



Nahuel Moreno

Letter to the CC
of the Spanish POSI

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Letter to the CC of the Spanish POSI

Bogota, Tuesday 13 October 1981

Dear Comrades,

Through the comrades of the PST (A) that are on the Executive Committee of the Fourth International (International Committee), I received last Thursday, four days ago, the invitation to attend your Central Committee, which will be held this weekend.

Accordingly, this letter was written in just four days. Its length is because I was preparing four documents, one almost finished, about the history of the opportunistic and revolutionary positions towards the popular-frontist governments. The other three were a personal letter to Comrade Pierre [Lambert], and two documents for the OCI (U), one criticising their political practice, mainly the articles and editorials of *Informations Ouvrières*, and the other analysing the theoretical and political documents written by Pierre and Stephan [Just] for the congress. This explains how I could write this letter in such a short time, incorporating whole pieces of my drafts.

Therefore, I want to clarify that you should consider it only as an “oral” intervention in a meeting between leaders. With this statement I mean that this letter has all the vices of oral interventions: it was prepared on the run, schematically and without being able to substantiate all quotes and assertions. I have always believed that a meeting of leaders is a team for work and elaboration, in which the leaders have to contribute the doubts and hypotheses. That is the advantage of oral interventions and of this letter, which not only has the defects of such interventions, but also its virtues. The discussion that you carry out will be very useful for me to change some or all my hypotheses and opinions. Based on the discussion I will decide whether, with a little more time, I write a letter to the members and supporters of the OCI (U) and of the entire Fourth International (International Committee), which I will request be published in the journals of our sections. Until I do so, this letter is provisional and I do not recognise it as my finished thought.

It is quite possible that your Central Committee will come to have great importance, because of the situation in our Fourth International (International Committee). It is no secret to any of our leaders that in our International organisation a very tough political discussion has started. This situation is a consequence of the fact that the comrades of the Abroad Committee of the PST (A) we believe, for several months now, that the politics of the OCI (U) is opportunistic. It is worth clarifying that we have discussed this with as many leaders of our sections we have come across, starting especially with the leadership of the Fourth International (International Committee), where we have been starkly posing this problem since last July. We bear the responsibility, which we assume, of being the initiators of this discussion. But, if it is true that the French OCI (U) is conducting an opportunist policy, then it is logically the real cause of the problems that arise.

What is certain is that the leaders of the two parties that are the foundation of the Fourth International (International Committee), whose agreement allowed us to move quickly towards the structuring of this leadership and this organisation we are all proud of, today are confronted. It is an exaggeration about the PST (A) because important sectors of its home leadership do not share our positions.

This strong dissension is a fact we cannot ignore. At best, we can regret it, but as Marxists, we must record the fact and face it to find a solution. Today, immediately, it is not about to say that the OCI or the PST (A) are right, but, essentially, to ensure a wide, long and deep discussion in an atmosphere of camaraderie, which will allow us to define the phenomena and, if necessary, to rectify either the OCI policy or our accusations. In short, your meeting, for all these reasons, will be useful for you and for the leadership of the Fourth International (International Committee).

CHAPTER I

Some basic, elementary, principles of the revolutionary workers' movement that the OCI (U) does not apply

The capitulation to the Mitterrand government has led the leadership of the OCI (U) to throw overboard the basic principles of the beginnings of revolutionary workers' movement, when Proudhonists, anarchists and Marxists were together. By this, we mean that these principles neither were nor are exclusive of Marxism but of all revolutionaries, including of every progressive activist.

With the presence of Comrades Pierre and Stephan in the Central Committee, you will be able to quickly and directly confirm whether what we say is true, or if they are delusions of an incorrigible ultra-leftist and sectarian. To do this, the leadership of POSI [Internationalist Socialist Workers Party] has to bring the collection of *Informations Ouvrières*, so that, at every point of our proposal Comrades Pierre and Stephan can substantiate their answers to the following questions: Are the principles raised by Moreno real? Is it correct what he says when he asserts that you do not campaign or call to fight for these elementary principles? From these two questions several replies may arise, but all very easy to answer — if we agree on the first, the second is answered with facts.

I hope that not only you ask them, but that Comrades Pierre and Stephan, with the fraternal approach that characterises them, answer them. My greatest wish is that they manage to demonstrate, in the heat of the discussion, that I'm wrong, that I have not read thoroughly the OCI (U) press, and that I'm making a unilateral interpretation of the principles and facts. If this is so, I will have no difficulty in changing my characterisations. But it is also possible that the answer to those two simple and categorical questions show that I am right, and to bring you back to defend the most elementary principles of the revolutionary workers' movement. When we say "complete abandonment of the most elementary principles..." we are referring not to the mere mention, in two or three lost phrases in some issues of the newspaper, of the most elementary tasks, but the permanent campaign and systematic agitation in all issues of the slogans and general principles common to the entire history of the workers' movement.

Following, we will enumerate those slogans of general principles, the policy of every revolutionary regarding them, and the attitude of the OCI (U) about them.

1. The release of ETA and IRA prisoners locked in the prisons of Mitterrand

One of the main reasons for our break with the USec, which was supported by the OCI (U) and the OCRFI [Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International], was the fact that the USec and its sections did not fight for the release of Trotskyists prisoners in Nicaragua first and Panama later. Not even the fact that Mandel has done a manoeuvre, issuing a resolution of the IEC that they were against the jailing of Trotskyists, left satisfied either the former Bolshevik Faction or the former OCRFI. At that time, we denounced Mandel for not carrying out a strong campaign for the release of the prisoners and of denunciation against the Nicaraguan and Panamanian governments. We insist that it is a question of principle for the Trotskyist movement

the class and revolutionary solidarity with any revolutionist prisoner, and even more so when it comes to Trotskyists.

This principle applies not only against the USec but also, as every principle, much more to the OCI (U), which has always made its defence a matter of honour.

I do not know whether the comrades of the CC of the POSI have knowledge of what we and the FI (IC) know perfectly well, and that is public knowledge in France. According to *Le Monde*, on 10 July 1981, the Appellate Court of Pau refused on 8 July the extradition of six Spanish Basques charged with possession of explosives. One of them was released, on the grounds that there was no crime committed, to be again placed under house arrest on 13 August. To this it must be added the fact that the same Chamber has agreed to extradite three ETA prisoners. On 7 August, the same Chamber refused the extradition of Basque militant Eneko Alegria, on the grounds that his crimes, although of common law, “are not extremely serious”. In spite of this, Alegria would remain in prison to appear on 3 September before the court of Bayonne, with other Basque separatists accused of possession of weapons (*Le Monde*, 9 October 1981).

We do not know how many ETA militants are prisoners in the jails of Mitterrand, but these facts show that, as a minimum, they are more than a dozen. But let’s suppose they are only three or four. Number one duty of any organisation considered revolutionary is to fight for the immediate release of these ETA militants and to condemn the government that keeps them in prison and refuses to incorporate their freedom in the new amnesty law. Because the duty of every revolutionary militant or organisation is to fight so that any victim of political persecution — whatever his crime might be and above all if it was fighting against a government that oppresses its people — remain free on entering France. This is a great tradition of the epoch of bourgeois democratic revolutions and the right to asylum.

But although we do not know the number of ETA prisoners in French jails, we do know what policy the OCI (U) has had about it: it has not lifted a finger, it has not written a single line, it has not said even a word, nor has it dedicated a single editorial to condemn the government of Mitterrand for keeping ETA members in prison. The OCI (U) has systematically refused to start a campaign for the release of the same. This abandonment of the principles is compounded because there are also prisoners of the IRA. All we have read in the OCI’s newspaper regarding the prisoners was inspired by the following fact: on 18 July, the Interior Minister granted an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* where he said the government would not allow the extradition of the persecuted Spanish Basques, clarifying also, in cryptic fashion, that the own government of Mitterrand would repress them. “Soon I will go to Madrid to meet with the Spanish Interior Minister, I will explain what we do, but extradition is not possible” (see *Le Monde* of 21 July 1981). In other words, they will not deliver the Basques for Spain to represses them, but the Mitterrand government itself will repress them.

Only then, for the first time, the OCI (U) remembers that there are ETA prisoners, but to support the Interior Minister against attacks by Giscard and the bourgeois press for having said they would not allow extradition. The only time it deals this issue, the OCI (U) raises the slogan: No to the extradition of Basque militants! And nothing else, i.e.: the same slogan as the Minister of Interior! (*Informations Ouvrières* #1010).

The comrades of the Central Committee of the POSI have a tradition that should fill them with pride — they have unconditionally defended the imprisoned militants of ETA and have campaigned for their immediate release. This experience, this intransigent policy, should lead you to demand from Comrades Pierre and Stephan the immediate change of this policy of silence on the face of ETA militants imprisoned in the jails of Mitterrand. In addition, this Central Committee must demand from its sister organisation in France to initiate a public campaign against the villainous Mitterrand government and its policy of keeping them imprisoned.

But leaving aside this request, I think the Central Committee will not refuse to pose the usual questions to the comrades of the OCI (U) present: Is it a matter of principles to fight for the immediate release of the IRA and ETA prisoners, condemning the current counter-revolutionary

French government that keeps them in prison? And the second question, even more simple and categorical: Where did the OCI (U) publish a word — let alone a campaign, a slogan, a task or a call, but just a word — to point out that there are ETA and IRA prisoners in the jails of Mitterrand, and the need to mobilise for the government to release them?

2. The militant repudiation to the plans of Mitterrand to repress the ETA

On 5 July, Cheysson, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Mitterrand, made statements to *Le Monde* specifying what would be the official government policy regarding the ETA and its members. With total clarity, he said: “We know perfectly well that terrorism represents a serious, perhaps fatal, threat to Spanish democracy, by itself and by the understandable reactions that may cause in the Spanish military. We are as determined as the Spaniards to fight against terrorism. Our commitment is categorical: no foreign terrorist, Spanish today, perhaps of other nationalities tomorrow, will find refuge in France. But we must act through our own means, through our own justice, police and information service. We must mobilise in Basque territory. So Basque terrorists have no illusions, the fact we oppose the extradition of some terrorists does not mean we will be lenient with them...” We must recognise the frankness and lack of subterfuge of the Mitterrand government regarding ETA — they plan to do exactly the same thing that Juan Carlos does, and out of respect for, among other reasons, the Spanish army. In short, they say they are “as resolute as the Spaniards to fight terrorism”; yes, they plan to repress the ETA within France and not to give the extradition so as not to lose face.

What did say the OCI (U) and Comrades Lambert and Stephan, who both have defended the ETA and its militants imprisoned or threatened with being violently repressed by the Spanish government, now that they are being attacked not by the government of King Juan Carlos, but by the government of Mitterrand? Exactly the same thing they have said about the ETA prisoners Mitterrand has in its jails — absolutely nothing, a silence of cemetery in the face of this monstrous plan by the Mitterrand government.

We look forward to the response that Comrades Pierre and Stephan will give the two questions that I strongly request from the comrades of the Central Committee of the POSI to ask them: Is it a matter of principles or not to fight the plans of violent repression by bourgeois governments, whether or not popular-frontist, against foreign fighters entering their own country? Where does the OCI (U) oppose and call to confront through mobilisation and struggle the policy of the Mitterrand government to repress the ETA with full violence?

3. The denunciation to the united front Mitterrand – Calvo Sotelo against ETA

We repudiated the counter-revolutionary agreement for the persecution of the Simon Bolivar Brigade, formed by the governments of Nicaragua and Panama. We made it a matter of revolutionary honour and principle, repudiating the USec for its silence on the matter. Something very similar is happening now in relation to ETA by the Spanish and French governments. Since the Mitterrand government assumed office the ties between this and the government of Calvo Sotelo have strengthened, and it is being discussed in secret how best to coordinate the repression of ETA. Calvo Sotelo, for example, in an interview with *Le Monde* on 2 July, said: “I do not need to stress that the extraditions we have requested and on which the French judiciary has spoken favourably also represent for us a question of ethics and principles”. And the statement by Mitterrand to *Diario 16*, on 25 September 1981, leaves no doubt: “France has said that there will be no extradition, but neither will I lend a hand to anyone who destabilises the Spanish democracy, admirably defended by their leaders and politicians”.

Informations Ouvrières and the OCI (U) have not deigned to make the slightest statement against these counter-revolutionary negotiations between the two governments to repress the ETA. We insist we do not have knowledge of any denunciation, of any word or call to fight this counter-

revolutionary approach. Once again the usual questions are raised: Is it a matter of principles or not to fight the counter-revolutionary agreements of the bourgeois governments to repress foreign revolutionists? The current negotiations between the governments of Mitterrand and Calvo Sotelo to collaborate in the repression of the ETA, are they counter-revolutionary or not? And if they are counter-revolutionary, do we need to repudiate them? And if we have to repudiate them, where did *Informations Ouvrières* and OCI (U) do it?

4. For the immediate freedom of the Breton, Basque and Corsican fighters and that Mitterrand keeps imprisoned

If it is a sacred principle of Trotskyism to fight for the freedom of foreign worker militants, classist militants, revolutionary militants and Trotskyist militants persecuted or imprisoned within the country. Fighting for the freedom of political prisoners in your own country is an obligation and a principle equally or more important than the previous one. That is, those who are silent and do not defend the political prisoners of the reactionary government cannot be considered revolutionists. According to the draft amnesty bill, in France there were nationalist Breton, Basque and Corsican militants prisoners. That law, in one of its sections, reads as follows, according to comments in *Le Monde* 2 on June: “The amnesty will be complete unless there has been death or serious injury, attempted murder or injury with firearms against the security forces”. It is clear that in fact there will be no amnesty against any nationalist or political revolutionary accused of threatening state security, i.e. the Breton, Basque and Corsican nationalists will remain prisoners. In addition, it is also very likely there will be Basque prisoners for helping ETA. What we are sure of is the existence of Corsican nationalist prisoners, as evidenced by the statement by Edmund Simeoni (president of the Union of the Corsican People) in *Le Monde* on 11 August which publicly calls for the “release of all political prisoners” before opening the dialogue with the government. The OCI (U) has not taken notice of this press release by Simeoni, as has also failed to support his demand for the immediate release of militant Corsicans prisoners.

Logically, such a regressive, such a reactionary measure of the Mitterrand government, a measure that resolves to keep in jail political prisoners of different nationalities who have attacked the state, was not worth even the slightest criticism by *Informations Ouvrières*, or the leadership of the OCI (U). Neither was the worker’s movement called to repudiate it or did the OCI (U) call to mobilise to fight it. And neither did the OCI (U) raise the slogan of full amnesty for all those accused of threatening state security who have political reasons. Mitterrand did it and this was enough. Silence and tacit approval. The OCI (U) knows no other policy than to keep silent and accept everything that Mitterrand does.

