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Our experience
with Lambertism

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Preface

The crisis of the Fourth International, brought about by Pabloite revisionism and still unresolved, has forced us to use the term “Trotskyist movement” often. We believe it is a correct denomination. The old trunk, the Fourth International founded by Trotsky, has given rise to different currents and groupings, international and national, which claim to be Trotskyist. It is a similar process, in this sense, to the crisis of the Social-Democracy, which originated revolutionist, opportunist, revisionist, centrist and capitulationist tendencies, all of them declaring to be Marxist.

At the time, the existence of the Social-Democratic movement could not be denied, even though Lenin, Luxemburg, and Bernstein were all part of it. In the same way, the existence of the Trotskyist movement cannot be denied today, even though there are all kinds of currents in its womb, from orthodox Trotskyism to revisionism more to the right-. The fact that the Second International held world conferences or congresses and our Trotskyist movement as a whole does not carry them out is a difference of form but not of content between the two.

The Second International in crisis had become a movement despite maintaining its form of international organisation. The effects of Pabloite revisionism on Trotskyism have been so destructive that we have not even formally kept a single international structure. But Trotskyism remains as a movement because its groups, parties and tendencies maintain their own organisation, independent of any other national or international organisation (Social-Democrat, Stalinist or bourgeois nationalist or petty-bourgeois nationalist), even in cases where they capitulate politically to any of those.

The crisis of the Fourth International and its degradation to the movement has caused, among other harmful effects, the existence of currents and organisations that, claiming Trotskyists, in many cases, we have lived isolated from each other for years, sometimes decades. Such is the case of the British WRP (Workers Revolutionary Party) and its related organisations in other countries on the one hand, and the IWL-FI (International Workers’ League - Fourth International) on the other. This has, in turn, provoked the existence of what we might call different “styles”, different languages, and often different conceptions of what the Fourth International is or should be. For this reason, before we enter directly into the subject of this article, our unification with the Lambertist current and the subsequent break with it, we want to broadly outline our conception of the International.

The Trotskyist conception of the International

For us, following what we believe was Trotsky’s conception and practice, the decisive, fundamental and first problem that we must consider is the construction, around a program, of the international organisation and its leadership. Trotskyism is synonymous with international organisation and leadership, as opposed to Stalinism in all its variations (Muscovite, Maoist, Castroist), social democracy, and petty-bourgeois nationalism of the Sandinista type, that neither want to nor build an international revolutionary workers’ organisation and leadership.

We believe that international organisation and leadership are a category different from and superior to any national organisation and leadership, however, large or capable they may be. Every national leadership is destined to fail if it is not an active part of the construction of an international leadership, in the same way that any leadership of a union, however, militant and revolutionary, is doomed to ruin if it does not fight for a militant and revolutionary leadership for the whole workers' movement. This is why we hold that, just as without oxygen there is no life, without international leadership and organisation there is no true Trotskyism.

The problem that leadership and international organisation are essential was, in the last analysis, what was behind Trotsky's struggle to found the Fourth International as early as 1936. Although at that moment his position was defeated by his comrades, obviously for Trotsky it was not a matter of how many or which forces could be nucleated, of their weakness or strength. For him, without international organisation and leadership, one simply could not be active and act politically in the class struggle.

“National Trotskyism”

The crisis of the Fourth International brought about by Pabloism sank into oblivion this conception for large sectors of Trotskyism. Mandel, who has always defended — and it is honest to acknowledge this — the need for a centralised International, does not see it in practice as centralised around a leadership and a program. Instead, he “constructs” an “International” which is a loose federation of national sections and international factions and tendencies, each with its own program (sometimes opposed by the vertex) and almost without discipline. That is to say, after having been an accomplice of Pablo in the dispersion of world Trotskyism, Mandel tries to keep its fragments formally united, without reversing the revisionism which had provoked the crisis.

Another sector that denied the Trotskyist conception of the International is what we call “national-Trotskyism”. Its various variants hold that the question of international leadership and organisation constitutes a kind of “maximum program” for an indefinite future, which for the moment must be kept at a declaratory level, as an expression of wishes, waiting for “the conditions” to take place. This is the view, for example, of *Lutte Ouvrière* of France. Lambert, Healy and, to some extent, the American SWP posed the problem of international leadership and organisation as an agreement between national leaderships; and even as synonymous with a national leadership. Thus, the post-1963 “International Committee” was basically the agreement between two national leaderships, that of the French OCI (*Organisation Communiste Internationaliste* – Internationalist Communist Organisation) and that of the British WRP (at that time Socialist Labour League, SLL), which exploded when, for reasons we do not have clear, the agreement was broken in 1971. The products of this rupture, the Lambertist OCRFI (Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International) and the Healyite International Committee (IC) further deepened the national-Trotskyist character, since they constituted small international groupings with “branches” of the OCI and the WRP respectively, absolutely dominated by these national parties.

The American SWP, for its part, showed its tendency to national-Trotskyism when in the early 1950s refused to establish a centralised international organisation and leadership, not only to develop orthodox Trotskyism but also to hold as a great objective the fight against Pabloite revisionism. That is, the SWP refused to nominate the International Committee, which at that time grouped the majority of world Trotskyism, as the embryo of the centralised Fourth International. Subsequently, the SWP bureaucratically liquidated the IC in 1963, by agreeing on its own to the reunification with Mandel, according to a kind of distribution of the world in the style of “Europe for Mandel and America for Americans”.

Our current

Our historical current, in contrast, tried to remain faithful to Trotsky's conception. Latin American Trotskyism, organised in the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO), fought hard for the IC to be constituted in an international leadership. Then we fought for one year, without entering the Unified Secretariat (USec), the liquidationist policy of the IC that the SWP was developing. Given the fait accompli of the 1963 reunification, we fought to see that Healy and Lambert joined in, with the aim of generating a consistent anti-revisionist current. Finally, given the alternative to enter the USec or be isolated, we chose to enter.

This was only one chapter of our struggle for an international organisation. We have always been guided by the principle of being a disciplined part of an international organisation. In that battle, which we developed for decades in a situation of overwhelming minority, we had to endure all sorts of discriminations and factional attacks, which led us to become a kind of "pariah" of the world Trotskyist movement.

We had to bear in the 1951 Congress that Pablo recognised as the official Argentine section the group of Posadas, a small group that capitulated to Peronism to the point of defending Peron's policy of supporting South Korea and imperialism against North Korea. We had to bear that at the Ninth World Congress of the USec in 1969, Mandel recognised as the official Argentine section the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), a Castroist guerrilla movement that broke with Trotskyism. And we did all of this for the same reason: we did not want to fall into national-Trotskyist isolation because we knew it would be our ruin.

The crisis of national-Trotskyism

Today there is no doubt that the Trotskyist law that condemns by definition "national-Trotskyism" to failure has been inexorably fulfilled. Both, its more subtle variant, the American SWP, as Lambert and Healy have followed a parallel path, of growing international isolation, of political capitulation to counter-revolutionary leaderships of the mass movement and of methodological and moral degeneration.

In the political-programmatic terrain, the national Trotskyism suffered, as it could not fail to happen, an absolute involution. Born as an attempt to resist Pabloite revisionism, by choosing the wrong path of taking refuge in national isolation, it ended in revisionism equal to or worse than the one it was intending to fight. The SWP ended up becoming an appendage of Castro-Stalinism. Lambert and the French OCI were transformed into a satellite of the French Social-Democracy and of its main union organisation, the CGT-*Force Ouvrière* (Workers' Force – FO), until arriving at the total capitulation to the government of Mitterrand in 1981 and, after the break with our current, to the bourgeois government of Nicaragua. Healy slipped into capitulation to the "nationalist" governments of the Arab bourgeoisies, in particular, the governments of Gaddafi, Iraq and Iran.

In the methodological terrain, in the effort to preserve the national-Trotskyist organisation "safe" from any "foreign" interference, bureaucratic methods prevailed to keep a personal control over the whole life of the organisation. Barnes, Lambert and Healy surrounded themselves with "unconditional" supporters, excluding from the leadership any leader who presented important discrepancies, and they did not hesitate to kick out from the organisation entire factions of militants who questioned the official line. Any measure was good in order to prevent the organisation from democratically debating the differences. Finally, along with bureaucratic methods, Lambert and Healy — Barnes did not — developed methods of personal destruction of the cadres and leaders who questioned them, covering them with slander and moral attacks.

In this area, Lambert and Healy were the worst that Trotskyism has produced. Mandel is a revisionist politician who wants a revisionist "International", and pushes his line with political methods. In general, his tools of struggle are not bureaucratic expulsions, and never moral attacks. Barnes expels right and left, but he does not use those vile methods either. Lambert and Healy,

representing a pure national-Trotskyism, do not hesitate to “defend” their national sect and their individual role in it. We have not followed closely their past in this dark field, but: How many “Varga cases” have there been. How many “Napurí cases”? How many “Just Cases”?

This combination of revisionism with bureaucratic methods and moral attacks provoked the organic and irreversible crisis of national-Trotskyism. Their organisations do not grow, but decrease, because of the individual but abundant defection of demoralised militants, the appearance of factions that break away or are expelled (as it is happening right now with Lambertism and the SWP) or by the plain and simple outburst of the organisation (as it has happened with Healyism).

Our short relationship with Lambertism can only be understood within this framework of the crisis of the national-Trotskyism. When we joined with it, it was already in crisis. The possibility of uniting with our dynamic and developing Bolshevik Faction was seen by Lambert as a way to overcome his own crisis. It was not on his part a principled strategy for reversing the OCI’s national-Trotskyism, but a simple survival manoeuvre. The only thing that Lambert succeeded in was postponing the outbreak of his crisis for a couple of years so that when it happened — as it actually happened — it was even deeper and more spectacular. From his capitulation to the government of Mitterrand and the split of the international organisation that united us, the Fourth International (International Committee) — FI (IC) — Lambertism practically ceased to exist as an international current. Something similar happened to Healy a few years later. The outbreak of his national-Trotskyist project, where the WRP had imposed total dominance over the IC, came with the WRP crisis since the miner’s strike of 1984-85.

The determinant: the world class struggle

It is important to complete this introduction with a final consideration. The uneasy life of Trotskyism since Trotsky’s death and its dispersal since the elevation in its leadership of Pabloite revisionism have given rise to all sorts of interpretations; from the Manicheans, who personify in some leader the origin of all evils, up to the idealists, who seek the reasons in a twisted understanding of the Marxist method.

We do not underestimate the weight of the personalities, their politics and their methodology, nor the serious consequences that can have a theoretical-political weakness. But our criterion is that the vicissitudes of our history have their deep motives in the great facts of world class struggle and politics. It is these great events, which struck on leaderships generally non-proletarian and not forged in the conduction of great revolutionary mobilisations of the working class, the ultimate explanation of our advances and setbacks, as well as of our divisions and unifications.

It is true that this does not remove even one iota of the personal responsibility of Pablo and later of Mandel for programmatic revisionism and the crisis of Trotskyism. The same can be said of Healy’s and Lambert’s responsibility with respect to the later phenomenon of national-Trotskyist revisionism. It is also true that the bureaucratic and destructive methods used by all revisionists and carried to the extreme by national Trotskyism caused ruptures and dispersion. No significant difference could ever be discussed democratically to the end. It was not possible under Pabloite revisionism which resorted to everything, even the intervention of national sections, to impose its capitulation to Stalinism. It was possible even less within national Trotskyism, where bureaucratic and destructive methods were indispensable for the “defence” or “security” of the all-powerful and infallible national leadership.

