Secretariat. A human type of militant with a description very similar to the one Trotsky does of the Bolshevik, and how this was clearly distinguished, from the human point of view, of the Menshevik, for being a modest, serious and at the same time fraternal militant. In all the countries of the world, I was met with the same type of militant. It was exactly the opposite of what happened to me in the Unified Secretariat, for example, where human types varied completely from country to country. And also, the way of being: intrigues, [discussion on] small issues instead of discussing the great political issues. Several times I have said this about the general Bolshevik human uniformity of our current.

What I can tell both to Comrade Oscar and to the comrades of *Lutte Ouvrière* is that I have felt them very close to that same level also. We have argued hard and it has not affected them at all. One of the leaders of *Lutte Ouvrière* who left already, pointed out to me [that it did not bother them] our plight and our observations and criticisms, but quite the contrary. This was revealed in all dealings with guest comrades in all areas, including in the social area. A proletarian atmosphere, magnificent, as well as truly Trotskyist. The first part of this closure is to tell you — thank you very much, comrades. Although you have done nothing more than to fulfil your obligations, but you have fulfilled them very well (...).

For me, the discussion of activities and of the world situation, as well as the number of resolutions, shows that we are the world's most dynamic, more coherent, less in crisis current, of the only two there are.

Within Trotskyism, there are two and only two currents on a world scale. And ours, on a global scale, is very weak. But there are only two: ours, very weak on a world scale, and the Mandelist. Lambertism on a world scale is an excrescence, almost non-existent. And the others are very strong national organisations, such as *Lutte Ouvrière* or others within the Trotskyist movement, with some international influence. We have them that responsibility. Let us not forget for one minute of this issue: there are two and only two [currents] on an international scale. Of these two, there is clearly one that is dynamic, growing systematically, extending and doing so with coherence, penetrating essentially the workers' movement, in all countries. It is a general feature, and this has been perfectly reflected in our World Congress.

In the field of elaboration, we believe that the World Theses prepare us fundamentally for the great opportunities that open up to us. The word “opportunity” is a mania we have. We used that word a lot, and once, reading Trotsky, we find that he defined Marxist politics as “the art of

using opportunities" (I do not know if the phrase is literal but that was the content). It was an incredible joy for us. Similar to when we read that the French general strike was the February revolution; because we read it after we said that there were unconscious revolutions and that what characterised the February revolution was, not only that it was bourgeois democratic, but [also] that it was unconscious. And we read it. And in this opportunity the same thing.

Indeed, comrades. We prepare our party to use the colossal opportunities that the class struggle gives, to fortify our parties and to develop the process of revolutionary mobilisation of the autonomous masses, independent, fundamentally of the proletariat, to take power. Whoever does not realise the class struggle, regardless of us, systematically gives us objective opportunities, does not know Marxism and Trotskyism.

The discussion on the World Theses has that fundamental axis — to put in tension our entire international organisation through an alert, through a call, that is: Throughout the world there are more and more opportunities for the only program and the only theory of the international and national socialist revolution, which is our Trotskyist program, which is the IWL program. Let's look at those opportunities. Let's discover them. They exist and we refuse countless times to see them. And they exist in our favour, of our program, because it is the only one that reflects the objective reality, comrades.

This is why we have insisted on the categories of revolutionary situation and revolutionary united front. It is a call to open ourselves to a rich reality and that is ours, comrades. This reality, which in its deepest, most essential aspects, is that of the class struggle, that of the mobilisation of the working class and its allies.

I believe that in this sense, which is the fundamental political theoretical sense of this Congress, we have achieved the goal we had set ourselves — to open ourselves to those colossal opportunities that open up to us and which will increasingly open up to us, if the historical course of the two, three, four or five coming years follows the course we anticipate in the Theses.

This is why, comrades, we can close this Conference by saying thanks to the fraternal comrades who visited us. They were one aspect, a very important factor for the success of this World Congress. And the rest, to the whole Conference, comrades, I think we can say: the job is done. And let's sing the Internationale. §