Despite being boring and repetitive, I beg of you to ask the essential questions to Comrades Pierre and Stephan: Is it a matter of principle or not to fight for the freedom of all those who threaten for political reasons the safety of any bourgeois state? Is it a matter of principle or not to defend all political prisoners, even if they have hurt or attacked agents of the bourgeois order? If it is indeed a matter of principle, why has the leadership of the OCI (U) not denounced that the amnesty law resolved to continue keeping imprisoned the Bretons, Basques and Corsicans who threatened state security or against agents of the public forces? Why doesn’t the OCI (U) hold a campaign for the release of these prisoners? Why doesn’t the OCI (U) publicise the press release by Simeoni and support his request for immediate release of the Corsican prisoners?

But here we are referring to prisoners who had been arrested by Giscard. Let’s see what happens with those arrested by Mitterrand.

5. The fight against Mitterrand’s repression of the colonial fighters

A principle as sacred as all previous ones is the struggle to prevent the imperialist bourgeois governments —popular-frontist or not — of the colonies repressing the nationalist fighters.

This principle is of great importance at the present time, if it is true what the Armed Group for the Liberation of Guadeloupe reported in a statement, in which it repudiated the government of Mitterrand: "... taking some of its members before the colonial courts, it is perpetuating the repressive practices of the former regime" (*Le Monde*, 23 September).

The OCI (U) has not even taken notice of this denunciation. And, as always, it has nothing to say about nationalist militants imprisoned by the government of Mitterrand, which judges them before the colonial courts.

Once again the usual questions prevail. Is it or is it not a sacred principle of Trotskyism to fight against the repression and the imprisonment of the nationalist fighters of the colonial peoples perpetrated by the imperialist government? Is it not a clear case of repression what Mitterrand does when he imprisons members of the Armed Group for the Liberation of Guadeloupe? And if it is a case of repression of an imperialist government against nationalist colonial fighters, is it not incumbent on the OCI (U) and *Informations Ouvrières* to begin a frontal battle against it, fighting for the immediate release of these prisoners?

6. Class solidarity with the workers' struggles and strikes

I have to apologise to the Comrades of the Central Committee of the POSI and your guests, for having to repeat or remind you that solidarity with our class, with its struggles, is practically the most sacred principle. For a class-activist it is a matter of principle, in every struggle the workers' movement carries out — whatever the leadership it may have and whatever the program it may adopt —, to support it, to have solidarity. Any workers' struggle, like any civil war or any war between states, demands from us a categorical pronouncement in favour or against that struggle. Many times we are openly against a strike, for instance during strikes of white workers to prevent black workers or workers of any other colour from working. Then the revolutionary party openly calls to break the strike, for being racist. And there may be other strikes made by workers but with a reactionary nature, as when some sectors of the Russian rail workers after the taking of power by the Bolshevik party, who made strikes against the workers' revolution. Then, the revolutionary party is against it and thus proclaims it to the four winds. But these are exceptions that prove the rule: in principle, a workers' activist defends and supports any strike or mobilisation of the working class.

For Trotsky, having the ear attuned to the movements and concerns of the working class is essential to equip ourselves with a political line.

We do all these considerations because if you look at the elapsed time since the end of the summer holidays and the month of September, we find that there is growing concern in the French working class and some beginnings of strikes and movements of some importance, like those which took place two or three months before the big strike with factory occupations in 1936. And according to *Le Monde* on 27 August, 100 workers of the factory France stopped on 25 August traffic on the private railway in the industrial area of the company, to protest against threats of closure of the same.

On 24 August, 100 activists of the CGT and the CFDT imposed on the SNIAS factory of Saint-Nazaire, the "wild" reintegration of seven delegates dismissed in December 1979 after a struggle of three months for wages and jobs. The workers expect, thereafter, a political decision to legalise their situation, because the amnesty law does not provide for reintegration in similar situations. (*Le Monde*, 26 August 1981). On 17 August, in the state tobacco factory SEITA in Chateauroux, strikes per shifts began, to discuss the modalities of implementation and compensation for partial unemployment.

The SEITA factory is the state-owned company for tobacco and matches. On 21 August the strikes per shifts were completed and on the 25 the dispute ended (*Le Monde*, 25 August 1981).

There is a strong union pressure in the RATP [*Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens* – Autonomous Operator of Parisian Transports]. The autonomous union announces that it will react with a strike if the wage situation is not improved. It adds, as FO [*Force Ouvrière* - Workers Force] had done before, “the purchasing power of the 36,000 company employees is significantly threatened in the absence of a wage contract”. The CGT, meanwhile “asks immediate measures before the opening of negotiations in September” (*Le Monde*, 23/24 August 1981).

During the month of September, a strike took place at the Gare de l’Est, one of the main railway stations in Paris, for work safety problems, which succeeds on the 23.

In two of the workshops of the company Renault, the largest metallurgical company in France, strikes have broken out against working conditions (for example, for the reduction of speed of the production line) and against the suppression of jobs. The bosses, in most of the workshops of Renault, have even decreed days of suspension of work (on 5 and 6 October to “adapt production to the market”). On *Le Monde* of 25 September, there is a detailed report of the conflict and the intervention of the CGT in it.

Workers at the Paris-Saint-Lazare station threatened to go on strike because of the overload of work in the new winter schedule (*Le Monde*, 26 September 1981).

To conclude, in August the residents of two homes of immigrant workers in Paris went on strike to protest the rising rents (*Le Monde*, 22 August 1981).

The OCI (U) only comments on the strike that took place in August of the airport workers, who rejected the propositions of their leadership. In *Informations Ouvrières* #1009 and #1013 the strike is supported and comments are made. Even a diary of the dispute is published. Other than this, we have not seen they give any significance or take any position with respect to the various disputes that took place. In this case, the principle of principles is that at least we comment whether we are for or against, if we are in solidarity if we are to do something or nothing about these strikes. What we cannot do is to keep silent especially when these strikes are against state companies and, therefore, allow us to denounce the government and put it between a rock and a hard place, denouncing the fact that the government is the only one who can fix them immediately.

And, as always, the questions: is it of principle, in general terms, to support the working class — whether it is wrong or not — when it comes into conflict against the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeois government? Is it of principle, at least, to comment on the disputes of the working class and to adopt positions about these disputes to defend the workers before all the people? And, if so, why doesn’t the OCI (U) comment, and call for solidarity with the strikes and disputes? And if it is against them, why doesn’t the OCI (U) call to break the strikes which, exceptionally, may be counter-revolutionary?

7. The expropriation without compensation of Church property, including its schools

I did not know whether to title this point as I did or to call it: the most ruthless struggle to sweep away the influence of the Catholic Church, the most gigantic counter-revolutionary apparatus created by the exploiters in the history of mankind.

I say this because the revolutionists have traditionally raised the most intransigent fight against the church, in the ideological field and of its action; we have always proposed, in Spain and in countries where the church is powerful, to take away from them the schools and any property that allows them to fulfil their counter-revolutionary role. The only means we can leave to them is the cult, respecting the religious beliefs of workers, without stopping for a single day to fight, propagate and defend atheism, and combating religion, but in the realm of ideological propaganda. As for the material means, we are for the expropriation of all church property. It is similar to what we do to face the monarchy. We are consistent anti-monarchists in England or

Belgium, as Trotsky explained to us. They are institutions that at any given time can be filled with fascistic and Bonapartist content.

The church is not going to be filled with this content; it is already full. For centuries and centuries, it has been learning and teaching how to crush revolutions or how to divert them. It is the most terrible ideological apparatus of the exploiters. According to a report in issue 1002 of *Informations Ouvrières*, hundreds of thousands of families now receive education in Catholic schools, forced to go there by the closing of 4000 schools under Giscard. The issue of Catholic schools is today a real problem, of importance. To address this problem, the OCI (U) has raised an identical slogan, in fact, to that of Freemasonry and the Socialist Party: “Public funds to public schools, private funds to private schools”. We do not want to dwell on the educational policy of *Informations Ouvrières* because we already will refer to it elsewhere in the letter. But we want to explain what for us a position of principle is: the confrontation and struggle to expropriate all church property; without payment, including its schools.

In *Informations Ouvrières* #1000, it is explained more or less extensively the OCI’s conception, program and orientation towards the Catholic Church, in the article “Teaching: where to find the means”. It says: “The Catholic citizens have the right to allow their children to be inculcated with the same pedagogical authority about the laws of gravity, of Newton and the ascension of Christ, the experiment of Archimedes and Christ walking on water, the achievements of biology and the raising of Lazarus, the discoveries of Galileo and the truths of the Inquisition. It is up to them. But it is not something for the secular school and its budget, paid for by taxpayers (...). We say this with the greatest respect for the beliefs of each one. The denominational education, jealous of its ‘own character’ will be delivered to the generosity of the faithful, as it happens with any private organisation, that lives of their contributions”.

We confess, comrades of the Central Committee of POSI, we give this quote ashamed. And we do it forced because we believe it is the theoretical justification of the slogan we quoted above, and which is the linchpin of the OCI (U) policy for the church. But that a Trotskyist newspaper, as a theoretical-political argument, uses what I quoted, an argument that was already behind the times late last century and typical of the bourgeois liberals, Freemasons, agnostics and secularists, we feel embarrassed on behalf of the revolutionary workers’ movement.

You Comrades, for being part of a Spanish Trotskyist party, know better than I that this has nothing to do with us: neither the slogan nor the argument. As any bourgeois liberal reasoning, it does not start from the institutions, or from the class struggle, but from the “Catholic citizens”. Then, following the entire individualist bourgeois theory, Catholic citizens have the right to organise themselves in clubs, churches, and these organisations have the right to life, and the bourgeois state and the government, to respect that right. This is the line of reasoning and the program of the OCI (U) regarding this problem. Just like any liberal from last or this century, as Mr Mitterrand, for the OCI (U) the church is very similar to a philatelic club; the philatelic citizens have the right “to be inculcated with the same pedagogical authority about Newton’s laws”. And that philately is the healthiest activity in the world. Please, comrades: The church is not an organisation of mistaken citizens who believe in Christ’s ascension and that he walks on water. The church is not a free casual, voluntary grouping of individuals with a number of quirks in the head. It is a gigantic counter-revolutionary apparatus, built during 2000 years by different exploiters, starting with the slave owners, continuing with the feudal lords, and ending with the capitalists and large current monopolistic trusts to help the exploitation of the slave, the serves of the glebe and the modern proletarian. With the approach of the OCI (U), military citizens are entitled to inculcate their children with the same authority “the laws of gravity of Newton” and that there is nothing greater in the world than military discipline and respect for army generals.

It is what Mitterrand says, but not what we should say. A true Marxist would say: We are very respectful of the beliefs of the Catholic citizens, but unfortunately those beliefs are manipulated and inculcated by the most terrible counter-revolutionary apparatus known in history, which is the Catholic Church. All we have to do against the beliefs of the citizens is to ideologically combat

the false beliefs that lead them to accept exploitation and to be handled by the church. But against the action of the church and against the material means they have to carry out the educational, social, trade union, counter-revolutionary action, we will lead a relentless struggle to take away those means. Out of respect for the beliefs of the Catholic workers — and it is no coincidence that the OCI (U) speaks of “citizens” and not of workers — we accept the private action of worship by the workers, but without accepting the bureaucracy, without accepting that the priests do not work. In other words, we will allow the same priests, after their working hours, to exercise their worship and we will not make any persecution while they do not take a single further step in the sense of encroaching on economic, educational, political and social activities. Therefore, we are for the expropriation without compensation of everything the church owns, and fundamentally their schools. We do this because we are not facing “Catholic citizens” or their convictions, but a counter-revolutionary institution. That is, the OCI (U) should raise the slogan of expropriation of all private schools, and mainly the Catholic schools. Not to raise this slogan is a real betrayal, no just directly to Trotskyism, but to the revolutionary workers’ movement that has been raising this line since the last century.

Moreover, it is not true that “denominational education... will be delivered to the generosity of the faithful, as with any private organisation, who lives of their contributions”. For us, school is not a “private organisation” but a public one; and denominational religious instruction is not a product of the generosity of the faithful, or lives from their contributions. It is all false; the church can give free education as it does in many Third World countries, because it lives of the exploitation, of the surplus value of the working class, what they are given by big business, the big bourgeoisie, the alms of the exploiters, and not from the generosity of the faithful workers but the generosity of their faithful capitalists. And that generosity stems from the surplus value, i.e. the profits of those capitalist faithful. So everything is false in the OCI (U) position, neither is the Church an organisation of Catholic citizens of volunteer type; and if it were, we can get a group of Catholics organised to get an abortion clinic, if they agree with abortion, and let us see whether the clinic is authorised by the church. No, Catholic schools belong to the Catholic Church and not to the Catholic citizens. Bourgeois law applies; just as the factory does not belong to the citizens who work in it but belongs to the bosses, Catholic schools do not belong to the “Catholic citizens” but to the church.

Education must not be private, but a social function; an education centre controlled by the working class will not allow the teaching of fables as the ascension of Christ and the resurrection of Lazarus.

We denounce the OCI (U) for hiding before the French masses the character of the church and for not repudiating the activities of the church, including education, which is not in the service of demonstrating Christ’s ascension, his walking on water and Lazarus resurrection, but in the service of consciously spreading exploitation. Covering up the church as the OCI (U) does is a crime against Marxism and against the world working class.

CHAPTER II

OCI (U) does not face up to the tcounter-revolution

Nowadays, at a world-wide and country scale, counter-revolution and revolution are faced. The global, regional and national counter-revolution has fluid communicating vessels, close relations.

The revolution also has them. The Portuguese revolution shook Europe. What is happening today in France affect the course of Europe and the world. The Vietnamese revolution shocked the world and weakened US imperialism and the bureaucracy.

Trotskyism elevates to conscious this global and national revolutionary process of communicating vessels. Hence, it not only supports the revolutionary processes but, as the other side of the same phenomenon, faces without respite and with hatred the counter-revolutionary plans and institutions, in order to defend the revolution.

Since Mitterrand assumed office, this is not the policy of the OCI (U). Let's look at four examples to see if we are right.

1. The confrontation to the international counter-revolutionary pacts of Mitterrand

One of the great theoretical and political merits of the OCI (U) was its insistence in repudiating the counter-revolutionary pacts of the bureaucracy and imperialism. Quite rightly it has regarded as a matter of principle repudiating the pacts of Yalta and Potsdam, as all others which have been made in this post-war period. Whoever does not repudiate them commits a double crime. The first crime is not to fight the own government as part of the pact. Second, as a result of the above, it facilitates the development of the world counter-revolution because, in fact, it does not defend the world revolution. In the case of the Atlantic Pact and NATO, whoever does not repudiate them is not only facilitating the attack of the global counter-revolution but neither does he defend the USSR because those pacts not only go against the world revolution but also against the European workers' states and the USSR.