But the essence of what was discussed, or it was wanted (and it was not possible) to discuss, that is, the political content of our divisions and reunifications, was determined by the world class struggle.

Applying this criterion to our relationship with Lambertism, we can say, in very broad terms, that the rapprochement of our current with Lambertism took place on the basis of our coincidences in relation to the Nicaraguan revolution.

These coincidences allowed us to continue advancing in the development of a common program which, despite having some gaps and misconceptions, we continue to claim as principled and Trotskyist. This program was the mainstay of organisational agreements that shaped a unique international organisation, of transition towards a democratic centralist International: the FI (IC).

The split of the FI (IC) was anticipated by the divergences around another great fact of the world class struggle, the Polish revolution. And it was precipitated by a key political fact, the triumph of Mitterrand in France. The program and the policy on the face of his government originated an abyss, an opposition by the apex between our current and the one of Lambert. Finally, as Lambert prevented the democratic discussion of these differences, the total breakdown took place, which became absolutely irreversible when he added to his bureaucratic methods a despicable moral attack on an old leader who came from his own current.

CHAPTER 1

The Nicaraguan Revolution hits on Trotskyism

The preparation, outbreak and triumph of the anti-Somocista revolution in Nicaragua brought about deep differences among those of us who claim to be Trotskyists. We do not know the positions of all currents, but the fact is that Nicaragua caused the division of the USec and was at the base of the construction of the FI (IC). On the whole, the USec did not raise a policy for the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution. The United States SWP dedicated its press to attacking the Sandinistas. Mandel was silent. Only our current, at that time the Bolshevik Fraction (BF) of the Unified Secretariat raised the slogan of Victory to the FSLN! The triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution became the centre of our policy and activity at the international level. All our modest capacity for propaganda, agitation and action turned, without any sectarianism, to support that revolution to triumph, to overthrow Somoza, to deal a blow to US and world imperialism without putting ahead our political differences with its Sandinista leadership.

We had, in short, what has always been a position of principles for us: if there is a struggle between revolution and counter-revolution, the first thing is to align ourselves in the field of the revolution so that it triumphs, even if the leadership of this revolutionary struggle would claim to limit it to a national-democratic victory against imperialism and the dictatorship of its agent. All the more so if this struggle is a civil war, there is no true Trotskyist policy if one does not begin by defining that we fight on the military side of the masses against the military side of imperialism and the dictatorial regime.

From this definition alone the BF developed an implacable criticism of Sandinista politics, its lack of a program of permanent revolution, its conciliation with the bourgeoisie, in the opposition front first and the National Reconstruction Government (NRG) later, and demanded from them the taking of all power in their hands, the constitution of a government without bourgeois and the implementation of a program for extension of the revolution to all of Central America and of expropriation of imperialism and the bourgeoisie within Nicaragua.

This policy we summarised as “military support, not political support to the FSLN”. In order to make it effective, the Colombian PST, led by the BF, called for the formation of the Simón Bolívar Brigade,¹ an international detachment to actively participate in the ongoing civil war against Somoza.

¹ The sectarian left criticised the name of our Brigade, arguing that Simon Bolivar was a bourgeois character who is still being vindicated by the Latin American bourgeoisie. We keep defending that name. Simon Bolivar was the greatest hero of the Latin American revolution of the early nineteenth century against the Spanish empire, who tried in vain to build a single republic in South America. His name connected with the democratic-anti-imperialist character that assumed the beginning of the socialist revolution in Nicaragua. It also expressed the character of this socialist revolution throughout Latin America: the struggle for the Second Independence, this time of Yankee imperialism, and for the Federation of Socialist Republics of Latin America. There was also a practical political reason: our aim was to promote mass support for the anti-Somoza revolution. Given the extreme weakness of Marxism in Latin America, choosing a name that did not match the healthy nationalist anti-imperialist sentiment of the Latin American masses would have been a sectarian error, which would alienate us from that goal. The criticism of the left-wing sectarians might well have fitted Trotsky for vindicating the *Convention* and, more generally, the more democratic and popular aspects of the 1789 revolution in the program for France.

We continue to believe that the constitution of the Simón Bolívar Brigade (SBB) was a success. At its best, it had just under 1,500 registered volunteers, most of them Colombians but also Costa Ricans, Panamanians, Ecuadorians, Bolivians, Argentines and Chileans. It was financed with the contributions made by its own members, through campaigns on the population and also with important contributions of trade union organisations.

The enemies of the Brigade, above all the USec, covered it with slander: the fundamental slander was that the Brigade had been nothing more than a propaganda manoeuvre of the BF and that it had never entered combat. Nothing more false. Certainly, the SBB was blocked from entering as an autonomous column through the south front since Sandinism demanded the individual entrance of its members to the Sandinista formations: a clear attempt to prevent our politics, that is to say, our “military, not political support” to Sandinism. But no less true is that members of the SBB fought — and died — on the southern front. It is no less true that the SBB occupied the port of Bluefields, where the revolution had not yet arrived, and led it to triumph.

The expulsion of the Simón Bolívar Brigade

The SBB managed to reach Managua, the capital of Nicaragua, in the collapse of Somocism. It was received with honours, not only of the Nicaraguan people but of the own Sandinista government that, among other things, gave it the building where to work. However, a few months later, the SBB was expelled from Nicaragua by that same government, and its members turned over to the police of the bourgeois government of Panama. Miraculously, this one did not kill any, but it repressed them hard.

This fact posed before Trotskyism two decisive problems, linked but not identical — the political-programmatic and the moral. The first was to define without evasiveness whether it was for or against the construction of a Trotskyist party in Nicaragua. The second was whether it supported the expulsion of revolutionary militants — Trotskyists or not — from one country and its surrender to the bourgeois government and the police of another.

The first problem is to the essence, to the *raison d'être* of the Fourth International: it is necessary to make the anti-capitalist revolution in the capitalist countries and the anti-bureaucratic political revolution in the bureaucratic workers' states. This means that sections of the Fourth International are needed in all countries of the world.

The expulsion of the SBB raised this programmatic problem not only because its leadership and a large part of its members claimed to be Trotskyists, but because it was expelled by the Sandinista government for carrying out the Trotskyist program.

Specifically, as reported in the world press, the SBB was expelled for: 1) Organizing trade unions (about 80) through democratic meetings of workers; 2) promoting the occupation of land by dispossessed peasants; 3) promoting the organisation of popular militias; and 4) denouncing as bourgeois some members of the Government Junta.

We clarify in passing that in the first three aspects, the SBB invented nothing; simply it encouraged and raised as a program what was an objective movement of the masses and the workers: organise their unions, occupy the land and form their militias. This dynamic clashed with the policy of the Sandinistas of the government coalition with the bourgeoisie, which consisted essentially in the use of different tactics, all aimed at preventing the working class from attacking the private property of the Sandinista bourgeois allies in the government. Thus, they disarmed the militias and built a regular army firmly controlled by the bourgeois coalition government. They prevented the occupation of lands beyond those expropriated to Somocism since a complete agrarian reform would have affected the properties of allies like Violeta Chamorro and Robelo who at that time were in the government. They allowed the formation of workers' unions, but only if they were controlled by Sandinism, to prevent them from becoming tools of workers' control and, ultimately, to prevent the expropriation of the industrial bourgeoisie, also allied with the Sandinistas in government. In

brief, its policy was aimed at preventing Nicaraguan workers and peasants from expropriating the bourgeoisie allied with Sandinism in the government.

In short, the SBB was expelled for applying this Trotskyist program and denouncing to the masses that Sandinism was opposed to it because it had agreed with the bourgeoisie the integration of a coalition government. Our brigade was expelled for doing Trotskyism, not just for declaring itself Trotskyist. So much so, that the “Trotskyists” of the USec and the American SWP opened and maintained their offices in Managua without problems, because, while declaring themselves Trotskyists, they did not do Trotskyism, merely supporting more or less unconditionally Sandinism and its pacts with the bourgeoisie.

On the moral aspect of the problem: the expulsion and delivery of revolutionaries to a bourgeois police, we are not going to stop because it explains itself.

The break of the USec

The break of the USec happens basically because it supports the expulsion of the SBB from Nicaragua and its delivery to the Panamanian police. This was done by an official delegation from the USec, made up of senior leaders of its Mexican, French, Peruvian, American and Swiss sections, when, on 3 September 1979, delivered to the FSLN leadership a declaration of unconditional support for that measure. In it, after accusing SBB of “trying to separate workers from their vanguard”, “the FSLN”, it declared that “the FSLN leadership was right to demand that non-Nicaraguan members of this group... leave the country” (*Combate Socialista*, 18 October 1979).

Those who had not supported the FSLN and the revolution at the time of the struggle against Somoza, now with the FSLN in the government, condemned the SBB because it tried to dispute the leadership of the workers’ and mass movement to Sandinism to guarantee a permanent course to the Nicaraguan revolution; and they supported its expulsion and delivery to the Panamanian police.

This fact is a catalyst to the rupture of the BF with the USec, for its political-programmatic and also moral meanings.

The confrontation around the SBB was a confrontation around the program: to capitulate or not to capitulate against the petty bourgeois leaderships of the mass movement that lead triumphant revolutions or, by the positive, to construct or not sections of the Fourth International in the countries where those leaderships have taken over.

Faced with the scandal that meant the delivery of the SBB to the Panamanian police, the International Executive Committee of the USec, in a resolution, included only a timid and insufficient sentence lamenting the fact. But, along with it, the capitulation of the USec to the FSLN and the other Central American guerrilla movements was deepened, categorically prohibiting the existence in these countries of Trotskyist organisations, on the grounds that the FSLN was the proper leadership for the ongoing revolutionary process. Consequently, the Trotskyists were to enter that organisation, not by making entryism, but plainly and simply dissolving in them.

In these conditions, the World Congress of the USec was approaching. Neither Mandel nor Barnes resorted to bureaucratic measures against our current, although there were some expulsions in some sections. Moreover, Mandel and Barnes recognised the weight of our current and were willing to ensure that the World Congress elected a new international leadership composed of at least one-third of BF leaders. But we were against staying in an international organisation where opposing programs and morals coexisted. We broke with the USec because it did not revoke its position of support for the expulsion of the SBB or its decision not to authorise the existence of Trotskyist organisations in Nicaragua.

Lambertism and the Nicaraguan Revolution

In contrast to the USec, other Trotskyist currents, even without knowing or sharing the politics of the BF and the SBB, assumed an attitude that honours them in repudiation of the expulsion of the SBB. One of them was Thornett's current in England. Another was Lambertism which, in a statement of the Central Committee of the French OCI dated 2 September 1979, condemned the expulsion of SBB as an attack "against the revolutionary and anti-imperialist movement of the masses" whose intention was "to liquidate the workers' committees that have taken control of the factories... oppose the construction of unions independent of the state [and] liquidate the peasants' committees".