The Mitterrand government has insisted that is closer than any other French government to the Atlantic Pact, NATO and the current Reagan plan. In an official statement, the defence minister said that "there is in the world two new men: Reagan and Mitterrand. Reagan, of whom many legends are told, will be a great statesman. He is surrounded by a remarkable team. Between the two men, who have nothing in common in ideological plans, there is an understanding greater than what is believed". The own Mitterrand ratified this increasingly close counter-revolutionary relationship with US imperialism by stating: "France is a good ally of the United States... We have common interests that are not at the mercy of circumstantial events".

With regard to the Atlantic Alliance and NATO, the Mitterrand government has been also categorical. His Minister of Foreign Affairs stated: "Our policy is based firstly on the Atlantic Alliance. In this, we are fully supportive". And the same Minister, on 5 July, on his return from the US, said about NATO and the Atlantic Alliance: "We are the best allies of the United States". "The Atlantic Alliance is a fundamental element of the agreement; look at Paris and Washington,

and our way of defence. The Socialists, we insist on the values... that form the basis of the Atlantic Alliance”.

And referring to NATO, Mitterrand stated that “the strict reciprocal obligations of NATO members are poorly defined by France, the strategic doctrine is lacking”. “In the debate between those who already want to create the supranational political institutions that NATO requires to act in concert, and those who wish to implement the mechanisms that lead gradually to the creation of these institutions”, “Mitterrand is located, for less than one year, on the first side”, says *Le Monde*. That is, Mitterrand is the champion of the total unity of NATO to fight the worker’s states and the European and world revolution.

When the United States government announced the installation of US missiles in Europe, which resulted in one of the largest popular demonstrations in the Federal Republic of Germany, Mitterrand’s Minister of Foreign Affairs was categorical: “France entirely approves the decision of its Atlantic allies of installing US Penning missiles and long-range missiles”. Both *Le Monde* and *The Economist* agree on their comments on this attitude of the Mitterrand government. *Le Monde* says that “Giscard had never been in favour of the deployment of US missiles in Europe”, and continuously clarifying that in the two existing positions “among European leaders (counter-negotiations with the USSR on missile deployment) the position of Mitterrand-Cheysson, generally agrees with NATO: Pershing missile deployment in the same proportion as the USSR”. And the British weekly stated on 13 June that the Mitterrand government “has expressed open support to the installation of US missiles in five European countries (which Giscard never did)”.

Faced with all these facts and the counter-revolutionary statements by the Mitterrand government, the attendance at the Ottawa conference where it was planned along with Reagan the world counter-revolution (including the development of the arms race to go against the workers’ revolution and workers’ states), through the strengthening of the Atlantic pact and NATO. What does the OCI (U) tell us? What policy, what slogans, what tasks, what campaigns does it have and does it propose to the mass movement?

The only thing we have found is a mere and timid question, not a positive phrase, in an article dedicated to the attack by Reagan’s aircraft to those of Libya. And it is: “Is it possible today to start the way towards the break with the bourgeoisie in France without questioning the anti-people alliances: Atlantic Pact, NATO, and Warsaw Pact?” This with an aggravating factor: it asks whether it is possible today to the start way towards the break with the bourgeoisie in France. What does this mean? Does it mean that Mitterrand began the way for the break with the bourgeoisie? Mitterrand is a servant of the bourgeoisie and a servant until now unconditional. No fact is really going against the bourgeoisie.

The language and politics of the OCI (U) should be clear, unequivocal. They should have been of permanent denunciation instead of what it was. Every time the government took steps or made statements in favour of the Reagan plan, we should have denounced the Mitterrand government in each issue of the newspaper as what it is, one of the most servile agents of the world counter-revolution. We should have called on every page of the newspaper to the French working class to fight against the counter-revolutionary foreign policy this front-populist government, mortal enemy of the achievements of the October revolution and the workers’ revolution in the world, which is arming itself to the teeth and collaborates to the arms race of Yankee imperialism to confront the USSR and the workers of Europe and the world. We should have called in every *Informations Ouvrières* to mobilise the working class for the breaking of the Atlantic Pact, NATO and mainly for the immediate, concrete problem, to fight the installation of the Yankee missiles in five European countries. None of this has done the OCI (U) or *Informations Ouvrières* to date.

As always, comrades of the Central Committee, I urge you to pose these questions to Pierre and Stephan, but more, I think it is time that you ask these questions of yourselves: Is it or is it not a policy of principles the systematic denunciation and the fight against the counter-revolutionary plans of French imperialism with US imperialism? Is it or is it not a policy of principle to call the workers’ movement to break the Atlantic Pact and NATO? Is it a policy of principle at this time

to call a colossal mobilisation against the installation of Yankee missiles in Europe? Is it a policy of principle to denounce the front-populist government for all these measures of support to the counter-revolutionary plans of US imperialism? And the definitive question, if everything is of principles, where did the OCI (U) made campaign and systematic denunciation and call to fight against the international counter-revolutionary policy of Mitterrand?

2. The fight against the arms race plans of Mitterrand

The Government of Mitterrand has left no doubt about what is its policy regarding this problem of the arms race. This government has insisted it has no plan to change anything that Gaullism has done in this area. Prime Minister Mauroy said that “the imperatives of defence are those that should be part of the permanence in government action...”. *Le Monde* commented on the general policy of the government of Mitterrand saying “the first leftist government under the V Republic takes charge of the choice of General de Gaulle on nuclear deterrence...”. And the same Minister said that “France — thanks to the extraordinary play by General de Gaulle, to be in the Atlantic Alliance without being in its integrated military structure, and possessing a nuclear deterrent force itself — is less threatened by neutralism than any other country in the Europe of NATO”.

During his visit to the submarine base of Île Longue, Mitterrand stated he made the decision to begin construction of the new nuclear submarine, which would be added to the existing fleet of six by 1980. *Le Monde*, on 15 September 1981, stated that the Prime Minister undertook to develop nuclear weapons. And the same personality announced that it will be “developed the nuclear deterrent force” and that “studies and research in long range armaments” will continue.

The government, unashamedly, has already given its estimates for the defence budget. These estimates show that Mitterrand is in the Reagan line of increasing such budget. And, as if this were not enough, the government informed on 13 August that “it provides for compensation to embargoed arm manufacturers” (by the government itself, especially when it came to business with Chile or South Africa). That is, part of the French budget will be used to compensate the most reactionary sector of the French bourgeoisie. Here we will not pose the question of whether or not it is a policy of principles. Here we have to say: Isn't the OCI (U) ashamed to have abandoned the *Transitional Program* that says “In precisely the same way we demand the expropriation of the corporations holding monopolies on war industries...” (L. Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 82). Why does the OCI (U) not fight against the arms race plans of the imperialist governments? Why does it not fight against the Mitterrand plans in this area? Why does it not start a battle to mobilise the masses against the “war industry” as required by the *Transitional Program*? Why does it not launch a mobilising slogan against the arms race plans and the expansion costs of the French national budget for it?

And, simpler still: Which word, which phrase did the OCI (U) write to denounce, to call or to insinuate a mere fight against the plans of Mitterrand to continue the policy of De Gaulle in regard to armaments, of expanding the military budget, building new weapons and compensating the armament manufacturers? We would settle for them showing us that in some of these areas, even if not in all of them, the OCI (U) said something. We would settle does not mean that we approve just saying a mere phrase.

3. The denunciation of the policy of Mitterrand that strengthens the Armed Forces of the regime

It has been a systematic policy of Trotskyism to denounce and, when conditions are ripe, to raise the destruction of the armed forces of the regime. The OCI (U) has been one that has most insisted on the play of institutions in the bourgeois state and the fundamental role of the armed forces as a pillar of this state. It has also stressed the need for Trotskyism to denounce systematically

the armed force for what they are and to use every great uprising of the mass movement to go against them, denouncing the bourgeois governments that maintain and develop them, defend them as a hierarchical structure of the bourgeois state.

Mitterrand's policy in this regard is clear, bourgeois to the marrow, of strengthening and defence of the bourgeois armed forces. Defence Minister Charles Hernu, on 11 July, stated "I believe that the armed forces have loyally served successive governments. If reproaches are to be made... you would have to direct them to the politicians and not the military that are the tool, the arm of political power". And at a meeting of the Higher Council of the military function, he declared that he will "watch over the legitimate interests of the military". He pointed out he was "for the military who retire to continue collecting their military pension in addition to the salary they may earn in civilian life". And in another part of his speech he said he gave "great importance to the proper functioning of the committee established under Article 7 of the general discipline regime". The government has pointed out it has discussed with the police that it has nothing against it. We know well what Mitterrand thinks, what we do not know is what the OCI (U) says and does. Is it or is it not necessary to campaign against the armed forces and against what the bourgeois governments do to strengthen them? If so, where and when has the OCI (U) made these denunciations?

It is a matter of principles to denounce, especially when we are under a popular-frontist government, that the government strengthens the armed forces of the regime.

For us, the destruction of the regime is of principle, which includes, of course, its armed forces. It is so of principle that under a normal bourgeois government it is not necessary to pound on it every day and also it is much harder to do this work because there is no rise. People hate the army, the police, and they know that we all want to see the regime, all of it, falling. But in the case of a popular-frontist government, precisely because it is not a "normal" bourgeois government because people think it belongs to them, it is necessary to denounce day-to-day the elements showing that the bourgeois regime is intact. The armed forces are, therefore, a fundamental point. But the decisive reason is that for having entered a higher stage of the class struggle, because there are possibilities of a workers' revolution or a bourgeois counter-revolution, we can and have the obligation to transform this struggle into one of the most important of the party.

4. The destruction of the bourgeois state bureaucracy

Since the Paris Commune, the revolutionary Marxist movement has been characterised by the denunciation and frontal attack on the structure of the bureaucratic apparatus of the bourgeois state. That is, that the state bureaucracy has the minimum or average wage of the workers and that their positions can be revoked by the workers at any time. In addition, it has endeavoured by all means for the working class organisations to meet the widest possible set of state functions, to start eliminating the bureaucracy.

Mitterrand's government has consistently argued it does not plan to replace the police or the bureaucracy, but only, at best, to be changing officials by socialist officials. The OCI (U) has not made any proposal in this respect that is not exactly the same as what the Socialist Party does. Never, to our knowledge, has the OCI (U) raised that a socialist bureaucrat is the same as a Giscardian bureaucrat, since both are bourgeois officials, to the extent that the current structure of the bureaucratic apparatus, which is an enemy of the mass movement, is kept. The OCI (U) has refused to lift the traditional slogan of the revolutionary Marxist movement that the employees of the state and its officials be appointed by the workers' movement, have a minimum or average wage and be revocable at any time, whenever the workers' movement so wants. Is it or is it not a policy of revolutionary Marxist principle, since the Paris Commune, to demand the control of officials by the workers' movement? If so, in what article or phrase of *v* this traditional line of the Trotskyist movement is proposed? With the aggravating circumstance that, on this point as on all others, we have taken the famous action program for France, written by Trotsky, where these problems are considered for immediate agitation.

CHAPTER III

Five fundamental requirements of Lenin, the Third International and Trotsky which are not applied

In my view, the OCI (U) does not meet any of the postulates that Lenin, the Third International and later Trotsky, through their analysis demonstrated that form the basis of Bolshevik policy towards popular-frontist governments. They are:

1. The systematic denunciation of the governments of the treacherous workers' parties.

Lenin did not practice the policy of support (not even of “progressive” measures) or the silence before the Russian provisional government. The same day in which he found out about the triumph of the February revolution, he sent a telegram saying: “Our tactics: no trust in and no support of the new government; Kerensky is especially suspect...” (VI Lenin, “Telegram to the Bolsheviks Leaving for Russia”, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, Vol. 23, p. 292). But once he arrived in Russia he raised his famous April Theses, which gave the line that would be characteristic of Bolshevism and Trotskyism respect to the popular-frontist governments.

His policy towards the new government was clear: “The utter falsity of all its promises should be made clear... in place of the impermissible, illusion-breeding ‘demand’ that this government, a government of capitalists, should cease to be an imperialist government” (VI Lenin, “The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution (April Theses)”, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, Vol. 24, p. 19-26). Day after day he will apply this policy — there is not a single article in Pravda for the entire year 1917, where the front-populist government and the traitorous workers' parties are not violently attacked. For reasons of space I will not dwell on quoting the immense amount of articles in which he argued that the government promises, plans and everything it said was “an absolute falsehood” and which Lenin “unmasked” minute by the minute without depositing any confidence in it. And he applied this policy even during the coup by Kornilov because Lenin argued that not even then it should have our support: “We are changing the form of our struggle against Kerensky. Without in the least relaxing our hostility towards him... without renouncing the task of overthrowing him...” (VI Lenin, “To the Central Committee of the RSDLP”, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, Vol. 25, p. 289-293).

In its famous resolution [of the IV Congress] on the different types of workers' governments and the policy to have about them, the Third International adopts this line. In regard to governments formed by counter-revolutionary workers' parties, the “liberal workers' governments” and the “social democratic workers' governments (Germany)”, after defining them as “coalition governments of the bourgeoisie and anti-revolutionary labour leaders” the resolution asserts it is “a means of deceiving the proletariat about the real class character of the State, or to ward off, with the help of the corrupt workers' leaders, the revolutionary offensive of the proletariat and to gain time”. Therefore, the Third International resolves not only that “Communists cannot take

part in such governments. On the contrary, they must vigorously expose to the masses the real character of these pseudo-workers' governments" ("Theses on Tactics adopted by the Fourth Comintern Congress", *The Communist International Documents, 1919-1949*, Selected and Edited by Jane Degras, Vol. 1, 1919-1922, p. 439). And Radek, explaining this tactic on behalf of the Communist Party of the USSR, said that the policy of electoral support for the Labour Party to get to the government was synthesised for the Third International in the following slogan: "Vote for the Labour Party, but be prepared to fight against it".

Trotsky, in relation to Spanish popular-frontism, says: "Break with the phantom bourgeoisie who stay in the Popular Front only to prevent the masses from making their own revolution. That is the first order of the day" (*The Spanish Revolution (1931-1939)*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 246). That is, Trotsky calls "to condemn and denounce mercilessly" (Ibid., p. 214) the workers' parties, the bourgeoisie and the government both of them constitute.

In France, he had a similar position. In that sense, it is interesting to see how opportunism uses Trotsky's famous quote about the second wave, where he says that "we do not put León Blum in the same bag with the de Wendels and their de la Rocque. We accuse Blum of not understanding or foreseeing the formidable resistance of the de Wendels". They forget that after this sentence, Trotsky continued with another sentence saying: "We must repeat that despite all of our irreconcilable opposition to the Blum government, the workers will find us in the front lines in the fight against its imperialist enemies" (*The Crisis of the French Sections, 1935-1936*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1977, p. 150).

For anyone who wants to understand, if we replace Mitterrand by Blum and the Willot brothers instead of de Wendel: "We will be in the frontline combat" against the Willot brothers, despite "our irreducible opposition" to the government Mitterrand. We will accuse Mitterrand of "not understanding the formidable resistance" that the Willot brothers will oppose to him.

The OCI (U) does not have this clear policy of Lenin, the Third International and Trotsky. On the contrary, since the Mitterrand government took office, there is not a single precise denunciation against the imperialist and counter-revolutionary bourgeois government, much less are they unmasked mercilessly. In the famous editorial of *Informations Ouvrières* #1005, not a single word is said about the character of the new government, or whether we need to fight it or whether we must denounce it. That is, the OCI (U) has spent its life denouncing popular-frontism and when, finally, there is a popular-frontist government in France, all it has to say in its editorial is that we must confront the bourgeois who will fight this government. The decisive fact for a Trotskyist when a popular-frontist government emerges is that it has become a new type of counter-revolutionary government. This is what you have to explain and tell the masses. What the bourgeoisie will do with that government is only one element of this analysis, but the essential element is the denunciation as counter-revolutionaries of the government and the workers' parties that conform it. Doing so should not necessarily mean that we call to overturn the government now, as we did with the government of Giscard. On the contrary, while we do not win the masses we will not raise the banner of the overthrow, but we will tell the truth to the masses from day one: the staunch enemy, the one which does not want to have absolutely anything to do with the government or with the counter-revolutionary parties that comprise it, is our party. Our party takes up the task of denouncing it, to show how all these traitors are servants of the bourgeoisie and Mitterrand the most important of them all, counter-revolutionary Masons, rotten agents of the finance capital and imperialism. And this will do from the outset, in order to convince the masses that it must be overthrown as soon as possible. And it must be said in editorials and in a systematic campaign.

2. The lack of systematic attack and sharp delimitation with the traitorous workers' parties

Lenin, the Third International and Trotsky not only argued that we have to denounce day by day and minute by minute the government of the traitorous workers' parties but also those parties.

Against the opportunist position of Kamenev-Stalin, Lenin argued that our opposition to the counter-revolutionary workers' parties should be blunter and our denunciation more violent than ever since a front-populist government emerged. Trotsky said of Lenin's policy: "In the coalition of socialists with the liberal bourgeoisie — i.e., in the 'popular front' of those days — Lenin saw nothing but treason to the people". And Trotsky continues: "The Compromisers' parties which ruled in the soviets were not allies to him but irreconcilable enemies" (L. Trotsky, *Stalin*, Panther Books, London, Vol. 1, p. 286). That was Lenin's line. This led him to write a public resolution about the counter-revolutionary workers' parties, where he said that "these parties are supporting the Provisional Government, which represents the interests of Capital and which has taken a counter-revolutionary stand in domestic as well as foreign policy" (VI Lenin, "Draft Resolution on the Attitude Towards the Parties of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Menshevik Social-Democrats, the 'Non-Faction' Social-Democrats and other Kindred Political Trends", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, op. cit., p. 159-160).

The Third International, among the 21 conditions to be considered a communist party, points out as the first condition: "In the columns of the press, at popular meetings, in the trade unions and cooperatives, wherever the adherents of the Communist International have an entry, it is necessary to denounce, systematically and unrelentingly, not only the bourgeoisie, but also their assistants, the reformists of all shades" ("Conditions of Admission to the Communist International approved by the Second Comintern Congress", *The Communist International Documents*, op. cit. p. 169). That is, already the Third International was voting against the policy of Zinoviev and Kamenev that under popular-frontist governments we should only attack the bourgeoisie or the enemies of the government. Here, as a sacred principle for a Communist, it was stated clearly that we should not only criticise the bourgeoisie but the reformists of all kinds. And, in case there were doubts, in #17 it insists again as a *sine qua non* condition to be considered communist the following: "The Communist International has declared war on the entire bourgeois world and on all yellow social-democratic parties. The difference between the communist parties and the old official 'social-democratic' or 'socialist' parties, which have betrayed the banner of the working class, must be brought home to every ordinary worker" (Ibid. p. 172). This position of the Third International was strongly defended by Trotsky at the time of the popular fronts.

For example, when he criticised the Molinier-Frank group,¹ which in 1935 broke with the official section and began publishing the newspaper *La Commune*. Although the popular front was not in government, Trotsky considered that both the plan to publish *La Commune* without a clear program of action and the policy of the newspaper were a capitulation to social patriotism. And it is at that moment that Trotsky points out that the crime of Molinier is "to renounce implacable criticism of the social-patriots (naming them by name), to renounce systematic criticism of the Revolutionary Left and of Pivert personally" in their paper. He adds that if that relentless criticism is waived, what is achieved is to have an "SAPist or Pivertist newspaper" (*The Crisis...*, op. cit., p.98), i.e. centrist. Trotsky's position is quite clear: a "merciless criticism of the social-patriots (calling them by name)" must be made as from the constitution of the popular front. That is, to denounce Blum, Thorez, and Pivert through a merciless criticism for the first two and systematic criticism for the latter. That is, always the same theme from Lenin to Trotsky: "The merciless criticism, systematic criticism" to the opportunists and centrists. This relentless and systematic criticism must be done more than ever when counter-revolutionary workers' parties constitute a popular-frontist government.

And in Spain, Trotsky insisted on what should be the main points of our policy under the popular-frontist government. These main points should be: "1) To condemn and denounce mercilessly before the masses the policy of all the leaders participating in the Popular Front. 2) To grasp in full the wretchedness of the leadership of the "Workers Party of Marxist Unification" [POUM] ..." (*The Spanish Revolution*, op. cit., p. 214). In other words, just as he said in France,

1 In 1934 after the rise of the Popular Front government in France, **Raymond Molinier** (1904–1994) and **Pierre Frank** (1905–1984) were part of the faction that remained inside the Socialist Party after the majority followed Trotsky's advice to leave. [Editor]

with a linguistic coincidence that that has nothing of casual, in the two countries the same word: “mercilessly”. Trotsky continued to insist on this and during the civil war, he said: “It is a question of rousing the masses with supreme courage against the traitorous leaders. There is the beginning of wisdom. Break with the phantom bourgeoisie who stay in the Popular Front only to prevent the masses from making their own revolution. That is the first order of the day. Rouse the Anarchists, Stalinists, and Socialists against their leaders, who do not want to break with their bourgeois ministers, those scarecrows protecting private property. That is the second step. Without that, everything else is verbiage, prattle, and lies” (Ibid., p. 246).

The policy of the OCI (U) is directly the opposite. Instead of mobilising the workers against their leaderships, which are in the government increasing prices, decreasing in fact wages, etc., *Informations Ouvrières* calls the counter-revolutionary workers’ organisations to form a united front to combat the price increases decreed by the government they represent. “Against the price increases, against the collapse of wages deliberately organised by the bosses, there is only one fighting chance, to organise the united front of workers’ organisations to demand precisely from all the bosses who rejoice so much: general increase of wages, automatic locking of price increases” (*Informations Ouvrières* #1007, editorial). But they do not limit themselves to call to the united front of these organisations to fight against capitalism, capitalism which the workers’ parties are defending from the government, but something much more serious — there is no systematic campaign of delimitation and denunciation against these workers’ parties. Mitterrand is never mentioned by name, against what Trotsky said, neither are the ministers. Something much more serious is done — since the taking of office of the popular front government, the OCI (U) has diminished their attacks on the CP, attacks that before and rightly so were brutal and systematic. They cease these attacks now when they should intensify such efforts and extend them to the SP. But, in their eagerness not to be differentiated from the CP and SP, the OCI (U) has reached the limit. It has put forth in its main document for the congress, a whole theory and a whole policy to avoid that the masses hate the SP and the CP more and more. The theory that *Informations Ouvrières* has been practising with “wisdom” is to say that all the evils that the French working class have because of the government are due to Giscardian officials, and not to the Communist and Socialist parties.

The worst in this regard is that *Informations Ouvrières* and the leaders of the OCI (U) not only do not differ from the Socialist Party but that they make agreements, explicit or not, with these traitors. For example, they are voting with the Socialists, in the UNEF [National Union of French Students]; against what Lenin said, they are making arrangements, i.e. the united front policy is being carried out. Never do they make the slightest criticism of the policy of the factions mainly of the SP, and also the CP in the different orders. That is, nothing is said of the policy of the Communist Party about the 12 months of military service. We do not see opposing parties in a brutal and systematic confrontation in all lines of the political and trade union activity and the class struggle in France. Quite the contrary, the OCI (U) is wisely applying the line of the opportunists and of Kamenev and Stalin, to blur the differences rather than accentuate them, and the policy of agreement. If this is not the case, they can give me examples. Let them show me how, in all places, we are known for a systematic denunciation and a brutal confrontation against the factions of the CP and the SP, not agreeing in principle about anything with them, save for almost non-existent exceptions.

And here also fits the workers’ united front: when a popular-frontist government emerges the tactic of the united workers’ front ends; which is why Trotsky called it a tactic because it does not apply in all instances of the workers’ movement. For example, when there is a higher stage of the class struggle and the workers’ parties enter the government, this tactic is finished. The tactic becomes the total confrontation to these parties in all places, in all the unions, because they are the standard bearers and direct defenders of the bourgeoisie. If this is not the case, Comrades Pierre and Stephan have a great Marxist, and especially Leninist and Trotskyist culture, and they will be able to provide a multitude of quotes to prove me wrong. When did Lenin raise the united front as a general line in 1917? When did the Third International raise it? When the traitorous workers’ parties, agents of capitalism, are in government? And when did Trotsky raise the united front with

the traitorous workers' parties which were part of a counter-revolutionary government? As far as we know, never. It may be an exception, but we do not know a single case. We know only those of Lenin we have already quoted, which say the opposite — not a single agreement with the parties traitorous to the working class.

3. The intransigent fight against the own imperialism and of support to the colonial and semi-colonial movements

In the eighth condition, of the 21 to be considered as a communist, the Third International stated: “A particularly explicit and clear attitude on the question of the colonies and the oppressed peoples is necessary for the parties in those countries where the bourgeoisie possess colonies and oppress other nations. Every party which wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to expose the tricks and dodges of ‘its’ imperialists in the colonies, to support every colonial liberation movement not merely in words but in deeds, to demand the expulsion of their own imperialists from these colonies, to inculcate among the workers of their country a genuinely fraternal attitude to the working people of the colonies and the oppressed nations, and to carry on systematic agitation among the troops of their country against any oppression of the colonial peoples” (“Conditions of Admission ...”, *The Communist International Documents*, op. cit., p. 170).

The OCI (U) has no systematic campaign for the absolute right to self-determination, freedom and independence of the colonies and semi-colonies. The only slogan we know — there may be other circumstantial phrases— was used by *Informations Ouvrières* commenting on the electoral victories of the Socialist and Communist Parties in the colonies against the Gaullist or Giscardian candidates. On the basis of these successes — according to *Informations Ouvrières* — “new political relations may be established, not based on colonialist oppression, and that give those peoples the opportunity to exercise the right to self-determination...”. As we see, it is very little, although very little would be something and that is virtually nothing. If we consider that the OCI (U) never mentions nor raises the breaking of the Evian Accords and the OCAM Charter, which bind to the yoke of French imperialism the former African colonies, transforming them into semi-colonies fully controlled and dominated by imperialism, then the OCI's policy of washing its hands in the fight against its own imperialism appears quite clearly. Therefore, the OCI (U) does not fill the requirements to enter the Third International of Lenin.

This lack of a consistent struggle for the absolute right to self-determination of the colonies and semi-colonies is accompanied by the lack of a systematic denunciation of the colonialist, racist politics of the Socialist Party and of Mitterrand. While the nationalist parties consistently denounce the Mitterrand government as equal as or worse than the government of Giscard, the OCI (U) never comments on such denunciations and does not defend the nationalist movements or support their denunciations. Much more serious than not echoing the denunciations, is that the OCI (U) paints the Socialist Party and its triumphs as elements in favour of the liberation of the colonies, while the nationalist movements say the Socialists are colonial agents. The Central Committee of the POSI knows this very well because the Socialist and the Communist parties in the Basque country are not an element of the liberation of this people but of subjection to Castilian imperialism. In France, exactly the same applies. Never has the OCI (U) published this conclusion that you have systematically defended and explained to the mass movement in Spain. However, *Informations Ouvrières* considers “a happy political groundswell” that the Socialists win elections in the colonies because “new political relations may be established”. It is not like this. The nationalist movements are right in denouncing the Socialist Party and the government of Mitterrand as colonialist. And it's shameful that *Informations Ouvrières* does not make the same denunciation, keeps the mouth shut and that, on the contrary, it opens some hope on the policy of the Socialist Party. Most serious of all is that the Mitterrand government has said, with all clarity, that it will maintain all signed agreements with African colonies and semi-colonies and that it will continue to have an army of colonial occupation, for intervention.

The Minister of Defence of Mitterrand, on 11 July, stated: “We have such agreements with African countries. They must be respected. This means that France must have the means of outside intervention, to be equipped to do so. We must have an intervention force (...). Our troops have the mission to protect our citizens if they are threatened or harassed” (*Le Monde*). More clearly impossible: France has an army to intervene in the colonies and to defend French citizens, i.e. the citizens who exploit the African semi-colonies, if they are “threatened or harassed”. The OCI (U) has not denounced these statements.

Most serious of all is that the OCI (U) neither supports nor defends the nationalist movements that oppose French imperialism. The representatives of the independence movement of Martinique denounced the leaders or agents of the Socialist Party. One of them, with all courage, said: “the election of the new President of the French Republic does not alter my thinking or my action”. And another nationalist leader said: “Nobody is fooled. You’re an incurable servant of the French state”, in reference to Aime Césaire. “You have become the privileged interlocutor of the government because the state knows that you are the only one capable of guaranteeing the colonial order, and unable to propose a break with colonialism” (*Le Monde*, 2 July). Logically, *Informations Ouvrières* did not comment at all on this argument.