This principled defence of the SBB by the OCI was part of an overall position also principled given the decisive fact of the world class struggle that was the Nicaraguan revolution. Luis Favre, an important leader of OCRFI, expressed it in a work titled "Proletarian Revolution in Nicaragua" (*La Verité*, 24 October 1979). There he defined the Nicaraguan revolution as "the classic beginning of the proletarian revolution". He characterised the FSLN program as "fully inscribed in the pseudo-theory of the revolution in stages and socialism in a single country". He denounced the "political will of the FSLN to constitute... a government of coalition with the bourgeoisie... and to combat all aspirations of the masses for the constitution of a government of their own without representatives of the bourgeoisie", adding: "It is the barrier of the popular front".

Favre specified the "bourgeois" character of the NRG and argued that the FSLN sought to "rebuild the bourgeois state". To that end, he quoted literally Trotsky's transitional program: to demand the break of Sandinism with the bourgeoisie to form a workers' and peasants' government, to agitate a transitional program as the program to be adopted by that government. At the international level, Favre raised the right slogan of the "Socialist United States of Latin America". And he concluded: "Any other attitude can only lead to the defeat of the revolution, which in order to be victorious requires the construction of a revolutionary party, section of the Fourth International".

It was, of course, a programmatic agreement of principles between the BF and the Lambertism on the face of a colossal revolutionary fact as it was the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution. For the first time in many years, two Trotskyist currents, which had virtually no relations for decades, agreed, given an event of such magnitude. The two fought against the essence of revisionism: the capitulation to Stalinist or petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships who led triumphant revolutionary processes. The two fought for the construction of Trotskyism in Nicaragua, facing one of these leaderships, Sandinism. Such was the deep meaning for us of these agreements that they brought about the approximation and subsequent unity between our respective currents.

CHAPTER 2

The birth of the FI (IC)

The agreements on Nicaragua led us, therefore, to explore the possibilities of joining our forces with Lambertism in an international organisation.¹ The first step was the establishment of the Joint Committee. And the first task of this was the elaboration of the programmatic bases that would support the unified organisation. In this, we were consistent with a methodology for us of principle: for every unity, at whatever level, the program is decisive. Especially when history had already shown that it was not enough to acknowledge the Transitional Program, the first four congresses of the Communist International and the Permanent Revolution, since all the revisionist leaderships that we had suffered, from Pablo to Mandel, professed faith in these documents.

It was necessary, starting from these bases, to elaborate a program that would give answers to new phenomena that did not exist in Trotsky's life: the triumph of revolutions that expropriated the bourgeoisie and constituted workers' states under non-Bolshevik leaderships, but bureaucratic Stalinists (Mao, Tito, Ho Chi Minh, Kim Il Sung and the Red Army in Eastern Europe) or petty bourgeois nationalists (Castro). This was so since it had been these processes that had generated revisionism in our ranks, from Pablo onwards, precisely as a capitulation to those leaderships.

The program of the FI (IC)

The program, prepared by Moreno — at the request of Lambertism — was presented in the form of Theses to the World Conference that founded the FI (IC) in December 1980 and was approved by it. In the intervention that presented it, Moreno clearly defined his objectives: “first, to elaborate a clear program, a general framework to structure a solid organisation; second, to clearly differentiate ourselves from the other currents of the workers' movement, mainly from revisionism. [The Theses] are a weapon of struggle against revisionism” (*Panorama Internacional*, Year V, #16).

The Theses of the FI (IC) (*Correspondencia Internacional-La Verdad*, January 1981) effectively constituted a principled Trotskyist program, which reaffirmed the need for the construction of the Fourth International and the currency of the Transitional Program; it made a relentless denunciation of all the counter-revolutionary and opportunist leaderships, from Stalinism to Castroism and Sandinism, through social democracy and the totality of the bureaucratic, bourgeois

1 With Thornett's organisation we found it impossible to reach a minimum agreement to do something in common. This group had as a precondition to conduct a discussion on the whole history of Trotskyism and our current. They were especially obsessed with discussing a flyer that the Cordoba Province branch of our Argentine party had published many years ago. We firmly refuse to enter into this discussion of the past and demanded, instead, to discuss a political agreement and a program to act together in the present. In this we followed the method of Lenin and Trotsky. When Lenin accepted the entry into the Bolshevik Party of the Inter-Districts Committee — lead, among others, by Trotsky — he did not place as a condition the smallest discussion about old differences. So did Trotsky when he called for the founding of the Fourth International with three centrist organisations and all his attempts to reach an agreement with Nin, the leader of the Spanish POUM, even though Nin had supported the popular front. The demand to make a historical discussion a prerequisite for a programmatic agreement for common action in the current class struggle is a sectarian method, not a Trotskyist or a Leninist one.

and petty-bourgeois — guerrilla and non-guerrilla — leaderships of the mass movement, and of the governments that they constituted. It had a whole chapter devoted to the political revolution, which it described as necessary in all existing workers' states, as well as in all the workers' organisations, trade-union and political, of the capitalist world.

The Theses confirmed their character as a weapon of struggle against revisionism in its final chapter entitled "Revisionism is incompatible with Trotskyism". It defined that revisionism, "which took over the leadership of our International in 1951, is characterised by having consistently capitulated, for the last 30 years, to the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships of the mass movement; and by having abandoned our uncompromising struggle against those leaderships to build and develop our parties as the only possibility of overcoming the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the mass movement", since "revisionism is characterised by asserting... the leaderships of the mass movement — bureaucratic, Stalinist or petty bourgeois — may take a centrist course, permanently progressive, which leads them to revolutionary positions".

The anti-revisionist aim of the Theses of the FI (IC) was so categorical that they ended up specifying it in its final phrase as "allowing the Fourth International to eliminate from its ranks the revisionism that had settled in it under various variants". The program of the FI (IC) was, therefore, an authentic Trotskyist program, drawn up on the basis of the project presented by the BF, and we continue to vindicate it as such, regardless of a major omission, the problem of the popular front (which we mistakenly considered it unnecessary to develop because there was nothing to be added to Trotsky's classic position) and a misleading formulation of the united workers' front.

Correcting Serious Deviations

The development of the program allowed, among other advances, to correct two serious deviations from Lambertism: the policy of anti-imperialist united front and sectarianism against the trade unions.

Since the mid-1970s, Lambertism had argued that in the backwards countries dependent on imperialism, the "anti-imperialist united front" had to be built. This was a common front between the working class and the bourgeois and/or petty-bourgeois sectors that resisted the oppression and exploitation of imperialism. It was clearly a strategy of class collaboration, popular-frontist. Our current, without denying the possibility, necessity and even obligatoriness of common anti-imperialist actions with any social sector or political organisation prepared to fight in that field, was opposed to the construction of fronts, since this would imply the loss of the political independence of the working class and its renunciation to lead the national-popular mobilisation against imperialism.

Lambertism abandoned its position and adopted ours. Hence, the Theses defined our tactics in the backward capitalist countries as "limited" "anti-imperialist unity of action", "opposed to popular fronts and other fronts or coalitions of collaboration with the bourgeoisie", that is to say, "temporary agreements with nationalist bourgeois organisations of masses", "circumstantial and limited in time", "tactical". In short, "the great task is always to achieve the total political and organisational independence of the working class, never the formation of stable fronts with the bourgeoisie".

On the trade union question, Lambertism also stepped back from its policy of years, which consisted of not taking the existing mass trade union organisations as the obligatory place of work for the Trotskyists, but rather posing something like "red unions". In this way, they were giving up the fight against the bureaucracy for the leadership of mass organisations. The retreat of the Lambertism from this ultra-sectarian and anti-Trotskyist policy allowed the Theses to define that "any Trotskyist party must work preferentially in those trade union organisations which group most of the workers, whatever the origin and the current structure of those organisations... working inside the trade unions, whatever their origins and characteristics... is a cardinal principle of Trotskyist policy".

The FI (IC) begins to develop

The few months of organic life of the FI (IC) continued and expanded the rate of fruitful work it had since the formation of the Joint Committee in 1979, both at the level of the different national sections and in the leadership bodies. Progress was made in national unifications and in the joint development of national programs. At the meeting of the General Council in May 1981, important theoretical and political advances were also made, driven by our current and approved by Lambert, although differences and problems appeared in some subjects.

Let us briefly list some of the major discussions and resolutions.

Central America: It was clarified that the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution against Somoza opened a revolutionary stage throughout the region, “a single objective and wholistic process, a process of a workers’ revolution, against Yankee imperialism, and that tends to unification in a single state of the whole isthmus”. This was so because Central America is a “nationality atomised and divided into six countries”, unlike the rest of Latin America, with more or less well-defined nationalities. Hence, while in the rest of Latin America we continued to raise the traditional slogan of the Socialist Federation, for Central America we raised the “United Socialist States of Central America”. In addition to expressing the tendency of the objective process, this central slogan was the weapon of battle against imperialism, which sought to “prevent the objective process of revolution throughout the region from being transformed into a conscious process” and “to maintain the balkanisation of the states, it needs to balkanise the same revolutionary process”, and against Castroism and Stalinism, who had the “consciously counter-revolutionary objectives” of “first limiting and later crushing the Central American revolution” by “constraining each process within the framework of the National states imposed by the United States” (*Panorama Internacional*, Year V, #17).

Spain: The discussion about the policy in response to Tejero’s attempted coup made it possible to correct errors of the two FI (IC) organisations in that country. Basically, progress was made in characterising the post-Franco regime, assigning all its importance to the institution of the monarchy, the army and justice, which kept a key element of continuity with Francoism, albeit with deep bourgeois-democratic reforms. This reversed the wrong policy of the Spanish PST (that came from the BF) which, before the coup, had attended the manifestation in defence of the existent regime — along with the workers’ parties and also to the right of Fraga Iribarne —, as well as the ultra-leftists deviations of the Lambertist party (POSI), which rejected the Cortes (parliament) as a terrain of electoral struggle for Trotskyism. The struggle for the Republic and the right to national self-determination of Basques and Catalans as great democratic slogans against the monarchy were thus clearly brought to the fore, linking them in a transitional program with the workers’ and peasants’ government, the agrarian revolution and the Federation of Iberian Socialist Republics (*Correspondencia Internacional*, April-May 1981).

Poland: It was clarified that there existed a “dual power... institutional and generalised... between the government... of the bureaucracy and Solidarity”. That this dual power occurred not only by the grouping of the totality of the proletariat in Solidarity but also by the development of rural Solidarity. That the class struggle would open the perspective of extending the organisation among the soldiers. That the central strategic task was to consolidate the popular power embodied in Solidarity, to start building the Solidarity pickets as a first step towards the militias and to orient Solidarity towards “liquidating the government of the bureaucracy” (*Panorama Internacional*, Year V, #17).

Despite agreeing on all of the above, which were important issues, in fact on Poland, two opposing approaches appeared. The approach of the leaders of the former BF, who emphasised the perspective of workers’ insurrection against the bureaucracy, supported by workers’ power organisations — Solidarity and Soviet embryos — and the importance of winning the soldiers for that perspective, and the approach of Lambert, whose preoccupation was the founding and development in Poland of a party of social-democratic type.

Peru: With respect to this country there were very rich discussions on the program and national tactics. The POM-R (Peruvian section of Lambertism), following the Lambertist policy of the “anti-imperialist united front”, had joined the electoral front called ARI (Revolutionary Left Alliance). At the meeting of the Joint Committee of February 1980, following the general orientation of the draft Theses, which set aside this Lambertist conception, the POM-R leadership decided to withdraw from the ARI and with the Peruvian PST (which came from the BF) “agreed to engage in a common struggle against the ARI and its popular front policy” (December 1980 Resolution, *Panorama Internacional*, Year V, #16) and they formed the “Workers to Power Front” a Trotskyist front and of class independence, to which it was managed to drag the majority of the Mandelist PRT.

A very good resolution was developed between the leaderships of the POM-R and the Peruvian PST at the Foundation Conference in December 1980, which would be the basis for the elaboration of a common national program, whose axis was the political independence of the workers, the denunciation of the project of formation of United Left as a class collaboration front, and the union unity in a central independent of the state and all political parties. As a result of the Theses, the nefarious policy of the “anti-imperialist united front” had been left completely outside the program and tactics of the Peruvian organisations, whose leaders agreed in holding an internal debate, in a bulletin, on the anti-imperialist and workers’ fronts, to finish overcoming the differences.

Surprisingly, at the General Council in May, the question of the anti-imperialist united front was raised again, when the leader of the former OCRFI Favre began his speech in this regard saying that the “axis of the struggle for the united front in the colonial and semi-colonial countries goes through the struggle for the anti-imperialist united front and the self-organisation of the working class... one could say anti-imperialist united front and soviets” (*Panorama Internacional*, Year V, #17). The discussion, which was quite harsh, did not go much higher, although the public debate was opened throughout the FI (IC). Moreover, in the same month, Lambert and Moreno jointly confronted the Peruvian POM-R (which once again single-mindedly maintained the anti-imperialist united front policy) with a common principled position as set out in the FI (IC) Theses

But ultimately, as we shall see later, Lambertism had signed a program that denied the anti-imperialist united front, while disagreeing, as a simple tactical manoeuvre. The same can be said of Lambert’s performance in Peru: like any good national-Trotskyist, since the subject did not directly affect the French OCI, he had no problem in lapidating his Peruvian friends and holding a position in which he himself did not believe. Later we will see how, after the rupture of the FI (IC), Lambertism returned without problems to its original position. What we want to emphasise here is how, in the last analysis, the signing of a common program was not a question of principles but a simple tactical manoeuvre.

Democratic centralism

Along with the program, rather as part of it, there was a second point of principles for our current, a point that characterised our entire policy of struggle for the construction of the Fourth International: the need for a democratic centralist International. It would be wrong to diminish the importance of this question, since a central feature of revisionism has always been, as we have already pointed out, to oppose true international democratic centralism.

That is why we made an effort from the outset to make the FI (IC) look nothing like the federation of tendencies of Mandel, nor like the federation of national sections of the American SWP, nor like the international groupings dominated by the national-Trotskyist “mother” section and subjected to it. We strove to build an International according to the Leninist and Trotskyist criteria that prevailed in the Communist International: centralised, with a single program, with common international campaigns, with an international leadership different and superior to a federative body of national leaders, which promote at a worldwide level the same principled policy.

But at the same time, we began by recognising that in the whole Trotskyist movement — including and beginning with our own current — there was no leadership proven in the revolutionary struggle that could centralise the International in a thoroughly Leninist way. That is why we opposed — and continue to oppose — that an international leadership expel or suspend national sections, which can only be decided by an international congress that strictly complies with all statutory requirements. We are also opposed to an international leadership imposing policy and tactics on national sections, as this is contrary to Leninist methodology. We think, on the contrary, that the international leadership, while promoting a common program and strategy of struggle for the revolution and against the traitorous leaderships, to be fulfilled in international campaigns, takes part in the life of the sections only through political and methodological discussion, advising and patiently helping the maturation of national leaderships. In summary, while we claim as correct and necessary the democratic centralism that characterised the Third International of Lenin and Trotsky, we know that today, and certainly for a good period, on account of the process of leadership crisis that the Fourth International has been living for many years, we have to adapt this regime, emphasising the democratic aspect to the maximum and attenuating the centralist aspect.

But in the process of forming the FI (IC), another element was added: the new organisation was built on the real basis of a fusion of pre-existing international currents, with its own traditions, styles and languages, which necessarily imposed a transitional period, of common work, to weld the fusion. This combination of reasons led us to propose an internal regime for the FI (IC), which while leaning towards international democratic centralism had some clauses that were not specific to democratic centralism.

This particular transitional regime was reflected both in its Statutes (*Panorama Internacional*, Year V, #16) and in the composition of its governing bodies. For example, in order to take a resolution mandatory for all sections and militants, the General Council of the FI (IC) should approve it by three-quarters of the votes, unlike the Leninist democratic centralism where the simple majority is imposed. In the governing bodies, on the other hand, the open World Conference that founded the FI (IC) voted a parity representation of the two fundamental currents: ours and the Lambertists.

This transitory character towards democratic centralism was perfectly clear for the entire FI (IC). When the World Conference was convened, it was stressed: “The Joint Committee has not yet considered a centralised leadership... The Fourth International (IC), although it will be a step forward in achieving this conquest, will not be considered as such. This must be the achievement of a responsible, principled process that is essentially the result of a common experience” (*Correspondencia Internacional*, October 1980).

The programmatic Theses adopted at that Conference pointed out that the task of reconstruction or reorganisation of the Fourth International was not completed, and that one of the great tasks of the FI (IC) was “to advance in the sense of rebuilding a true democratic centralism of the Fourth International, destroyed after the crisis brought about by Pabloite revisionism in 1951”. The Statute itself, in its Preamble, pointed to the objective of “restoring the political conditions necessary for the full observance of the norms of democratic centralism at the international level”.

We emphasise this aspect so much because it would be what would lead, a few months later, to the burst of the FI (IC) as soon as political-programmatic discrepancies of great magnitude appeared.

CHAPTER 3

The programmatic-political revisionism of Lambert

We have said that the reason for the rupture of the FI (IC) consisted of the bureaucratic methods used by Lambert to prevent the discussion on the policies of the French OCI about Mitterrand. But before we enter into that subject we will dwell on the content of that discussion — what was what Lambert did not want his French organisation to discuss? It was not a trivial problem. It was the capitulation of the OCI (the strongest section of the FI (IC) alongside the Argentine PST) to a bourgeois popular front imperialist government.

This capitulation was developed in a flash almost from the day after Mitterrand's electoral triumph in May 1981. Lambert, who once upon a time had violently attacked the French Social-Democracy, came to support it blatantly as soon as it came to government. This was expressed in every field, both in the characterisation of the new government and in the political slogans and the intervention of the OCI in the class struggle. The *Draft Report* prepared by the OCI leadership to be presented to its Congress, as well as its weekly press organ, *Informations Ouvrières*, at that time, were the showcase for this capitulation.

The *Draft Report* (*Correspondencia Internacional*, November 1981) defined the Mitterrand government as “a bourgeois class-collaborationist, front-populist type”, clarified that it was not “a workers’ and peasants’ government”, and stated, “this is not our government”.

Opposite characterisations

But then a number of truly remarkable qualities were attributed to Mitterrand:

“There is an insurmountable contradiction (antagonism) between the bourgeois government of Mitterrand and the bourgeoisie”. “The government of Mitterrand enters necessarily at every step in conflict with the apparatus of the bourgeois state, with the bourgeoisie...” (*Draft Report*). “The mere existence of Francois Mitterrand's election to the presidency of the Republic and an SP-CP majority [in the National Assembly] is incompatible with the anti-democratic and reactionary institutions of the Fifth Republic” (*Informations Ouvrières*, #1019).

From this analysis, it was deduced that France was divided into two camps: the camp of the workers’ movement and the government of Mitterrand on the one hand, the camp of the bourgeoisie on the other. A division so sharp that it carried “the germ of a civil war and the bourgeoisie cannot but prepare it”. In other words, it had already begun to do so: “the great capital [is preparing] attacks of civil war”, and “Mitterrand wants to oppose” these attacks (*Draft Report*).¹

¹ These analyses of Lambert show all their ridiculousness if we apply them, for example, to Great Britain under a Labour government, let us say the government of Attlee. They would sound like this: “There is an insurmountable contradiction (antagonism) between the bourgeois government of Attlee and the bourgeoisie. The government of Attlee enters necessarily at every step in conflict with the apparatus of the bourgeois state, with the bourgeoisie. The mere existence of Attlee's election as prime minister and a Labour parliamentary majority is incompatible with the antidemocratic and reactionary institutions of the constitutional monarchy. This brings with it the germ of a civil war, which the great capital is preparing to launch, and Attlee wants to oppose those attacks.”

Faced with this characterisation of Mitterrand’s “incompatibility” with the Fifth Republic and the consequent evolution of the French situation towards a revolutionary situation, of civil war of the big bourgeoisie against Mitterrand, our current opposed a completely different analysis:

“The class collaboration content of the Mitterrand government expresses itself, above all, in its will to preserve what is essential of the institutions of the Fifth Republic” (*Correspondencia Internacional*, October 1981). Therefore, unless a powerful revolutionary wave took place — and this was neither happening nor did happen — Mitterrand’s rise to government would reinforce the deteriorating Fifth Republic, creating a bipartisan game, “defending the Fifth Republic in crisis and accepting its rules of the game, respecting the electoral alternation, as in England”. And we insisted: “It is categorical that without a ‘first wave’, strong and lasting, that unleashes the beginning of the French Revolution... the Fifth Republic, then, will survive. Surely the current government with Stalinist participation will fall and other front-populist combinations will emerge, presided over by Mitterrand... What will be inevitable is a political crisis that will throw the CP out of the government, possibly going to collaborate from the outside with the bourgeois government of the day”.

The revolutionary rise did not take place and the events remarkably confirmed our hypothesis for such a situation, completely opposed to the Lambertist prognosis that there was a civil war in the pipeline between Mitterrand and the French bourgeoisie.

The theory of the “camps”

The false characterisation of the Mitterrand government and its relations with the French bourgeoisie served Lambert to make an equally false analogy to some “classic” situations of civil or national war and to attempt to transfer them to France. Thus, the OCI compared the French situation with the Russian situation when the Kornilov uprising against Kerensky, the Spanish during the civil war, and the Chinese under the Japanese invasion. It then clarified that the Trotskyist policy consisted of being “in the front row of the Kerensky camp and in the camp of the Spanish popular-frontist government against Franco” (*Draft Report*). The aim of this analogy was to point out that the greatest danger to the working class was the big bourgeoisie and its forthcoming civil war against Mitterrand and not, of course, the Mitterrand government.

It was a matter then of using as a model a correct Trotskyist policy to take place in the military camp of the oppressed nation in the struggle against imperialism or the democratic republic against fascism, to explain the support for Mitterrand. A completely false analogy, for a double reason: first, because there was no civil war in France; second, because defining for a military camp does not imply supporting politically the bourgeois or front-populist political leadership of that military camp. To take only one such example, Lenin and Trotsky were never for Kerensky’s “camp” until Kornilov’s flesh-and-blood rebellion broke out; before and after it, they were placed in the “camp” of the working class against the Kerensky government. And when, during the rebellion, they were in the military camp of Kerensky, they never supported him politically, but they attacked and denounced him more forcefully than ever because he was incapable of fighting to the end against the coup and for having made it possible with his policy. The same could be said of Trotsky in relation to the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek and to the Spanish Republic under the governments of Azaña, Largo Caballero and Negrín.