The Union of Workers of Guiana, the UTG, in a statement released on Wednesday 12 August in Paris by the CGT, denounces that the new prefect of Guiana “has installed in the department a regime of terror and fear”. And referring to the behaviour of the security forces when confronting the construction workers on strike since 15 July, it stated: “Democracy is today attacked and the UTG, in the same way that the striking workers, suffers the repression of a true police state. This situation is worse than the one we experienced under the previous power” (*Le Monde*, 14 August). And the OCI (U) does not say half a word: neither does it support the nationalist movement, nor does it denounce Mitterrand. We would be satisfied with them publishing this denunciation, that they do the same as you, Spanish comrades of POSI, have always done, to systematically denounce the Castilian imperialism and the government of that imperialism, yesterday Franco, today Juan Carlos, and tomorrow quite possibly Juan Carlos and Felipe González. That is, the Socialist prefects appointed by Mitterrand brutally repress striking workers and the nationalist movement, which denounces that the situation is as bad as or worse than under the government of Giscard, and *Informations Ouvrières* neither says anything nor comments on these serious events and this repression by Mitterrand.

The Armed Group for the Liberation of Guadeloupe, a nationalist movement, in a statement published in *Le Monde* on 23 September, puts with all clarity that “regardless of the colour of the successive French governments, our objective is the unconditional access to the national independence our country”. And: “At a time when the French government takes firm positions on the Third World in general and South Africa and Nicaragua in particular, while it acknowledges in a joint statement with Mexico the legitimacy of the Salvadoran patriots who face repression, it adopts with respect to its own colonies backward attitudes, for which they will be accountable to history”. The OCI (U) does not even take notice.

4. The mobilisation of the soldiers for their rights against the military structure

The fourth condition to be considered eligible to enter the Third International stated: “The obligation to spread communist ideas includes the special obligation to carry on systematic and energetic propaganda in the army. Where such agitation is prevented by emergency laws, it must be carried on illegally. Refusal to undertake such work would be tantamount to a dereliction of revolutionary duty and is incompatible with membership of the Communist International” (“Conditions of Admission ...”, *The Communist International Documents*, op. cit., p. 181). Essential part of any Trotskyist politics — much more when entering a new stage, a superior stage, of the class struggle, as in this case with the emergence of the new government in France — is trying to mobilise the soldiers to defend their rights, to try to destroy the structure of the Armed Forces

of the regime from within. We could say that there is no principled revolutionary policy without proposing the armament of the working class, and the fight, the organisation of the soldiers to oppose to the normal structure of the Armed Forces of the regime.

The Socialist Party, for the sake of elections, realising that this was a serious problem for the French youth, raised the line, before the elections, of six months of military service. This slogan is now felt by all the French youth. Traditionally, in principle, we Trotskyists have had a transitional program to take to the barracks and to mobilise the youth, the soldiers: to organise soldiers committees, election of officers by these, control from the unions of military training, right to discuss, meet and read what you want within the regiment, to create cells or political factions and to have a pay for all soldiers equal to the minimum or average wage, etc. In a statement published on 12 August in *Le Monde*, the Minister of Defence emphatically declares: "It is ruled out the idea of military service of six months". Even previously the minister, in his address to the Supreme Council of Military Service, had said: "I have already said publicly that I am against the establishment of soldiers committees, and I attach great importance to the proper functioning of the committee instituted by Article 17 of the regulations of general disciplinary" (*Le Monde*, 4 July). Under Article 17 advisory committees are created with soldiers appointed by the superiority.

The Communist Youth accepts the government's policy to maintain a military service of one year, but at least it did so critically, since it held up a program not to become disarranged given the demands of the soldiers: "Free transport, pay increase of a soldiers wage to 30 percent of SMIC [Minimum Inter-professional Salary], development of military training with sufficient means, guarantee of freedom of information and opinion, respect for each other, and an end to the witch-hunt in the armed forces" (*Le Monde*, 8 August). Therefore, in this issue, the OCI (U) has lagged behind the CP.

Faced with these concrete measures of the government and the need felt by youth, the OCI (U) had no answer. It did not raise the slogan "mobilise the youth", neither from the UNEF, from the youth of the OCI (U), or from the OCI (U) itself. It did not call on the other youth organisations to fight for the six months of military service, or to face the hierarchical structure of the Armed Forces. If this is not so, the questions we have been asking will allow Comrades Pierre and Stephan to rebut me with facts.

5. The Workers' and Peasants' Alliance

The *Transitional Program* states that "The sections of the Fourth International should work out with all possible concreteness a program of transitional demands concerning the peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie and conformable to the conditions of each country. The advanced workers should learn to give clear and concrete answers to the questions put by their future allies" (*The Transitional Program...*, op. cit. p.86-87).

One of the essential points of Trotskyist policy is to achieve the alliance of the proletariat and the poor peasantry, leading them to fight against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois government of the day, whether popular-frontist or not. In this sense, in principle, we are in favour of all peasant mobilisations to fight against their miserable living conditions and the exploitation they are subjected to by the bourgeois government, landholders, the bourgeoisie and the big monopolies. We say this because, in this "first wave" which has opened in France, i.e., of increasing struggles, the peasantry is also starting to say something. On 13 August, to testify against the importation of Spanish products, peasants invaded the tax office of Tarascon. The CGT issued a statement giving "full solidarity to the peasants and their organisations" stressing that "the whole agricultural Midi is being shaken by a series of powerful, brave and justified actions" (*Le Monde*, 2/3 August). And by 7 August, there were further demonstrations of anger among the peasants of the South.

Commenting on this mobilisation of the small farmers, *Informations Ouvrières*, in issue 1012 of 8 August, in an article entitled "Agrifood trusts are ruining small farmers", denounces the food monopolies, which force small farmers to sell their products at prices too low. They achieved

this by importing fruits, vegetables and wines from Spain. Farmers have responded by stopping transporter trucks and destroying their cargo. The article concludes that the situation is due to the European Common Market, which defends capitalist interests. It calls to launch anti-capitalist measures against the agrifood trusts and trading companies that control the market. And it warns that “behind the demonstrations of recent days, there are political manoeuvres that are not innocent and that aim, from the point of view of the interests of capital, against the Mitterrand-Mauroy government”. It is a pity that *Informations Ouvrières* does not have a section of puzzles because otherwise, this article should have been there. Is the OCI (U) in solidarity, as the CGT is, with this mobilisation of the peasants that took place in early August in France? Yes or no? There can be no other answers. If we stand in solidarity, we may issue all alerts we like, we can even criticise the opportunity to have fought or not. But we have to clearly say that we are in solidarity, we are in favour of the peasants to organise themselves and to continue making statements of this kind, adding an openly revolutionary program, such as: for the nationalisation of wholesale commerce of grapes and the agricultural products produced by the farmers. The expropriation should be without payment, same as that of the big agrifood trusts. And from there, the guarantee by the government of high prices, remunerative, that guarantee the average salary of the French workers to every peasant. And if by the sale of their product at prices set by the state, showing their accounting, the farmer does not get its average wage, the state will complete it. Logically, to raise this proposal, we must mobilise against the Mitterrand government itself, which wants the opposite. Is the OCI (U) willing, since it has not already done so, to move against the government to support the peasant mobilisations and to propose to the working class to support them? Or is the OCI (U) is not in favour of these mobilisations? If it is, then why does it not call the workers to support them and why does it not develop a revolutionary transitional program to fix the peasants’ problem immediately?

CHAPTER IV

Lack of a revolutionary trade union political line

For Trotskyism, it is an obligation to be active in the trade unions of masses, until the revolutionary upsurge gives rise to independent revolutionary unions and other organisations. In France, trade unions are our most important place of work. The OCI (U) applies this principle: its members are union members. They develop an intense activity in them and, in the case of UNEF — the independent and democratic student union — they play an outstanding role as leaders.

For all this, it is critical that the party has a union policy in all sectors: workers, teachers, professors, civil servants, secondary and university students, etc. Reading the newspaper and documents for the XXVI Congress of the OCI (U) have convinced me that the party has a deep opportunist orientation in relation to the trade union movement. Opportunism reflected mainly in the fact the OCI (U) does not have a transitional program for the union movement in any of its sectors, especially the workers' unions.

1. The denunciation of the social-patriotic leaders in the unions

Among the famous “21 conditions” of the Second Congress of the Third International, we find the following: “Every party which wishes to join the Communist International must carry on systematic and persistent communist activity inside the trade unions, the workers' councils and factory committees, the co-operatives, and other mass workers' organisations. Within these organisations, communist cells must be organised which shall be persistent and unflagging work to win the trade unions, etc., for the communist cause. In their daily work the cells must everywhere expose the treachery of the social-patriots and the instability of the ‘centre’” (“Conditions of Admission ...”, *The Communist International Documents*, op. cit., p. 170). We must be clear: the OCI (U) does not fulfil this “duty” of every revolutionary party. No denunciation “in their daily work” of “the treachery of the social-patriots”. Between issues 1000 and 1020 of *Informations Ouvrières*, we have only found some articles denouncing the CFDT and the CGT (of the latter a systematic campaign of denunciation of their traitorous leaderships). And above all, where is the CGT-FO, which as we will see, is of fundamental importance to the OCI (U)? The lack of such a campaign, Comrades of the POSI, has a name on the positive: criminal and complicit silence.

There is an exceptionally serious case: FO, where Comrade Pierre Lambert holds a high position of leadership. The Comrade is at the same time, Secretary General of the OCI (U) and a member of the highest leadership of our International: therefore it is not a work of entryism or clandestine, of the Comrade in FO. Therefore, I ask old Comrade Pierre, with all respect, to answer me the following question: Where and when has he fulfilled his duty in his “daily work to expose the treachery of the social-patriot” Bergeron since the popular-frontist government of Mitterrand came to the power? And if not in his “daily work”, at least if at any time the OCI (U) or Comrade Pierre publicly denounced the treacherous social-patriot Bergeron?

This is a key issue, because if the top union and political leader of the OCI (U) is not applying this policy against Bergeron, then we are facing a capitulation to this traitor; and, worse, Comrade Pierre is acting as a transmission belt of social patriotism in our party. Therefore, the whole policy of the OCI (U), of capitulation to the Mitterrand government, is due to very deep reasons.

At this point, I want to clarify that I am not insulting Pierre, my comrade for whom I have the deepest respect and appreciation. I am simply applying the teachings of Trotsky, the attitude of our teacher in a similar case. In a discussion with the leadership of the SWP, of 15 June 1940, he was asked if he thought the party was “adapting politically to the trade-union bureaucracy”. This was the response of the Old Man, and we note that he spoke of the leaders in whom he had placed all his hopes: “To a certain degree I believe it is so... the pressure of the backwards elements is always reflected through the trade-union comrades. It is a healthy pressure; but it can also break them from the historic class interests — they can become opportunists” (“Discussions with Trotsky”, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40)*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1977, p. 281).

2. The policy of the OCI (U) in the UNEF: dialogue, concertation, information to the front-populist government

In his keynote speech of 8 July before the National Assembly, Prime Minister Mauroy said the government would make a “profound transformation of our educational system. Everyone must be involved: parents, elected officials, associations, representatives of employees and employers. And in the first place, the teachers (...) The unification of the public education service will be the result of concertation and negotiation”. (*Le Monde*, 10 July). Since then, government policy with reference to the student movement has been “concertation and negotiation”.

Guided by the statements of senior leaders of the Independent and Democratic UNEF, who in turn belong to the Central Committee of the OCI (U), and by articles of *Informations Ouvrières*, the policy of the OCI (U) in this field is — and pardon the epithet — the most shameful thing I have seen in my entire trajectory as Trotskyist militant. If in trade unionism there are sins of omission, in student unionism there are sins for what is said and done (perhaps because we have great strength in the sector).

The conclusion from the reading of *Informations Ouvrières* and other documents is inevitable: the UNEF has become a mouthpiece for the policy of “concertation and negotiation” of the popular-frontist government in the student movement and the UNEF imposes it on the sector it leads. “The national bureau of the UNEF notes that, in the new situation created by the arrival of Francois Mitterrand to the presidency, the role of the UNEF is to inform the authorities of all the claims and aspirations of the students” (*Informations Ouvrières*, #1000). Comrades of POSI: Have you read that right? According to the UNEF, it is enough for a popular-frontist government to arrive, and the role of the union ceases to be the mobilisation of the students, to assume the abject function of the informant. Forget about mobilising the youth and the students around transitional slogans of revolutionary type felt by the youth: Six months of military service and a student wage, the right of all young people not to work until completing university studies, which can only be met by the revolutionary and mass mobilisation. None of that: our task is to “inform the authorities”, i.e. inform a counter-revolutionary bourgeois government.

In *Informations Ouvrières* #1002, Comrade Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, president of the UNEF and member of the Central Committee of the OCI (U), said: “We believe that the time has come for Independent unionism, democratic and of concertation”. Under Giscard, student “independent and democratic” unionism (to differentiate themselves from the Stalinists of UNEF-Renouveau). Now, under the popular-frontism of Mitterrand, “concertation” is added. With whom? With an imperialist counter-revolutionary government. Never has the worst revisionist of Trotskyism dared so much. But Cambadélis continues to insist: “We are delighted by the positions of the authorities of the new government on the concertation” (*ibid*). Comrades of POSI: Is this not a shame for world Trotskyism?

This policy of information and concertation with a counter-revolutionary imperialist government rejoices the OCI (U) and the UNEF: “First, we must welcome the new climate that prevails, which allows the UNEF to be easily received, even in the Elysee and Matignon, when, before, it was very difficult, even impossible”. And later on: “The UNEF notes that the national

Ministry of Education is open to dialogue and welcomes that a solution to the problems that concern the students is being searched” (*UNEF Informa*, 16 September 1981).

And in *Informations Ouvrières* #1008: “The national collective of the Independent and Democratic UNEF has discussed its attitude towards the government. We think the situation is favourable for a new university policy, including the necessary reforms for the right to study to be really respected”. To sum up: the task of UNEF is no longer to mobilise but to inform; the student unionism, previously independent and democratic with respect to the Stalinists, is now of concertation regarding the popular-frontist government; the positions of the new authorities are welcomed; the Ministry of Education dialogues and searches for “necessary reforms for the right to study to be really respected”. What student who reads this will believe that the government is counter-revolutionary and popular-frontist and mortal enemy of the student movement and youth? I make the following prediction: the popular-frontist, the counter-revolutionary government will not satisfy any of the great aspirations of the French youth. At best it will make some timid reform, to prevent the revolutionary mobilisation but instead of the right to study for young workers there will be more hunger and instead of jobs when studies are finished, there will be more unemployment. That is what we have to tell the students to get them out of deception.