Lambert’s “camp” method was the same, as a drop of water is to another, to the method that Pablo used at a previous time — and that Lambert fought — of predicting the third world war between imperialism and the bureaucracy as inevitable and, accordingly, opting for the “camp” of the bureaucracy, capitulating politically to it. Thirty years later, in Mitterrand’s France, Lambert adopted Pablo’s method, which caused a marked coincidence in the prognoses and politics of the OCI and the small group of Pablo’s current followers in France.

Opposing forecasts, opposing policies

Both the French OCI and Pablo's followers predicted that Mitterrand would take measures very favourable to the workers. Both argued that he would be object, because of these measures, of a ruthless attack by the big bourgeoisie. And both proposed defending the government and its "positive" measures of such attacks.

The Lambertist Draft Report said: "The OCI will support every step the Mitterrand government can take" in terms of breaking the state apparatus of the Fifth Republic, nationalising companies, separating the Church from education, the problems employment, rising prices, vocational training, and so on. Accordingly, as Stéphane Just stated in a document approved by the Political Bureau of the OCI: "We are willing to support all government resistance to the pressure and sabotage of the capitalists".

Exactly the same thing was said by Pablo's little group: "We will support all social and political measures that [Mitterrand] take that satisfy the demands of the workers". "We will unconditionally defend [the Mitterrand government] against the attacks from the right" (*Pour l'autogestion*, #1).

This policy shared by Lambert and Pablo led them both to hold that we Trotskyists should make a kind of "united front" with the bourgeois imperialist government of the popular front. Pablo defended "unity of action" with Mitterrand (*Sous le drapeau du socialisme*, 10 May 1981). Lambert disguised a similar line under the formula of "united front" with the traitorous workers' parties that were part of the government. For example, in *Informations Ouvrières* #1007, it was called to "organise the united front of the workers' organisations... against the price increases [and] the collapse of wages deliberately organised by the bosses". Instead of denouncing that the workers' misery was the fruit of the policies of the popular-frontist government and of the "workers' organisations" that made it up, Lambert called for unity with the latter and denounced only "the bosses".

Our current made an opposite forecast. We argued that the government would tend to "impose the harsh plans of hunger and unemployment of the bourgeoisie, continuing the orientation of Giscard-Barre. It will try to convince the workers that they accept it, and if it fails, it will appeal to all means (*Correspondencia Internacional*, October 1981).

Our policy was also opposite to the policy of Lambert-Pablo. The OCI never denounced Mitterrand as the main enemy of the workers' movement and argued that the main enemy was the French bourgeoisie that was outside the government. We held that, on the same day that the popular front assumed the government, it was transformed into a government of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the political struggle against the bourgeoisie went through the combat against its government of the day, the government of Mitterrand. Only an actual civil war or the serious preparation of a coup could lead us to define, circumstantially, that the worst danger to the working class was the fascist counter-revolution and not Mitterrand and, if Mitterrand faced it, to fight from the same military camp.

The bourgeois government of popular front could have or not have friction with the bourgeoisie. Lambert was of the view that it would have it to the point of civil war, and deduced that we had to defend or support the "positive" steps of Mitterrand against the bourgeois reaction. We held that there was neither going to be such major friction nor such civil war. But what was important was that, even if Lambert had been right on his prognosis, he was wrong in his policy. With friction or without friction, with civil war or without it, the true Trotskyists never support any measure of a bourgeois government, whether or not of popular front.

In this, we took inspiration in Trotsky, who rejected that revolutionists could support measures, not even in the midst of a civil war. So he noted on many occasions, for example, when he polemised with Shachtman, arguing that we should not be voting in favour of the war budget of the Spanish Republican government. With all the more reason we could not support measures of Mitterrand in France where there was neither a civil war between Mitterrand and the bourgeoisie nor was France moving towards it.

The other side of his support for the alleged positive measures of Mitterrand was Lambert's refusal to raise demands on the government and the workers' parties that were part of it to expose both before the working class. Lambert never raised the traditional Trotskyist slogan against popular frontist governments: Out with the bourgeois ministers! In fact, he did not raise that or any other slogan of power against front-populism. He never raised nor agitated before the masses a transitional program to develop their mobilisation that would face them to the popular front government. By not raising these slogans or formulating these demands, he refused to unmask the government, the SP and the CP for failing to fulfil them.

As an inevitable result, Lambert never delimited himself from or denounced the workers' parties in the government for not breaking with the bourgeoisie in order to become a true workers' and peasant's government to implement those transitional measures.

The Trade Union policy of Lambert

All this had really nauseating political and union expressions. In the trade union terrain, there was no solidarity with the workers' struggles and strikes that had a spike since the end of August 1981 and in the face of which the OCI took no position nor called to support them. The OCI did not make a focus of its policy the permanent denunciation of the treacherous leaderships of the French workers' movement, a permanent obligation that is increased a thousand-fold when these leaderships are a part, directly or through the parties they respond to, of a bourgeois government. Although the OCI made some denunciations, very sparsely, of the CGT and CFDT, it never made the least denunciation of CGT-*Force Ouvrière* (CGT-FO), whose highest leader, Bergeron, is a perfect social-patriot traitor and in whose leadership Lambert occupies a high post.

Further, Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, president of the student union (UNEF) and at that time a member of the CC of the OCI, and the whole Lambertist leadership argued that, from the assumption of Mitterrand, it had come the "time of trade unionism... of concertation". Hence, "the role of UNEF is to inform the authorities of all the demands and aspirations of the students" (*Informations Ouvrières*, #1000). Meaning that, on the face of the popular-frontist government, the role of a trade union ceased to be to mobilise the students and came to be an informant of the bourgeois government to make agreements with it.

Along with this, Lambertism maintained its traditional position that the unions should not do politics. *Informations Ouvrières* #1002 reported with satisfaction that the UNEF congress had rejected a proposal by the French Revolutionary Communist League (Mandelist) to rule in favour of an SP-CP majority in the legislative elections that succeeded the presidential election that anointed Mitterrand. The argument was that a union should not "approve the position of a political organisation" because that would "isolate it". Lambertism thus defended the same position of yellow trade unionism, to exclude politics from mass organisations, or to separate the masses from politics. A precise preventive manoeuvre so that the student union would not question the politics of the brand new President Mitterrand.

In order to finish blocking any possibility of united mobilisation of the masses against the imperialist popular-frontist government of Mitterrand, the OCI never raised the slogan of unity, in a single central or confederation, of the three centres in which the French proletariat is divided (CGT, CFDT and CGT-FO) and the independent trade unions. A traitorous omission, since this division is one of the fundamental reasons that allow the survival of the rotten regime of the Fifth Republic.

Although the apolitical nature of trade unions and the non-demand of union unity on the part of the OCI came from afar, we stress them because, from Mitterrand, trade union leaders were directly or indirectly involved in the bourgeois government. Under these types of front-populist governments, the need for union organisations to unify and take part in politics becomes more imperative than ever. It is the terrain where Trotskyism can fight more forcefully for the

independence of the working class in front of the apparatus of the bourgeois state and its popular front government.

Capitulation to imperialism

The OCI did not denounce French imperialism or its governmental expression, Mitterrand. It did not campaign for the independence of the colonies it still has, such as Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyana. On the contrary, it described the electoral triumphs of Social Democracy in these colonies as “a happy political swell” (*Informations Ouvrières*). Nor did it say a single word against the repression of the anti-colonialist fighters of Guadalupe.

The OCI did not call to eliminate the semi-colonial compacts of French imperialism with several African countries, nor did it condemn Mitterrand’s policy of maintaining them, even by arms. Nor did it fight Mitterrand for the freedom of the Breton, Corsican and French Basque nationalist prisoners.

The OCI did not denounce that Mitterrand was — and is — the most servile government to Reagan and his plans for world counter-revolution that has existed in France for a long time. It did not denounce his armaments policy nor, specifically, his policy to develop a “nuclear deterrence force of its own” directed against the Soviet Union. The OCI did not call on the working class to mobilise for the breakdown of the Atlantic Pact, of NATO and against the installation of US missiles in five European countries.

Capitulation in all grounds

In order not to expand endlessly this list of capitulations to front-populism, we will finish by pointing out that Lambertism yielded to Mitterrand in the political ground, from what has to do with the most elementary bourgeois democracy to the character of the state.

The OCI did not fight for the destruction of the bourgeois state by not demanding that government officials be appointed by the workers’ movement, be revocable by the latter, and have a salary equivalent to that of an average worker. Thus it supported in fact Mitterrand’s policy of leaving intact the state apparatus and merely replacing some of its officials with elements of the SP.

The OCI did not demand the release of prisoners from the Basque ETA and the Irish IRA who were in Mitterrand’s prisons.

The OCI did not fight Mitterrand’s policy of allowing private education, in particular, religious education, to continue. Instead of demanding the state monopoly of education and its secular character, it raised the same slogan as the SP and the Freemasonry: “Public funds for the public school, private funds for the private school”.

It was this total capitulation of Lambertism, in in the fields of the program and the slogans, and also political, economic and trade union, national and international, to the bourgeois government of the popular front headed by Mitterrand, which unleashed the crisis and the subsequent split of the FI (IC). It was the most outrageous revisionism, of a capitulation to the political leadership of the French working class even worse than those of Pablo and Mandel. They, at least, capitulated in front of treacherous leaderships of mass revolutionary movements. Lambert capitulated to the miserable electoral success of Mitterrand, without any revolutionary struggle of the working class.

Total revisionism: capitulation to the Sandinista movement

After the split of the FI (IC), the Lambertist turn to revisionism was completed with the capitulation to the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. The counterweight that had meant our

current fighting, within the FI (IC), the opportunist conception of the “anti-imperialist front”, had disappeared. The results were quick and dire.

The Mexican Lambertist organisation (*Liga Obrera Marxista* – Marxist Workers’ League) took the first step, signing the final resolution of the Forum of International Solidarity with El Salvador, held in Mexico in April 1982. The content of the meeting consisted, according to the statement of the Secretary of the Political Bureau of the Forum, Bill Zimmerman, in “supporting the Mexican government in the search for a negotiated political solution to the conflict”. A veritable blank check to the reactionary bourgeois government of López Portillo to apply its policy of demobilising the revolution in El Salvador and all of Central America.

In July 1982, the Lambertist international organisation, which had adopted the acronym FI (ICR), in its *Resolution on Central America* defined the FSLN government as “workers’ and peasants”. This was absolutely false. Sandinism had not broken politically with the bourgeoisie. Certainly, Violeta Chamorro and Robelo had left the Government Junta, by their own will, not because the Sandinistas threw them out. But their places had been occupied by Córdoba Rivas, conservative leader and member of the Supreme Court of Justice, and Arturo Cruz, a former official of the Inter-American Development Bank, who later went on to serve as ambassador to the United States. The latter would later become the great political figure of the bourgeois opposition friend of the “contras.”

In spite of all this, Lambertism, in addition to defining that bourgeois government as “workers’ and peasants”, argued that “the gap was widening... between the people of Nicaragua and the FSLN, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie and imperialism, on the other” (*Tribuna Internacional*, May 1982). Although all the data of reality indicated the opposite, the Lambertist analysis introduced in Nicaragua its celebrated “camps”. Now the FSLN government appeared in a solid unity with the Nicaraguan people, constituting the anti-imperialist “front” or “camp”, which faced the “camp” of imperialism and the bourgeoisie.

All of the above was, however, a problem of characterisation or theory. What is really serious is that, because of this characterisation or theory, Lambertism stopped making the slightest criticism of Sandinism. Today, for example, Nicaraguan workers are clamouring for workers’ control to stop the economic sabotage, the black market, capital flight, and the closure of businesses that the bourgeoisie is doing. Sandinism opposes with all its power the workers’ control. Lambertism, in order to not make the slightest criticism, is silent. Even less, it argues that, even if it were a workers’ and peasants’ government, we Trotskyists are for another type of government: the government of the working class, with its own democratically constructed and led organisations, and a Bolshevik party at its head.

Lambertist support for Sandinism is unconditional, without any criticism. In *Informations Ouvrières* #1240 (12 December 1985), Favre spoke out for “the defence... of the Nicaraguan government and revolution”. *Informations Ouvrières* #1266 (12 June 1986) announces the OCI’s attendance to a meeting with the Nicaraguan vice president, Sergio Ramírez, of the “organisations that support the struggle of the Nicaraguan people and their government against imperialism”. Nowhere is there a single difference with Sergio Ramirez. *Informations Ouvrières* #1270 (10 July 1986) reproduces an interview made by Francois Forgue, one of the top Lambertist leaders, to the president of the Nicaraguan Supreme Court. Again, not a single criticism or difference with the interviewed person.

There is nothing to criticise in the OCI attending meetings whose purpose is to defend Nicaragua against imperialist aggression. Our current has attended multiple meetings of this type and signed hundreds of statements in defence of Nicaragua. Moreover, we always insist on the necessity of making a great mass movement with that goal, where any political and trade union force that shares it can take part. Just as we did with the Simón Bolívar Brigade, we are ready to form another brigade, if Sandinism allowed us, to go to Nicaragua and fight against Yankee aggression, under the Sandinista military leadership. Such is the policy of our current, the same policy that our

Nicaraguan party, the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* [Revolutionary Workers' Party] develops.

But what we do not do, what no authentic Trotskyist can do, is to stop criticising Sandinism or recognise it as the best possible leadership for the revolution and the anti-imperialist struggle. We continue to demand that Sandinism adopt socialist measures that end with the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie, imperialism and the church within Nicaragua. We say that if these measures are not taken, the counter-revolution is being allowed to be strengthened and Nicaragua attacked by the internal front, while the Yankees mercenary “contras” attack it from the outside. We denounce that Sandinism, by not applying these measures, is a bad, terrible leadership of the ongoing war against imperialism.

The latter is what Lambertism does not do, having gone to unconditional support, without any criticism; capitulating to Sandinism. With this policy, not only are they not fighting for Nicaragua's victory over imperialism; it is also absolutely impossible to build a Trotskyist party in Nicaragua. What will be built for if there are no differences with Sandinism? Such is the matter of fact conclusion of the Lambertist capitulation: in Nicaragua, it is not necessary to construct the section of the Fourth International, in struggle against Sandinism, for the leadership of the working class and the Nicaraguan mass movement. With the Lambertist policy, the most that can be built is a support group — unconditional, not even critical — for Sandinism.

A finished revisionist conception

To explain all this capitulation, Lambertism resorted to the classic reasoning of all revisionists: “It is the action of the masses which, little by little, will lead the leaders to deepen the revolutionary process” (*Tribuna Internacional*, May 1982). Nobody can rule out, of course, that the revolutionary rise of the masses and imperialist aggression compel a wing of Sandinism to go further than it wants and establish a workers' and peasants' government. But that is not what Lambertism says, but rather that “the leaders” are going to “deepen the revolutionary process”.

That is exactly what Pablo began saying about the Stalinist bureaucracy — that, forced by the imperialist war, it was going to drive revolutions around the world. There would appear its famous centre-left wings in the communist parties, whose supposed existence would support the entryism to Stalinism for a whole historical stage. Later, Pablo extended this conception to the whole planet, specifically to all the treacherous leaderships of the mass movement. Their “left wings” stopped being counter-revolutionary to become progressive centrists. And this applied to the British “Labour” left-wing, to Mao and Tito, to the entire Bolivian MNR first and then to Lechin, and a long etcetera.

Starting from Trotsky's hypothesis, confirmed by reality in the postwar era, that treacherous leaderships could go further than what they wanted, forced by an unsolvable crisis and by the revolutionary rise of the masses, Pablo ended up saying that those leaderships or sectors of them, pressured by the mass movement would cease to be counter-revolutionary. Pablo thus ignored the role of counter-revolutionary leaderships who, for class reasons, never cease to be so, not even when, forced by circumstances, they are at the head of a triumphant revolutionary process. In that case, the next day they use the power, conquered thanks to the masses, to betray more strongly than ever the permanent course of the revolution.

Precisely at this point resides the difference between orthodox Trotskyism and Pabloite revisionism. The former defends and supports with all its strength the revolutionary processes of the masses and their conquests. This is why we unconditionally defend a bureaucratic workers' state or an oppressed nation if they are attacked by imperialism or a bureaucratic union if it is attacked by the bosses or the police. But we never politically support the traitorous bureaucratic or nationalist bourgeois leadership of that revolutionary process, that workers' state, or that oppressed nation or union. We continue denouncing it to the masses as an enemy of the revolution. Pabloism, in

contrast, politically supports these treacherous leaderships, which it characterises as ceasing to be counter-revolutionary to become progressive centrists.

When Lambertism began to assert that the Sandinista leaders were going to be “taken” “by the action of the masses” to “deepen the revolutionary process”, they were repeating, almost verbatim, Pablo’s conception. They thus entered into the definition of revisionism which they themselves had voted in the Theses of the FI (IC), which characterised revisionism as that which “asserts the leaderships of the mass movement — bureaucratic, Stalinist or petty bourgeois — can adopt a centrist course that would lead them to objectively revolutionary positions”.

The final proof that it is a complete and finished revisionist conception is that Lambertism generalises it to the whole world. In Argentina, the Lambertists ended up entering the remnants of the Peronist Youth that had once been part of the Montoneros, and who were always and still are the “left” political agents of the bourgeois leadership of Peronism. In Brazil, the Lambertists are part of the wing of the *Partido de los Trabajadores* [Workers Party] led by Lula, the “leftist” bureaucrat formed by the Vatican to prevent the young, inexperienced and intensely combative Brazilian working class from promoting a revolutionary leadership.

But perhaps it is in France where once more Lambertist revisionism is most acutely present, starting from the party project they launched at the end of 1985, the MPPT. Between 30 November and 1 December last year, the Constitutive Congress of the MPPT (*Mouvement pour un Parti des Travailleurs* — Movement for a Workers’ Party) was held in Paris. According to *Informations Ouvrières*, which ceased to be the publication of the PCI to become the MPPT’s “free tribune”, the MPPT “brings together workers and militants of various origins (militants or former militants of the SP and CP, militants of the PCI, trade unionists) given the fact that “the leaders of the SP and the FCP have violated the mandate that the people entrusted to them in 1981, by refusing to vote the laws favourable to the workers, which has left the working class and related popular layers without genuine political representation”. That is why it proposed “the reconstruction of an authentic, independent workers’ party, faithful to the opinions of the workers”.

This could be a tactical step forward. Perhaps Lambert finally decided to attack hard French imperialism and its socialist government, its supporters of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, and attempt to group the workers who are breaking with their illusions in the great traitorous parties in a revolutionary perspective. Then, the MPPT project could be a wrong or correct but respectable tactic, because it would be at the service of the socialist revolution in France. But it is not at all like that.

Let us see what the program of this new party is. To belong to the MPPT there is “no other conditions than the agreement on the following four points” (*Informations Ouvrières*, 5 December 1985):

“1. Recognition of the class struggle: the class struggle and the political struggle on class grounds constitute the permanent line of action as well as the central axis that should favour the reconstruction of a workers’ unity based on the broadest democracy.

“2. Secular state and secular schooling.

“3. Liquidation of the anti-democratic institutions of the Fifth Republic and establishment of a true democracy in which the people themselves will define its form and content.

“4. Reciprocal independence between political parties and trade union organisations.”

As we see, there is not a single point in favour of the workers’ revolution and socialism, nor any point against French imperialism and the defence of the right to self-determination of its colonies and semicolonies, a fundamental programmatic point, according to the Third International, to know whether a workers’ party of an imperialist country is revolutionary or not. This betrayal, which in the program is implicit, by omission, by not mentioning the fight against French imperialism as a fundamental point of the revolutionary program for France, becomes explicit, placing openly and from its foundation the MPPT in a role of support of imperialist France in the “Political Report for

the Constitutive Congress of the MMPT” adopted in September 1985 and published in *Informations Ouvrières* #1228 (19 September 1985). There it says:

“What do the workers need...?”

“Democracy, that is, the respect for the republican principles of the sovereignty of the national representation... of unity of the Republic...”

Lambertism raises the “unity” of French imperialism and its colonies, the “overseas departments”. “Unity of the Republic” in France means domination by French imperialism of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, New Caledonia and other peoples. Instead of calling on the French workers to fight against their own imperialism and to ally themselves with the peoples subjugated by French imperialism to free themselves, Lambert calls them to close ranks in defence of the “unity” and “democracy” of the imperialist Republic.

In conclusion, from a programmatic-political point of view, Lambertism no longer has anything to do with the construction of the Fourth International, since it has founded a new reformist-liberal-imperialist party, which does not even claim socialism and self-determination of the colonies from “its” imperialism.

CHAPTER 4

The split of the FI (IC): Bureaucratic methods and moral attacks

The differences between our current and Lambertism over politics in France were not, as we have seen, of small import. They were about a programmatic question — the Trotskyist strategy towards the popular front governments. It was not something new to our movement. On the contrary, that strategy had been well established since our foundational program, the Transitional Program, pointed to the Popular Fronts as the main enemy of the working class and the socialist revolution.

However, even this abysmal difference did not necessarily have to lead to a bitter factional struggle that would culminate in the rupture. A profound — and probably hard — discussion on the subject carried to the end with full democracy for all sections and militants of the FI (IC) could have served to rectify the Lambertist orientation, or to convince us that our criticisms were exaggerated. It could also have happened that, after that discussion had been exhausted, we could conclude that we had divergent programs that could not coexist in the framework of a common organisation and that it was best to separate ourselves in fraternal terms and leave to the class struggle and the application in it of our respective programs the definitive word and the possibility of a new convergence.

Unfortunately, as it has always happened in our international movement since Pabloism, this discussion was not made. It could not be done because Lambertism resorted, corrected and increased, to the bureaucratic methods of Pabloism to prevent it. It began by trying to prevent the discussion; it continued by expelling the dissidents in the French OCI and in other sections that it led; it culminated in a raging moral attack on one of the FI (IC) highest leaders and founder of the OCRFI, Ricardo Napurí. These non-workers', non-revolutionary methods, typical to all revisionisms, were taken to the extreme by their national-Trotskyist factions. Lambert's methods were absolutely identical to those of Healy.

The deep reason for the rupture of the FI (IC) was those methods, which prevented the democratic discussion of existing differences. The history of the rupture of the FI (IC) is, therefore, the history of four months of struggle by our current for that discussion to be made; and the history of the manoeuvres without methodological or moral principles of Lambert to prevent it.

Manoeuvres to prevent the discussion

As the positions of the French OCI about Mitterrand became known, reactions occurred in different sections of FI (IC). In August, the debate was already open. The issue was discussed at the congress of the Italian LSR and at the leaderships of several Latin American parties, including the Argentine PST and the Colombian PST, both coming from the former BF. In all cases were present representatives of Lambertism, who could report and counter-report without any limitation.