The UNEF does not prepare the students and the youth to face the inevitable betrayal of the government. On the contrary, the UNEF and the OCI (U) capitulate completely to government policy, and consciously broadcast it in the university. And this criminal policy of delivering the student movement tied hand and foot to the counter-revolutionary government has the full support of the socialist factions in the student movement (how could it be otherwise, since it is their party that rules).

Conclusion: in trade unionism, we do not denounce the social-patriots, while in the student movement we are the social-patriots agents of Mitterrand-Mauroy-Savary.

3. Apoliticism, a bourgeois politics

On 28-29 of May (i.e., after the presidential and before the legislative elections), took place the founding congress of a union of high school students, promoted by UNEF. According to the chronicle of *Informations Ouvrières* #1002: “At the end of the congress, a proposal was presented — that the secondary students’ union rule in favour of the election of a majority of SP-FCP deputies to the National Assembly. The intention of this is that the union approve the position of a political organisation, which would isolate it because it would appear as the windshield of a party. Many delegates stressed also that, in the union meetings where they were, they were not given the mandate to take such a position. In short, the response of the Congress could not be clearer. The proposal to call for a vote for an SP-FCP majority is rejected by 1931 mandates (90.02 percent of the votes) against 214 (9.97 percent)”. (We clarify that the tendency that presented the motion, is led by the Trotskyist LCR). Perhaps in another frame (i.e., if the UNEF had a correct, Trotskyist, policy), we would discuss this as a serious error, but tactical. But in this case, we face a conception, not to fight the extreme socialist right in the student and faculty movement: the apolitical unionism.

Trotskyism holds exactly the opposite — party members go to the unions to raise their revolutionary program suitable to the union and try to impose it. They only admit tactical adjustments, formulations that are comprehensible to the workers and serve to mobilise them. But from there to not do politics in the unions is a very long stretch. To quote just two cases there is the polemics of Lenin and the Iskristis against economism and syndicalism. And Trotsky, in *Whither England*, approves the measure to expel from the unions any worker who does not to support the Labour Party.

The position of apolitical unionism is typical of yellow unionism. Precisely, the agents of the bourgeoisie in the worker’s movement (the bureaucratic union leaderships) seek that trade unions avoid politics and that they leave political activity in the hands of the parties, separated from the mass organisations.

If there was a current in the UNEF in favour of voting for Giscard, we, the champions of democracy in the student movement, should defend their right to make their arguments and counterpose ours in a relentless political struggle. But to propose, as the leadership of the UNEF does, that the union should not make political arguments “so as not to compromise its unity” is yielding to bourgeois blackmail.

4. Trade union unity

We leave this important point for last because we want to highlight it. One of the hindrances of the French mass movement is its division into several union organisations: CFDT, CGT, CGT-FO, in addition to the independent trade unions of teachers.

The OCI (U) has denounced on many occasions that the division of the workers’ movement, due to the policy of the apparatuses, is guilty of almost all the ills of the French proletariat. This is why the agony of the V Republic continues, by not having a unified action of the proletariat and the masses causing its final collapse. This being so, why does the OCI (U) not propose the trade union unity, the single federation? This should be a prominent slogan in our campaigns on the workers’ movement. It is a slogan to agitate, because what French worker —rank and file worker, no bureaucrat of the apparatus — does not agree with the unity of the whole workers’ movement in a single workers’ federation? We need to say the same at the level of each industry, the struggle for a single union is necessary, much more now, in the new stage that has opened. Not to raise this slogan is pandering to the bourgeoisie and the apparatuses, in their desire to keep the division of the workers’ movement.

CHAPTER V

The support to the Mitterrand government leads to a minimum program

On account of both, the political practice of the OCI (unified) and its weekly publication and its theoretical-political documents for the congress that will take place later this year, it appears clear that the essential axis of its policy towards with respect to the Mitterrand government is the support for almost all the most important measures it has taken. As we have already explained in the article published in *International Correspondence*, support for the measures of a government popular-frontist or any other bourgeois government, however progressive they may seem, actually mean support, the most shameful and the worst that can be given to a bourgeois government. Never did Lenin, the Third International or Trotsky support a single measure of a bourgeois government. They have defended measures, have used such measures, but they never, ever supported them when the bourgeois government proposed them because that would mean supporting the whole policy of the government before the mass movement. It would mean that the workers would consider that there may be the solution to their basic problems approving some measures of the bourgeois government. If one is approved, you can do the same with many others.

What revolutionary Marxists change, as explained in this article, it is how to flatly refuse to approve measures of the bourgeois government, as I will show in what follows. In opposition to this line of Lenin and the Third International, and of Trotsky, the opportunist, since 1917 to Pablo, has held the theory of support to the progressive measures and repudiation of the negative measures, and other expressions similar to those used today by the OCI (unified). This policy disarms the workers who come to the conclusion that the government can continue taking steps and achieving solutions to their problems. This is giving to the working class the opposite impression to what a Trotskyist party wants to give. This party uses all means to demonstrate that the popular-frontist government and its ministers are servants of the bourgeoisie and all their measures will be in the sense of stopping the revolution, even when they seem “progressive”, and that what we need to do is to repudiate the government with all its measures, which are part of its politics. In short, the goal of revolutionary Marxists is to awaken a growing hatred in the workers’ and mass movement against the counter-revolutionary worker’s parties and against the bourgeois governments of which they are a part, for, when that hatred has expanded to the whole workers’ movement, overthrowing the government. If we support the measures, instead of hatred we provoke at least confusion and rather hope in the government.

1. Unemployment

Let us see the consequences of the policy of supporting “progressive” measures. The editorial of *Informations Ouvrières* #1012 gives the position of the OCI (unified) about the government’s plan in regard to unemployment. “Mauroy said: ‘The government will propose in December the approval of a two-year plan [...] that will organise the relentless fight against unemployment. It will allow initiating a thorough transformation of our society in 1984. At that time, we will present a more ambitious five-year plan. No worker can fail to approve the principle of such plans.’” Mauroy,

in his speech, had been clear enough. He had said that there are one million eight hundred thousand unemployed, and for 1984, within two and a half years, two hundred and ten thousand jobs will be created. A second five-year plan will then be then proposed. When the OCI (unified) says that “no worker can fail to approve the principle of such plans”, I wonder if it is a joke. To give jobs over more than two years to approximately 10 percent of the unemployed who would exist then in France and from that moment on to have a more ambitious five-year plan to solve unemployment; it is a somewhat cruel joke. For a currently unemployed, the “principle” of Mauroy that the OCI (unified) enthusiastically supports, which considers as a step, means he will wait seven years to see if, with these bourgeois plans, the problem of unemployment is solved. It takes courage and to instil the workers with much trust in the popular-frontist government to say with confidence that we must support the plan.

Instead of, as demanded by Lenin and Trotsky, denouncing the plan Mauroy as a bourgeois plan to the core, in all its aspects, as a ridiculous plan that does not address at all the problem of unemployment; instead of raising our transitional program, the OCI (unified) supports the counter-revolutionary plan and recites generalities.

As always, the OCI (unified), which has defended for so many years the *Transitional Program* and its method, forgets the true Trotskyist, transitional position for unemployment. As the *Transitional Program* says: “The struggle against unemployment is not to be considered without the calling for a broad and bold organisation of *public works*. But public works can have a continuous and progressive significance for society, as for the unemployed themselves, only when they are made part of a general plan, worked out to cover a considerable number of years. Within the framework of this plan, the workers would demand resumption, as public utilities, of work in private businesses closed as a result of the crisis. Workers’ control in such cases would be replaced by direct workers’ management. The working out of even the most elementary economic plan – from the point of view of the exploited, not the exploiters – is impossible without workers’ control, that is, without the penetration of the workers’ eye into all open and concealed springs of the capitalist economy. Committees representing individual business enterprises should meet at conferences to choose corresponding committees of trusts, whole branches of industry, economic regions and finally, of the national industry as a whole. Thus, workers’ control becomes *a school for planned economy*” (*The Transitional Program...*, op. cit. p.81-82).

This, applied to France, would mean that today, to overcome unemployment we would have to raise, and call the workers to the mobilisation for the reinstatement of all fired workers to their old companies, and if these cannot reintegrate them, for them to be expropriated without payment and controlled by the workers’ movement through enterprise committees. On the other hand, to remove the defence budget, and that all that fabulous amount of millions of francs be made available to a congress of the workers’ movement which would make an overall economic plan mainly of public works to provide jobs for everyone, young people without work, those dismissed, those leaving universities and secondary schools, for all French workers, or suchlike variations. In contrast to this clear position of the *Transitional Program*, the OCI (unified) has a minimum program and another maximum program for the holidays. The minimum program is to support this pittance that in two years two hundred ten thousand jobs will be created by the government, without even calling into question that the bourgeoisie continues exploiting the workers, as proposed by the government plan. The maximum program asserts that we should not to be afraid to go to socialism, that we must be mobilised to attack the bourgeoisie, for the available hours of work to be shared with the same pay, etc. If there are still nearly two million unemployed in France the workers need to know that part of the blame for this situation lies with the OCI (unified), which approved the popular-frontist plan of “war on unemployment” instead of denouncing this “war” as of the exploiters against the exploited.

2. The nationalisations

In Mauroy's programmatic speech on 8 July, the government policy on nationalisation is considered. In such speech, Mauroy clarified: there will be no undue nationalisations or foreign capital will be affected; in cases of companies or banks with strong foreign participation, foreign shareholders are free to retain their shares or sell them to the state; compensation of the entrepreneurs will be "legally incontrovertible".

Informations Ouvrières, in the editorial of issue 1012, that is to say giving the official position of the OCI (unified), was "in favour" of Mauroy, saying: "All organisations and parties that claim to be of socialism are, in principle, in favour of the abolition of private ownership of the major means of production and of changing it for its collectivisation. Any progress in this direction can only be positive. Therefore, they cannot help but be in favour, a priori, of the nationalisation of the eleven groups and the extent of the nationalisation of credit". In its eagerness to embellish the government, the OCI (unified) called "collectivisation" a vulgar capitalist nationalisation, that all it does is strengthen state capitalism, and seek support for the development of capitalism in the country.

Once again, the OCI (unified) completely forgets the *Transitional Program* to take a position against it: trust and instil trust to the workers in the government, being in favour of the nationalisation policy of the bourgeois government, insinuating that they are "collectivisation". The *Transitional Program* states that: "The difference between these demands and the muddle-headed reformist slogan of 'nationalisation' lies in the following: 1) we reject indemnification; 2) we warn the masses against demagogues of the People's Front who, giving lip service to nationalisation, remain in reality agents of capital; 3) we call upon the masses to rely only upon their own revolutionary strength; 4) we link up the question of expropriation with that of seizure of power by the workers and peasants (*The Transitional Program...*, op. cit. p.92-83).

Trotsky could not be clearer. Instead of making invocations to the suppression and collectivisation of private property, and therefore being "in favour of... the nationalisations" that the Mitterrand government will carry out, the *Transitional Program* tells us that we must "warn the masses against demagogues of the People's Front", as they are "agents of capital" and to "rely only upon their own revolutionary strength", i.e. not to trust the government of charlatans. Trotsky would have said that Mauroy is a charlatan in the service of capitalism; that we must not rely at all on him and only in the revolutionary strength of the masses, and to expropriate without compensation and to fight for "the seizure of power by the workers and peasants".

The program of the OCI (unified) is transformed into a minimum program, which is "in favour" of an ultra-bourgeois measure, which does not solve absolutely any problem and does not attack the bourgeoisie at all. And there are parallel occasional references in the newspaper, very, very exceptional, sometimes through questions and others implicitly, to the convenience of not paying the bourgeois who are expropriated. But the positive line, the editorial line, has been the support, a priori, of the government's nationalisation plan.

3. The immigrants

Of every four manual workers in France, one is an immigrant, I believe. This means that for a revolutionary organisation the problem of immigrant workers is of fundamental importance. The government of Giscard had a repressive policy against immigrants, enacted the Bonnet law, which put fixed quota of foreign workers with the right to enter France, and the Stoleru law, by which any immigrant who loses his job must leave the country or rather, in fact, is expelled. In addition to this, immigrants suffered great discrimination with respect to housing and wages. To make matters worse, they were not allowed to have a specific organisation and were not allowed to vote. When Mitterrand came to power, Giscard was threatening to expel some families with their children.

On 26 May, the Minister of the Interior of Mitterrand suspended all deportations of immigrant workers. Logically, this thrilled the OCI (unified), and the issue 1002 of *Informations Ouvrières*, on 30 May, ran an article about it entitled “An important first step”, where it was said that “First, it is an important first step in satisfying the demands of immigrant workers, after the fall of Giscard-Bonnet-Stolew. Second, it shows the way forward to dismantle the repressive apparatus perfected under Giscard-Poniatowski-Peyrefitte”. And it continues later: “Their claim (France is their country) has been satisfied (...). The measure of temporary suspension, pending the immigration debate in the National Assembly, has stopped the machine that disturbed their lives [of immigrants] on behalf of the Giscardian laws”. That is, the OCI (unified) does not call to distrust the French popular-frontist, social-chauvinist government, mortal enemy of the workers, but quite the opposite, it actually called to stay calm since a “first step” had been taken. The mania of the first step is characteristic of the opportunist currents in the revolutionary movement, which always speak of first progressive steps of the bourgeois governments, as we have said. It does not call to the mobilisation and organisation of immigrant workers, or alerted them: Beware of this government in the service of capitalism and imperialism!

On 8 July, Mauroy gave the official government position regarding immigrants. In his speech, he said that new immigrants will not be admitted, but those already settled in France will be not expelled. However, the Bonnet law and the Stoleru law will remain. That is the two Giscardian laws against immigrants. The Socialist Party had pledged to give the vote to the immigrants, in principle, in the municipal elections. Shortly after, the government reported it will not grant that claim. In order not to make it any longer, the last *Informations Ouvrières* I have read, issue 1020, states that “the law presented by the government to eliminate the Bonnet law — about to the conditions of entry to France of immigrant workers — as well as the deportation measures by which the Giscardian power had been granted an arbitrary right” were being discussed in the Senate. Regarding the letter of the laws presented by the Socialist government, *Informations Ouvrières* says: “It is necessary to recognise — as several deputies of the SP itself denounce — that they are far from fully meeting the needs for equality and elementary justice claimed by immigrant workers”. But this would be nothing. These projects, deficient according to *Informations Ouvrières*, suffered an aggregate in the Senate, “forcing immigrants living in France in the previous two years to give irrefutable proof of that”. And as if this were not enough, it was deleted the article of the project that entitled them to the immigrant associations established for over five years to combat discrimination and to practice before the jurisdiction all rights reserved to the civil party. *Informations Ouvrières* notes that a Socialist senator, M. Roujas, was the one who forced the vote on the elimination of this article. That is, “the first step” was transformed into a trampling against immigrants, a step back, or at least in marking the pace resembling the Giscardian laws, although changing a little the manner to do demagoguery. That is, the suspicions and denunciations of the Trotskyists, of us, were confirmed and not the hopes of the OCI (unified), hopes that made them say that the government’s announcement that the expulsions would not be allowed was an “important first step” in solving the problem of the immigrants.