But the debate began to be blocked from its beginning in some sections with Lambertist leaderships, while it was absolutely silenced in the French OCI. To give just one example, the

Central Committee of the Spanish POSI decided, on the initiative of the leader of the French OCI Stéphane Just, “not to take into consideration” a letter that Moreno had sent — invited to that meeting and unable to attend. The mere fact of having sent the letter was described as “a violation of democratic centralism”. Without entering here into the peculiar type of democratic centralism that transitionally the FI (IC) had, we emphasise that for Lambert a leader cannot send a controversial letter to a CC to which he was invited to attend to discuss but could not travel to.

Even more serious was the attempt by Lambertism to prevent the French OCI rank and file from discussing the problem, with the OCI Congress being convened for December of that year. Lambert wanted that this congress ratify, without opposition and without serious discussion, his policy of support to Mitterrand. Still less did he accept, in spite of his stated agreement that the discussion be made public, that this public discussion should reach France. This was demonstrated when he delayed with different excuses issue #13 of *Correspondencia Internacional*, the official public organ of the FI (IC), which included an article by Moreno — written at Lambert’s request — with his criticism of the orientation of the French OCI. Finally, when the magazine was printed, the OCI took an unusual resolution: to prohibit the public sale, outside the framework of the OCI, of the official public organ of the International.

Also, all kinds of obstacles were placed to the international discussion. Grossly in violation of article 9 of the FI (IC) Statutes, which established that the Executive Committee was responsible for ensuring “the driving of the international political discussion and takes all necessary measures to this end”; Lambertism systematically refused that the Executive Committee fulfil this function. In order to delay the discussion as much as possible, he insisted that only the General Council could implement the international discussion and delayed endlessly the date of its convening.

To all these manoeuvres, our current responded with a serious and constant effort so that the whole FI (IC) could discuss democratically the problem. In different meetings of the Executive Committee we presented proposals whose general line was as follows:

- That the Executive Committee immediately open the international public discussion and convene the General Council to set a date for a World Conference, with six or seven months of prior discussion.

- That this discussion be mandatory in all sections, which should hold extraordinary congresses or conferences during the last month prior to the World Conference. The French OCI was advised that a resolute vote on the subject under discussion be held at a congress or conference of the same type, in other words, to do the same as the other sections.

- That the defence of the positions be made aloud by delegations of the two conflicting positions, in all the bodies — of leadership and rank and file — of all sections, during the six or seven months of pre-World Conference discussion.

- That, given the existing fractional climate, a moral and control commission and of organisation of the debate and the World Conference, be designated by agreement, accepted and recognised by all.

- That during the discussion period no disciplinary sanctions should be applied to any militant who expressed ideological, political or methodological differences with his or her leadership. (Later, when the expulsions by Lambertism began, the requirement of reincorporation of the sanctioned was included.)

Of all these points, Lambertism only accepted public discussion and to convene the World Conference. To all the other points a categorical No! This refusal to implement a democratic discussion throughout the FI (IC) and particularly in the French OCI was what led to the rupture.

The excuse that Lambert used to formalise the division was a note from the Argentine PST that reported that it had decided to open an office in France and requested 1,000 copies of *Correspondencia Internacional* #13 to sell them publicly. That blew it all up. The Lambertist manoeuvre to prevent the dissemination of our positions in France by prohibiting the distribution

of the official public organ of the FI (IC) was exposed. Lambert decreed, then, that this request of the Argentine PST amounted to a “self-excision” and declared us “outside” the Executive Committee.

Lambert, like every national-Trotskyist, invented an international democratic centralism to suit his needs to “defend” — or, as Healy would say, take care of the “security” — of his “mother party”, the French OCI, its national leadership and himself as “*primus inter pares*”. To do so, he cavalierly ignored the Statutes of the FI (IC) that he himself had voted. The Statutes established that the only body that could impose on the Argentine PST or any other section a mandatory resolution to do or not to do something, was the General Council by three-quarters of the votes.

Despite everything, our current continued searching for ways that the FI (IC) did not divide and the discussion could be made. With that intention, Moreno, in a letter to the joint meeting of the Executive Committees of OSI and CS of Brazil and all sections of the FI (IC) (*Correspondencia Internacional*, November 1981), pledged to “abandon this Project [of opening an office of the Argentine PST in Paris] if the EC is reconstructed..., the immediate opening of the international discussion is accepted... with the right to take part in the discussion of the OCI or any other section..., any kind of sanctions were banned and those who had been expelled from the French OCI were immediately reincorporated. The letter concluded by saying:

“I want to discuss the politics of the OCI policy in the face of the Mitterrand government in its cells, to convince the organisation and its leadership that they are deeply wrong. That is all. That is all I ask. In that I am uncompromising. I do not accept being restricted or that any militant or leader of the OCI be restricted on that sacred right. If we are granted the rights I claim in this letter, everything can be arranged.”

But nothing was fixed. Lambert was not willing to open his organisation to a discussion that questioned his popular-frontist political strategy and, with it, the bureaucratic method that he imposed to defend it.

In view of the fact that the division of the FI (IC) was a fact, we made the greatest efforts for this to be made in a principled way and in a climate as fraternal as possible. The result of these efforts was the protocol signed on 17 November 1981 by Lambert and Andrés Romero, of the Argentine PST (*Estrategia Socialista*, January 1982). It stated that “the joint form of the General Council does not exist anymore”, it was proposed to “set up a liaison committee” to continue the discussion and the objective of “maintaining fraternal relations” was specified. In that spirit, a commitment was made that neither side would use the acronyms of FI (IC) or the name *Correspondencia Internacional* for their publications.

Before the ink from the protocol was dry, Lambert violated it. Eleven days after its signature, in Informations Ouvrières (28 November 1981) appeared the information that the “General Council of the FI (IC)” had gathered, which had convened the “World Conference of the FI (IC)”. No fraternal separation: Lambert had decided that his current, which was a minority in the FI (IC) should try to keep the name of the international organisation. We, despite being a majority, fulfilled our commitment. We have never used the name of FI (IC) or *Correspondencia Internacional*.

The expulsions

In the midst of this process, Lambert began the witch-hunt inside the French OCI, which later spread to other sections led by Lambertists. On 24 October, a national conference of the OCI cadres was held convened to “begin the international discussion”. In its proceedings, which could not be recorded because of Lambert’s express opposition, he announced that a serious fascist-Stalinist provocation against the OCI had been discovered, involving members of the OCI who came from our current. He announced that the expulsions had begun. And he reaffirmed that all those who thought that the policy of the OCI against Mitterrand was revisionist would be expelled.

This announcement was put into practice by means of an internal document entitled “Note from the leaders of the OCI to all sector managers”. This document seems a carbon copy of Healy’s

delusions about “security and the Fourth International”. It begins by saying that the French CP wants to destroy the OCI. Then, to explain that there is no democratic centralism for the party’s enemies, he invents a hypothetical Trotskyist who participates in meetings with the fascist group Direct Action. For such an individual, there is no democratic centralism: “there is only one attitude: Out!”

Next, the document states the purpose of such a preface: if an OCI member says in an internal meeting that the OCI is revisionist, “there is no place in the OCI. Out!” Here Lambert went further than Healy himself. This, at least, sought or forged facts of reality to condemn Hansen as an agent of the FBI or the GPU; Lambert directly establishes the crime of opinion. If a militant claims that his organisation’s policy is revisionist he must be treated like a Stalinist or a friend of the fascists: “Out!” It was the method of the Stalinist amalgams. For Stalin, every opponent was a Nazi or imperialist agent. Anyone who opposed Lambert was, by definition, the same as a Stalinist or a fascist. And so the expulsions began.

In order not to be repetitive, we will mention only, for its “classic” character, the expulsion of Streik. The OCI Central Committee threw him out of his party, accusing him of doing “a work dislocating of the organisation” and that, because of his “discussions”, he had moved away young workers from the OCI. As it turns out, Streik had not broken the discipline of the OCI or publicly defended positions opposed to the officers. He was expelled for discussing.

Streik’s cell, when informed of the expulsion, voted against it. The Central Committee of the OCI solved the problem by expelling the five comrades of that cell who had voted against Streik’s expulsion. They were expelled for voting differently to what the leadership wanted.

In addition to their practical, immediate goal of preventing discussion, these expulsions also sought to destroy the victims. That is why they were mixed with analogies or insinuations — “Stalinist”, “fascists” — against the revolutionary morals of the opponents.

The split of Cambadélis

Lambert’s bureaucratic methods seem to have followed their ascending course after the rupture of FI (IC). *Le Monde* on 18 April 1986 reported on the resignation of the PCI (new name of the French OCI) of seven senior leaders: one from the Political Bureau, one from the control committee and five from the Central Committee, headed by our already known Cambadélis, one of the top five leaders of the PCI. According to them, they are followed by about 500 militants. They have formed an organisation that is called Socialist Convergence and which seems to march towards a close relationship or directly the entrance to the SP.

We do not know the ins and outs of this split, in which there seem to have been no expulsions, but a timely mass resignation. But *Le Monde* on 10 May 1986 quotes a document approved by the Central Committee of the PCI dated 26 April, according to which Cambadélis would have constituted a “secret faction camouflaging all [its] positions [and] voting on all reports and Political resolutions”.

In *Informations Ouvrières* #1261 appears a full page article signed by Jean-Pierre Raffi, which makes a violent criticism to the positions of Cambadélis among them the one that maintains that the government of Mitterrand is equivalent to the “questioning of the Bonapartist form of the institutions of the bourgeois state”. Raffi replies that Mitterrand never questioned these institutions, but rather set about “establishing... the legal institutional framework to allow the Mitterrand-Chirac government to ‘discipline the working class’”. Later, Raffi accuses Cambadélis of proposing to “defend, as Mitterrand himself does, the reactionary Constitution”. Raffi ends his article: “*Bon voyage, Cambadélis*”.

Obviously, there has been a shift to the left of Lambertism in relation to Mitterrand, at least in words. But this turn is absolutely bureaucratic. Does Cambadélis not say exactly what Lambert

used to say? Had not Lambert argued that Mitterrand was “incompatible with the antidemocratic and reactionary institutions of the Fifth Republic”?

A non-bureaucratic leadership would have begun by self-criticising its capitulation to Mitterrand, which led to the rupture of the FI (IC), regretting that this capitulation had encouraged a position like that of Cambadélis and, as responsible for that disaster, asking Cambadélis and his group not to break with the PCI and guaranteeing for it all the internal democracy to review together the enormous errors of the past and the present. Lambertism, however, attacks Cambadélis as a dishonest secret faction, seems to rejoice that it has split and dismissed it with a cynical “*Bon voyage*”.

Anything but recognising that this “good trip” of Cambadélis takes place because of the political path to which Lambert pushed him.

The moral attacks: Napurí and Just

We have already seen that, along with the expulsions, Lambert attacked the opposition’s revolutionary morality. This facet of the Lambertist method, the moral attacks, would bloom repugnantly against Ricardo Napurí.

Ricardo Napurí is an old revolutionary leader, founder of OCRFI, secretary general for 10 years of its Peruvian section, POM-R, and senator by FOCEP. Napurí was the pride of OCRFI, its highest public figure.