Once again, the program of the OCI (unified) is only a minimum program because even in this article, which analyses the laws of the Government and the actions of the socialist senators against immigrants, they are not called to organise themselves to fight against the discrimination they are suffering from the popular-frontist government. And what is more serious the OCI (unified) continues without raising a program of struggle for immigrants but in order to raise it to the whole of the workers’ movement.

For all this, I confess I do not know whether the OCI (unified) believes that we must fight for the right to vote for immigrants in all instances, for the unrestricted right to stay, to have a decent home and to organise themselves as they wish. I do not know whether the OCI (unified) defends the national rights to their language and their customs and culture, as for example the right to bilingual schools. And finally, I still do not know, why have they not supported the strike of immigrants against rising rents?

4. Atheistic education and private education

It is an old slogan of Freemasonry and freethinkers to demand that public funds go to secular education and private funds to private education. The socialist government, composed by Masons, cannot but sympathise with this slogan and this policy. The OCI (unified) has raised this same slogan, giving it great importance. One of the few agitational campaigns, one of the few positions systematically raised by the OCI (unified) has been this line. But this slogan is no longer minimal, but directly bourgeois. They raise the right of existence for two types of school, both bourgeois, although secular education is more progressive than religious education. But defending the right of the two types of schools and only ask that public funds go to public schools is not a transitional, anti-capitalist slogan, but bourgeois liberal.

A truly Trotskyist position starts by acknowledging that education is a social fact, which must be in the hands of society and not in the capricious hands of any organised group, even if it is self-financing. The real Trotskyist position is the expropriation of private schools, the complete nationalising of education and its control and planning by the workers' movement. The OCI (unified) raises the petty bourgeois, non-Trotskyist slogan of control of education by the teachers, parents of students and young people. Thus *Informations Ouvrières* in number 1018 said: "Who better than the teachers, parents of students and young people to define in what direction school should be reformed, to express the needs and propose measures? To break the resistance of the capitalists, should we not have to rely on the teachers, parents and young people and mobilise them?" This means that, for *Informations Ouvrières*, parents, youth and students, as well as the "Catholic citizens" for Catholic schools, are the essential elements to take into account to solve the problem. They ignore the most basic Marxist principles that both citizens and parents are divided into bourgeois, petty bourgeois and proletarians, and social institutions, such as schools, as well. That is, regarding education, as well as regarding Catholic schools, *Informations Ouvrières* has a liberal bourgeois conception and not a class conception. We believe that the working class is the only class that can control the schools to be at the service of the young workers and all the young people.

As in all other cases, the OCI (unified) is satisfied with a minimum program, secular education, and does not raise a transitional program. This program cannot be other than "workers' control of education" to ensure students an average salary and the right to university study for all young people, without forgetting the urgent need to expropriate all private schools and nationalise education.

CHAPTER VI

Minimum program or transitional program based on a slogan of power?

In the same way that the leadership of the OCI (U) for years fiercely criticised the popular-frontist governments and when it is time to face such government, they chose to keep their mouth shut because the workers believe in it, something similar happens with the *Transitional Program*. For years the OCI (U) defended the *Transitional Program* and its method, for today to deny it in its entire conduct: in the preparation of documents and in its daily politics, as well as in the articles and positions that are defended in *Informations Ouvrières*. As we understand it, the OCI (U) has abandoned the method and content of the *Transitional Program* to adopt a minimum program as we try to demonstrate.

We would like to dwell on the analysis of this issue, which is cardinal.

1. To fight the illusions from the illusions or to fight for the most pressing needs of the workers' movement?

The entire opportunism of the OCI (U) begins from considering that the fundamental and decisive factor to take into account when developing our policy and slogans are the illusions of the workers' and mass movement. It is no coincidence that one of the most important political and theoretical documents elaborated in relation to the Mitterrand government begins by taking into account the consciousness of the masses and not the objective needs presented to it. The criterion that what we need to take into account to develop our policy and our slogans is essentially the level of consciousness of the masses has been a traditional criterion of opportunism. For opportunism, it was important to accompany the most primary workers' movement and the most backwards consciousness of the masses. That is, it is not a question of respect for these illusions but an accommodation to them. At first, we did not understand what the formula of the OCI (U) meant, and we came to think it clever and useful... Today we realise it is an opportunist formulation, very dangerous. One takes into account the illusions of the masses to adopt the best tactics to combat them; not to yield to them. The OCI (U) takes such illusions to formulate the substance of its slogans and policies. It begins by giving in to the capitalist government and its ministers since the masses believe in them. The OCI (U), deep down, believes in the government or, by accepting the beliefs of the mass movement, it pretends to believe; i.e. it does not attack or systematically denounce Mitterrand and his ministers.

The other criterion of the OCI (U) is that politics must be done based on the situation, by the concrete situation of the moment, and based essentially on the experience of the mass movement. Therefore, for them, the key elements to take into account when developing our policy are the illusions on the one hand and on the other, the experience. That is, two subjective factors instead of the objective situation and the needs arising from this objective situation. Hence the OCI (U) argues that we should not frontally attack the government or denounce it while the masses have not done their experience and continue having illusions about it.

Trotskyists, starting by the own Trotsky, we believe exactly the opposite. For us, illusions are important to take into account but of second order since they only help to formulate tactics and the slogans. We cannot underestimate either the illusions or the experience, but the essential elements to formulate our policy are the needs of the workers' and mass movement. That is, at this time the unemployment, the high cost of living, the scarcity of wages, plus the need to change the government, are the decisive factors to develop a policy, a program and the slogans appropriate to this program. Another surprising attitude of the OCI (U) is that in order to not start from the most urgent needs of the masses to formulate its policy, it argues today that the problem is essentially political, and thereby tries to ignore the objective needs of the masses. The OCI (U) tries to make an abstraction of objective reality to argue that the problems are purely political and not economic, and for the immediate struggle against poverty. All this leads the OCI (U) to refuse to have a true transitional program for the current situation in France.

2. The lack of a true program of action, transitional

Comrade Pierre, in the document he has prepared as a draft central resolution for the congress of the OCI (U), very nonchalantly asserts that they do not have an action program, that it will come a time when they are going to develop it. Thus it reads:

“That said, we are in the presence of a task that we must consummate, namely, to develop on the basis of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International, an action program to respond to the new political situation between the classes in our country Can we do it immediately?” (*Draft Political Report for the XXVI Congress*, part II, pp. 9 and 10).

“The answer is no.”

“It is essential that the OCI (U) develop in the coming weeks and months an action program. This is not however to be either ultimatum or abstract” (*Internal Bulletin* #1, p. 19).

This problem of not having a national transitional action program has been well discussed in the ranks of the Trotskyist movement. In 1935, Frank-Molinier decided to publish a journal of masses given the emergence of the new situation created by the formation of the Popular Front and the beginning of the rise that was taking place in the workers' movement. Thus they published the newspaper *La Commune*, with five slogans: the creation of workers' committees and communes; the formation of popular militias and the arming of the workers; revolutionary defeatism; workers' and peasants' government; reconstruction of the revolutionary party. Old Man Trotsky pointed how this line of Molinier-Frank was opportunistic, of capitulation to social patriotism, that this trend to capitulate was expressed in the fact that the group Molinier-Frank did not have an action program, transitional as we would call it today. And thus Trotsky said, “what the masses can demand of a newspaper are a clear program and a correct orientation”. And later on he says: “For us the important thing is a program that corresponds to the objective situation [...] But in P, Frank's letter, in all his thinking —as in the well-appeal of whatsoever *La Commune*— there is no mention of a program, and not without reason: the program constitutes a serious obstacle to the general fraternisation with the petty bourgeoisie, with intellectuals, pessimists, sceptics and adventurerists; we, for our part, believe that the program determines everything” (*The Crisis...*, op. cit., pp. 99 and 106).

And Trotsky was referring, in this case, to the need to rely on the program of action which he had made for France in 1934 or to develop a new one. Trotsky added more, that if there is no program there can be no slogans, there can be absolutely nothing that is truly revolutionary, Marxist. Trotsky insisted that without a transitional or action program it was not possible to do anything by a revolutionary party.

Later, when Trotsky wrote the *Transitional Program*, he again emphasised that the first thing a revolutionary party must do is the program. Answering the question of what a revolutionary party can do in this situation, he said: “In the first line give a clear honest picture of the objective

situation, of the historic tasks which flow from this situation irrespective as to whether or not the workers are today ripe for this. Our tasks don't depend on the mentality of the workers. [...] We must tell the workers the truth, then we will win the best elements". ("Discussions with Trotsky before the Transitional Program", in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, op. cit. p. 126). And again he insisted: "What is important when the program is definitely established, is to know the slogans very well and to manoeuvre them skilfully..." (Ibid., p. 146).

That is, the same slogan depends on the objective situation and not on the mentality of the workers' movement. As Trotsky said: "We can only say that our slogan corresponds to the objective situation..." (Ibid. p. 134

This is logical because the *Transitional Program* is a method to be applied at national level, to mobilise the worker's movement of the country. Just as the Fourth International cannot have on a global scale any slogan that is not based on the Transitional Program and the various transitional programs that we develop according to the situations that are opened, at the level of a country, we cannot develop a single slogan if we have not previously developed a transitional program for the stage concerned in that country. Without this transitional program, all tasks and slogans that arise are opportunistic, because of the movement, the tactics become everything and the program, the goals, the strategies are nothing, do not exist.

3. The minimum program of the OCI (U)

If we select the slogans that the OCI (U) has today in France, we will corroborate that generally, it is a minimum program. Even the transitional slogans that it raises very occasionally and exceptionally are also minimal because to be transitional they must be part of a set, since isolated and raised circumstantially they are minimal. For a slogan to be transitional it must meet three conditions: to be a call to action, to the mobilisation of workers against their exploiters or their state; to be closely linked to other immediate slogans that exceed it, mainly workers' control; and finally, it should be inextricably linked to the backbone of the transitional program, the proposal of power and the construction of the party as the other side of that proposal of power. That is, the slogans must always form a set closely linked with each other, where slogans depend on each other, to give it dynamic and to educate the whole working class.

The OCI (U) launches slogans anarchically, separated from each another, without linking them, without forming a set. And especially, they do not link them the problem of power.

Today, the program of the OCI (U) for France revolves around the following slogans: to approve the government's nationalisation plan; to approve the principles of the government program against unemployment; to establish a policy of concertation and negotiation on the student and educational field; to be for secular education and also for private education, only requiring that public funds go to private secular education and private funds go to private education; to approve in principle the measures of the government with regard to immigrants; as "an important first step" to make us the voice of the workers' movement to negotiate with the government the problem of temporary workers, etc., etc. This is the program the OCI (U) agitates the most. It is more than minimal; it is the super minimum program of the SP itself. But occasionally, very rarely, without linking them to one another, without raising a revolutionary policy and a systematic agitation of the transitional slogans, the OCI (U) raises some other transitional slogan, i.e., a slogan that goes against capitalist private property or raises power such as "SP-FCP government" or other similar ones. But without this proposal of power as the core of our system and of agitation of our program, there are no tasks and slogans truly transitional. Let's see whether these are really transitional slogans or part of a minimum program.

4. The fight against the misery of the proletariat

Our *Transitional Program* says: “Under the conditions of disintegrating capitalism, the masses continue to live the meagerized life of the oppressed, threatened now more than at any other time with the danger of being cast into the pit of pauperism. They must defend their mouthful of bread, if they cannot increase or better it. There is neither the need nor the opportunity to enumerate here those separate, partial demands which time and again arise on the basis of concrete circumstances – national, local, trade union. But two basic economic afflictions, in which is summarised the increasing absurdity of the capitalist system, that is, *unemployment* and *high prices*, demand generalised slogans and methods of struggle” (*The Transitional Program...*, op. cit. p. 76).

Is this an accurate picture of the situation of the French proletariat under the government of Mitterrand? By the way: unemployment is reaching nearly two million. Gas has increased by 22 percent, electricity by 15 percent, gasoline six cents per litre, the subway fare by 14 percent and housing rents 10-13 percent. Meanwhile, minimum wages have increased by 10 percent (of which 5 percent was anyway by previous wage agreements).

And in this frame, President Mitterrand asks the Council of Ministers for a “budget of austerity”, saying in reference to wages: “Certain legitimate aspirations will have to wait for a little” (*Le Monde*, 25 July 1981); thus he shows the true face of his government against the thousand and one fraudulent calls by Mauroy to wage “war on unemployment”.

Against these ills of capitalism, the *Transitional Program* is very clear; to propose control measures which, by going directly against the capitalist system and the bourgeois state, acquire a revolutionary content because they are part of a whole revolutionary system. Among these measures we have:

Against unemployment: sliding scale of working hours (allocation of available work among the entire existing workforce); plan of public works with wages, hours of work, etc., set by the unions.

Against the decline in real wages: sliding scale of wages (automatic wage increases in accordance with the increase in the cost of living).

Against rising prices: price freeze, under the supervision of workers’ committees.

And to these it adds, against the capitalist sabotage and parasitism, expropriation and nationalisation of banks and financial institutions, the expropriation without compensation of the great trusts and the richest families in the country (the “60 families” of the United States and the “200 families” of France), the abolition of commercial and industrial secrecy with the opening of the account books, etc.

All these measures should be “part of a general plan, worked out to cover a considerable number of years” (*Ibid.*, p. 81). But that is not enough: “The working out of even the most elementary economic plan – from the point of view of the exploited, not the exploiters – is impossible without workers’ control” (*Ibid.* p. 82). That is, Trotsky links transitional tasks with each other; he does not leave them to their fate.

Perusing the journal *Informations Ouvrières* from issue 1000 to 1020, what we do we find? We find, for example, in the editorial of issue 1005, the following: “Against price increases organised by capitalists and bankers, we must first get a real increase in wages and pensions according to the cost of living. Secondly, control and supervision of prices” (by whom? Linked to what? It does not say). Issue 1014 raises the freezing of prices. The editorial of 1020 raises “the distribution of available work among all workers, keeping wages intact”. And throughout several issues, it raises the nationalisation without compensation of Agache-Willot and of “any company that threatens to close their doors or lay off” (editorial issue 1012). A statement of the Central Committee of the OCI (U) in issue 1001 poses the “lifting of bank secrecy”. On one or two occasions, in isolation, it raises the “workers’ control” and the government without bourgeois in two or three variants.