Napurí had already had differences with Lambert, before the FI (IC) arose, about the meaning of the popular assemblies in Peru and, above all, against the insane demand by the OCI that the POM-R leapt from 100 to 2,500 militants in one year. A new difference emerged when, already within the FI (IC), the unification between the POM-R and the PST (Peruvian section of the former BF) was discussed. On that occasion, Lambert and Moreno presented a common position, urging the unification, which Napurí opposed because he considered that the prior discussion that had been established in a special protocol had not been carried out. But that difference was treated quite differently by Moreno and Lambert. For Moreno, the fact that such a difference existed with Napurí did not mean that he had ceased to be a revolutionary. Lambert accused him verbally of “police provocateur” and “agent of the bourgeoisie”.

When the crisis of the FI (IC) was transferred to the interior of the POM-R, Napurí resigned from his party and, together with the best union leaders of the POM-R, declared his decision to unify with the Peruvian PST, led by our current. The Political Bureau of the POM-R, in a statement dated 4 December 1981 and made public in the newspaper *Marcha* (Peru, 8 December 1981), accused Napurí of “a betrayal”, of “a traitorous desertion”, of having become an “element” that threatened to “corrupt” the POM-R “under the material pressure of the bourgeois state, in particular parliament”. Specifically, the POM-R leadership accused Napurí of not having delivered to the POM-R the corresponding money from his senator diet. Napurí was a thief.

Our current responded to such a moral attack on an old revolutionary leader demanding that a moral tribunal be constituted to judge Napurí. The tribunal was constituted, composed of anti-imperialist and left-wing, trade union, political and cultural personalities, unsuspected of sympathising with our current. To such an extent was a genuine and impartial moral tribunal that several POM-R leaders went to testify before it, recognising it in fact.

The ruling of the court was that Napurí had not committed any action that put in doubt his worker and revolutionary morality. Lambert’s slanderous method had been exposed.

After the rupture of the FI (IC), Lambert continued with the system of moral attacks. Less than three years later, it was the turn of his life comrade, his “second” in the OCI, Stéphane Just. Stéphane Just was an electrician, a union leader, leader of the French Trotskyist organisation since the late 1940s, a fighter against Pabloite revisionism since 1951. But he also committed a “sin” — he did not vote as Lambert wanted him to vote, and thus became a Stalinist provocateur.

It all began with the expulsion of a militant, Mélusine, by the XXVIII Congress of the PCI, reported in a press release dated 23 April 1984. Mélusine was accused of having “falsified by means of quotations the speeches of comrades”. Then it was noted that “the methods of falsification belong to the arsenal of Stalinism”. And again with the method of the Stalinist amalgamation: If Mélusine misquotes other comrades, and Stalinism falsified quotations, one needs to treat Mélusine as a Stalinist: Out!

Then, the Congress reported that Just voted against the expulsion of Mélusine calling it “a sanction to political differences”. But Congress “believes that any solidarity with Mélusine... is incompatible with membership in the PCI”. That is why the Congress “has demanded Comrade Just to abandon [his] position and [his] vote”. And, “since Comrade Just refused” to do this, Congress “considers that those who refuse to vote the expulsion resolution of the counterfeiter provocateur Mélusine would place themselves outside the party”.

This shameful document ends with a harangue against “Stalinist provocations”.

Here the amalgams and the persecution become delirium. Congress demands a militant to change his position and his vote! We seem to see Stalin demanding the famous “self-criticism”! And it expels one of its founders and highest leaders, with decades of Trotskyist trajectory, for refusing to do it!

It is already clear that Lambert has no scruples about rubbishing the name and revolutionary honour of comrades who, whether wrong or not, have dedicated their whole lives to the revolution and to the International. It is enough that they manifest differences with him so that, just like Healy, he feels that “his” national-Trotskyist sect is threatened; that it is necessary to “defend” it, to bring it “security”. And the best way to do this is to grossly slander, to try to destroy its “enemies” by hitting them in the only thing a true revolutionary has in this world: his own track record, his revolutionary morality, which is something much more valuable than his political successes or mistakes.

To the national-Trotskyism of Healy and Lambert, that moral capital, which is not only individual but a legacy for the world workers’ and revolutionary movement, does not matter at all. They do not hesitate to try to destroy it for the sake of their miserable and small personal ambitions, through the worst infamies. Healy accused Hansen of being an agent of the FBI and the CIA. We do not know how many similar villainies he has committed, but there must be many. Lambert accused Varga, the Hungarian fighter against the bureaucracy and his tanks, of being a double-agent of the CIA and GPU. He accused Altamira and his comrades, who (mistaken or not) militated and died under the terrible South American dictatorships, of being Pinochet’s agents. He accused Napuri of being a thief. He accused Just of being a Stalinist provocateur.

Our moral trajectory

Our trajectory is opposed to the one of Lambertism as far as the revolutionary moral of the revolutionary militants and leaders is concerned. We have never used moral issues to attack political opponents.

A good example was the case of comrade Camilo González, of the leadership of the Colombian PST, of the former BF; and of the FI (IC). This comrade, who spoke out in favour of the Lambertist positions, was left out of his party by explicitly refusing to abide by its statutes and discipline. Along with this, some of his friends sent us complaints in the sense that there would be a campaign against him. Our response to this situation was exactly the opposite of Lambert’s. A document was made public, in which we lamented that Camilo had marginalised himself from the PST and declared that we still considered him a great leader, with an irreproachable revolutionary morality.¹

¹ After the break with Moreno and his current, the political course of Camilo González went to the right, until ending up reneging on the socialist revolution. In 1990-1992 he was Health Minister of the ultra-reactionary bourgeois government of Virgilio Barco in Colombia. (Editor)

The case of Camilo is only a milestone of a whole trajectory of our current in which we never resorted to the liquidationist and destructive method of moral attacks in the Lambertist style. Another milestone, of which we feel doubly proud, is to have consistently defended Hansen from the filth of Healy, and with more strength than ever from the moment we broke politically with Hansen.

This trajectory gives us sufficient moral authority to plant the cross on the tomb of a Lambertism absolutely degenerated.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

The evolution of Lambertism since the rupture of FI (IC) is, unfortunately, the one we have described. Its turn to revisionism, to the popular front in France, to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, to the Lulaist clericalism in Brazil, is complete. It seems that nothing remains of that organisation which, with all its national-Trotskyist and sectarian vices, had the merit of being a champion of the anti-revisionist struggle within the world Trotskyist movement.

It also seems that nothing remains of that organisation that suffered the worst of the isolations for having resisted submitting itself to the Stalinist methods of the historical head of revisionism, Pablo. It now uses those same methods to a qualitatively higher degree than Pabloism itself.

Almost nothing remains, finally, of an organisation that was among the most powerful national parties of our movement. It goes from crisis to crisis. With Just, a minority sector of militants and cadres broke away. But it is not a break that can be underestimated — Just was one of the pillars of the construction and leadership of the OCI and its international current. With Cambadélis another sector of militants and leaders breaks, debilitating qualitatively French Lambertism where it was stronger: the student union.

But the most important crisis, much worse than the crisis of the French Lambertist party, is the crisis of its international current. We can say that it has been reduced to rubble. Although this crisis as an international current is determined by the crisis of the French organisation, as inevitably occurs when national-Trotskyism is concerned, its catalyst was in this process that we have described of the relations of Lambertism with our current.

The decisive importance of the program and the organisational methods

Revisionism has created in the ranks of those of us who claim to be of Trotskyism a cynical, petty bourgeois attitude to the problem of the program. For decades, it became standard practice to swear by the Transitional Program, whose essence is that a political revolution must be carried out against the bureaucracy, to follow on without the slightest scruple to apply a different policy: from the entryism for long years to the Stalinist parties of Pablo, to reneging the political revolution in Cuba or to say that Sandinism is a revolutionary leadership. The program was thus reduced to a useless piece of paper. You could sign anything and do the opposite.

The same could be said of agreements in the field of organisation and methods. It could make a profession of faith in democratic centralism and then fall into the most aberrant bureaucratic methods. On the whole, the programmatic and organisational question was taken in a non-principled, but opportunistic, way: as a manoeuvring ground to strengthen positions of leaders, national sections or international factions.

Our current fought and fights relentlessly against this behaviour. We attach the utmost seriousness and importance to everything we sign: from the smallest agreement with another

organisation to apply a trade union tactic, to the program and the statutes of the international organisation we are building. We firmly believe that the pillars of any International are its program and statutes, and the most unconditional respect for them. We also believe that the one who signs a programmatic and/or organisational agreement to not fulfil it, in the long run, loses; and the one who fulfils it, in the long run, wins.

That was precisely what happened to Lambertism. It signed as a manoeuvre, did not fulfil what it signed and was plunged into the worst crisis. The opposite occurred with our current — we signed up convinced of what we signed, we kept strictly within the programmatic and statutory framework of the FI (IC) and, precisely because of that, we left that experience greatly strengthened. In other words, the IWL-FI emerged from this, a different international grouping, superior to what the BF was.

Our advances

In the political-programmatic terrain, from May to June 1981, that is to say, as soon as Mitterrand took over and the capitulation of the French OCI began, there emerged a healthy, homogeneous, simultaneous and immediate reaction of the national leaders of the different parties which came from the BF. They went out to fight against the capitulation. As a result of this struggle, we had an enrichment not foreseen in the theoretical and political discussion of a key issue for the world socialist revolution, which is the issue of popular fronts.

In the terrain of methods, there was also a homogeneous and principled reaction in defence of our conceptions on the organisational question and internal democracy. From the different national parties and groups emerged criticism and challenges to the bureaucratic methodology of Lambertism. That battle took place within the framework of the maximum respect on the part of all the leaders to the organisms and statutes of the FI (IC). The same as for our leaders who were members of the EC. Throughout the entire period of discussion, in the sections led by our current no one was expelled. On the contrary, both our criticisms and the official documents of the OCI were widely reproduced and distributed, and those who supported the Lambertist position were able to defend it with all the democratic guarantees at all levels, of leadership and rank and file, of those parties.

The result of this principled behaviour in the programmatic and methodological field meant that the IWL-FI, founded in January 1982, is both qualitatively and programmatically superior to its previous components, in particular to the former BF. Lambertism lost its two most important Latin American leaders, Napurí and Alberto Franceschi (leader and member of the Venezuelan parliament), who founded the IWL-FI together with our historical current, to set up a new international leadership, of which they are a part.

This new leadership and organisation capitalised on the advances of the struggle against Lambertist revisionism and continued to make progress on issues such as the workers', anti-imperialist and revolutionary fronts, the political revolution and the methods of organisation, as well as the orientation towards national sections. The IWL-FI stood thus as the only current of the world Trotskyist movement that not only is not in crisis but has a healthy political dynamic and increasing insertion in the working class and its struggles in more than 20 countries, while the USec is debating in a chronic crisis, Healyism is dead and Lambertism entered into agony.

Secondarily, the legacy of the FI (IC) served to reveal the Lambertist unknown quantity and remove an obstacle to the construction of the Fourth International. The majority of the components of the FI (IC) forces continue today in the IWL-FI. This is not the Fourth International the workers of the world need. It has no mass influence in any country, although it is in a position to fight for it in a few. But it is a step forward in the fight against revisionism, of whatever sign, for the construction of Trotskyist revolutionary parties in all the countries of the world and for the construction of a Fourth International authentically Trotskyist. §