The fact is that these slogans, correct by themselves, are raised mechanically and unrelated to each other in the different issues of *Informations Ouvrières* (some, such as the sliding scale of working hours, only in two issues). But let's suppose that these slogans (and others that *Informations Ouvrières* never mentions, such as "plan of public works") appeared in every issue of the newspaper. This is useless if the two slogans that encompass them and make them a battle plan to be agitated consistently before the workers' movement are missing: "general economic plan, drawn up by the workers' movement against the economic plan of the bosses and the government"; and "workers' control of production", a slogan that appears only once in the supplement to issue 1016 (statement by the CC). It is no coincidence, as always, the OCI (U) carefully avoids formulating a plan with agitational slogans of anti-capitalist mobilisation, because anti-capitalist means anti-government of Mitterrand. And the OCI (U) does not want to have the slightest friction with this government.

To make a systematic campaign, with a plan of struggle revolutionary and anti-capitalist against the misery of the workers and the mass movement, is it or is it not a matter of principle for Trotskyism? If so, where is this plan in the press and the agitation of the OCI (U)?

5. The mobilisation of the masses: a constant imperative.

One of the features of Bolshevism and Trotskyism is the constant pursuit and agitation of the slogans of mobilisation of the proletariat and the masses. As an example, we have our "transitional program, the task of which lies in systematic mobilisation of the masses for the proletarian revolution" (Ibid, p. 76). This concept of systematic mobilisation is repeated in each of the tasks that the program lists:

"Unemployment and high prices demand generalised slogans and methods of struggle..." (Ibid, p. 76).

"Against a bounding rise in prices (...) one can fight only under the slogan of a sliding scale of wages" (Ibid, p. 76).

"The struggle against unemployment is not to be considered without the calling for a broad and bold organisation of public works" (Ibid, p. 81).

And in summary: "'Realisability' or 'un-realisation' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle" (Ibid, p. 77).

We do not want to dwell on more examples, only to point out that, whatever the stage of the class struggle and the experience of the masses, the revolutionary party will seek the suitable "slogans and methods of struggle". How does the OCI (U) respond to this demand? It is instructive to first see what it did before 10 May. Until that day, *Informations Ouvrières* was full of slogans and methods of struggle: "Out with Giscard"; "SP-FCP Unity"; "Defeat the divisive policy of the apparatuses"; "March to SP and CP headquarters to demand automatic withdrawal"; "One hundred thousand signatures to force Marchais to act for the withdrawal"; "Great demonstration to give to Marchais the hundred thousand signatures"; "Rally of the OCI (U) for the unity to oust Giscard"; etc., etc.

Now, we see the opposite. A tour of *Informations Ouvrières* after the election shows us a panorama, from which we give some examples.

Informations Ouvrières #1012: "Against the capitalists, to rely resolutely on the working class, the youth, the exploited masses". Here it is about nationalising the companies that threaten with closure or layoffs, to counter unemployment. But, how? Will it be by means of a strike? A demonstration? A petition to the government?

Informations Ouvrières #1019: "Against the capitalists, it is necessary to rely on the mobilisation of the workers". Again: What concrete mobilisation? With which specific slogans? In all recent *Informations Ouvrières*, we have found the following calls.

1) To a congress of temporary workers, in order to form a delegation to attend on 12 September the Ministry of Labour to present a petition for job stability. Period, nothing else. Do you think comrades of the OCI (U), with your trade union experience, that this alone is a measure of struggle that would solve the problems of temporary workers? No: this measure alone is useless. There must be a plan of struggle like the following (just as an example):

Effective work for the temporary workers! Demonstration of hundreds of thousands, to accompany the delegation to the ministry. We give the minister a period of one month to give work to all! This is a problem that concerns all workers: let's go to the unions and factory committees to seek solidarity with our struggle!

2) "Rallies, Friday, 23 October. Paris – Porte de Pantin and from 15 to 28 October in..." (*Informations Ouvrières* #1017) (The names of some eighty cities follow). What is the rally for? What are its slogans? What tasks will it propose to the workers' movement to face their most sensitive problems? It is not known, at most it is said once: "To explain the positions of the OCI (U) (unified) and fight for a policy that serves the interests of the proletariat" (ibid). The posters invite to go to the rally without any slogan, without any concrete proposal for action.

3) "Against the political mobilisation launched by the CNPF [National Council of French Employers], to oppose the mobilisation of the workers, which could take the form of a call to a congress of employees of banks, financial and insurance institutions (*Informations Ouvrières* #1017). It could take the form... and who summons it? The union? The committees? If it is about resolving the nationalisation, what control measures should this congress take, according to the OCI (U)? It is not known.

4) In several articles, it calls "to mobilise for the nationalisation of the Agache-Willot group. Not a single dismissal!" We found once (in *Informations Ouvrières* #1019) the following appeal: "To elect workshop and factory delegates, that these workshop and factory delegates meet at a national conference and take all measures to mobilise all the workers, all the population threatened by layoffs, to win the battle against the Willots and their men". That isolated call, without slogans or methods, is also useless. It should be said (again, for example):

"That the union (or the factory committees) call to a congress of delegates. There the OCI (U) will propose: "immediate occupation of Boussac–Saint Freres and all factories of the Agache-Willot group". "With the factories occupied, we will send a delegation to the ministry to demand the immediate nationalisation without compensation and under workers control of Agache-Willot". "Formation of defence pickets. Formation of committees that go to unions and factory committees to ask for measures of solidarity". "Great rally of the OCI (U) at the Porte de Pantin: for the nationalisation of Agache-Willot, the OCI (U) proposes strike and occupation of the factories of this capitalist octopus".

Why having these calls (quite rare, by the way) to mobilise; abstract calls, without slogans, without organisational proposals, which therefore do not mobilise anyone? We believe the key is a political document "prepared by the Political Bureau of the OCI (U)... as a preparatory text for the XXVI Congress" published in *La Lettre Informations Ouvrières* issue 1011: "At present we must express what the masses expect from the government, which does not mean that all claims should be made towards the government: the general rule is they should be directed towards the bosses, and not necessarily in terms of immediate action. The preparation of the big struggles to come, possibly the general strike, depend essentially on the political maturity...".

Elsewhere we will see whether the slogans should go against the bosses or the government. But here it is said that the slogans should not be formulated "necessarily in terms of immediate action".

We might agree if it specified which slogans, for example, "Bourgeois ministers out of the government" or "When we have enough strength we will throw out the bourgeois government of Mitterrand". These are not slogans for mobilisation. They are propaganda slogans, to "patiently explain", and they will be while the masses trust this government.

But here we have to think it is about all the slogans. A conviction which is reinforced when we read *Informations Ouvrières*: no slogan for action, no measure of struggle.

The great struggles and the general strike “depend essentially on the political maturity” — that is undeniable. But does this mean that meanwhile, we do nothing more than general propaganda for the “nationalisation” or the “war on unemployment”? Furthermore, can the “political maturity” be accelerated without us Trotskyists deploying a daily, tireless agitation, with slogans and measures of struggle around the most sensitive problems (high cost of living, unemployment and the kind of government we urgently need)? This, Comrades of the CC of the POSI, is not Trotskyism, it is reformism.

6. Transitional slogans or tasks not linked to the problem of power is the negation of Trotskyism

Trotsky, in the *Transitional Program*, is categorical about the central issue of transitional demands. He says:

“It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today’s conditions and from today’s consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat” (Ibid, p. 75).

And insisting on this criterion that if transitional demands are not linked to the problem of power they are not useful, let us remember that Trotsky when he points out that we are for expropriations without compensation he clarifies that “we link up the question of expropriation with that of seizure of power by the workers and peasants” (Ibid, p. 81).

The OCI (U) does none of this. At no time does it link its slogans with a proposal of power to oppose it to the bourgeois government of Mitterrand. The OCI (U) has completely eliminated from its agitation the most formidable slogan developed by Lenin and Trotsky for the stage where the masses have illusions in the popular-frontist government, which is “Out the bourgeois ministers and the bourgeoisie of the popular-frontist government”. What is pitiful is that the OCI (U) neither has, nor permanently agitates any other slogan of power.

There is no valid explanation to justify this abandonment of the most important transitional slogan developed by Marxism to face this moment of the class struggle. Always the most important, central point of the *Transitional Program* is the question of the power we want power and the power that by means of agitation we oppose to the bourgeois government. Lenin always opposed the Russian popular-frontist government one or two forms of power. “All Power to the Soviets” as soon as he arrived in Russia. And, subsequently, “Out the bourgeois ministers of the provisional government”, and so on. Never does a Trotskyist party fail to make a proposal of power.

But this proposal is not part of a summation, that is, it is not added to the other slogans but is the axis of the system of “transitional demands”. Precisely this is the axis of the system of “transitional demands”. Precisely this is the axis that the OCI (U) does not have. As a result of this total abandonment of the transitional program (because there is no transitional program without the systematic proposal of power to agitate every day as the essential axis of all our slogans and our entire policy), we find the abandonment by the OCI (U) of the struggle for a workers’ and peasants’ government. Not only does the OCI (U) not fight for the bourgeois ministers to leave the popular-frontist government, but — what is much more serious — it has totally abandoned the point of the *Transitional Program* that insists on the need to fight for the workers’ and peasants’ government.

The OCI (U) has given up all this time to make the demand the Bolsheviks addressed to the Mensheviks and SRs: “Break with the bourgeoisie” “Take the power in your hands”. Just as Trotsky says: “Each of the transitional demands should, therefore, lead to one and the same political

conclusion: the workers need to break with all traditional parties of the bourgeoisie in order, jointly with the peasants, to establish their own power (Ibid, p. 95).

The OCI (U) has not required, as imperatively demanded by the *Transitional Program*: “Of all parties and organisations which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name we demand that they break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers’ and peasants’ government” (Ibid, p. 94). Nor has it made absolutely any agitation around transitional demands that should be a part, in our opinion, of the program of the workers’ and peasants’ government. Despite that Trotsky insists in the *Transitional Program* that this agitation must be tireless, i.e., permanent and with full force. And this slogan, like all other *Transitional Program* slogans, has as one of its objectives to destroy “the reformist and pacifist illusions”.

7. The construction of Trotskyist parties

The other side of the backbone of the *Transitional Program* is the systematic agitational campaign for the construction of a Trotskyist party with mass influence. This systematic campaign is expressed in two ways: It cannot be carried out if there is not a permanent criticism and a sharp demarcation from the traitorous workers’ parties to justify the Trotskyist party call to the workers vanguard to build and develop our party as the only party mortally faced to the popular-frontist government and the other counter-revolutionary workers’ parties. If the first task of denouncing the traitors is not fulfilled the other task, the call to strengthen our party, cannot be fulfilled either because no worker will be able to understand today in France why he has to come to the OCI (U) if the OCI (U) is, in general terms, with the program of the Socialist Party and it does not criticise it, nor does it criticise the FCP. This is the reason why the OCI (U) has abandoned any systematic campaign of explanation on the one hand and agitation on the other, calling on the workers to build the Trotskyist party. Not even in the posters of a scheduled rally does the OCI (U) call for building the party. The OCI (U) cannot raise the slogan that the workers who are frontally against the popular-frontist government and who face traitorous workers’ parties come to the party because unfortunately, the politics of our French section do not match the revolutionary sentiments of the workers’ vanguard. All this happens for abandoning the method of the *Transitional Program*.

CHAPTER VII

The crucial importance of this discussion

It is a constant in history that, on a popular-frontist government arriving in power, two clearly defined blocks appear in the workers' movement: the opportunist and the revolutionary blocs. Beware, not tendencies, but blocs — heterogeneous groups integrating into their bosom disparate, even antagonistic, currents of the workers' movement. Huge tactical differences, of historical, theoretical and even philosophical order may exist among its components — what unites them are some key political positions.

The classic example is the Russian revolution, under the popular-frontist government of Kerensky. There emerged a revolutionary bloc integrated by a current of revolutionary Marxism (Lenin-Trotsky) and anarchists and Left Socialist Revolutionaries. And at the other pole, an opportunist bloc, composed of contumacious revisionists (Plekhanov), internationalist centrists (Martov) and also a sector of revolutionary Marxism (the Kamenev-Stalin wing of the Bolshevik Party).

It is no coincidence that in these cases blocs and not parties or tendencies emerge — the intensity of the class struggle in the revolutionary stage causes a great polarisation in the workers' movement and the left that transcends old differences without eliminating them.

What is it what unites the different tendencies in their respective blocs? Their attitude towards the popular-frontist government and the counter-revolutionary workers' parties that comprise it. The policy of the opportunist bloc has two very precise characteristics. On the one hand, it supports the popular-frontist government; each of its members does it in different ways, but they are all united in this policy of support, or “defence” of the government. On the other hand, it tends to dilute the strict line of demarcation between the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary workers' parties, by seeking agreements with these.

From these characteristics a whole policy is derived: abandonment of the systematic denunciation of the popular-frontist and counter-revolutionary government in everyday agitation and in the party press; abandonment of the slogans of government, of the task of “patiently explaining” — that is, in a propagandistic but constant way — to the masses, the need to overturn the government in order to establish the revolutionary workers' power; etc., etc. The revolutionary bloc, which, as we mentioned above, is also heterogeneous, has political characteristics antagonistic to the opportunist block: it attacks the popular-frontist government and differs sharply from the counter-revolutionary workers' parties that integrate it. Hence its constant policy: systematic denunciation of the government, no support for their actions or statements, however, progressive they may seem; to instil in the masses absolute mistrust; refusal to conclude the smallest agreement with the traitorous workers' parties, unmasking them and calling the masses to fight them. And above all, the “patient” and constant “explanation” of slogans such as “all power to the Soviets”, “out with the bourgeois ministers”, which help to show our hatred of the bourgeois government and the need to establish the revolutionary government. This policy leads to the point of repudiating, as Trotsky and the French section did in 1936, the “Matignon Accords” between Blum, the bosses and the trade unions, which included measures so “progressive” as the of 40-hour-week law.

The France of today, under Mitterrand (like the France of 1936 under Blum), is no exception. Faced with the popular-frontist government the two blocks reappear. In the revolutionary bloc

are us, along with the ultra-left — and adventurers in the world— groups, sects or parties. In the opportunistic bloc — forming part of a larger bloc of the SP and CP — is the bloc of the currents led by Pablo, Mandel, and Lambert. History repeats itself again: a sector of the revolutionary Marxist movement, Lambert’s sector, becomes part of the opportunistic bloc.

Comrades of the POSI central committee, I want to clarify that I am not insulting Comrade Pierre. Simply that, as a Marxist, I apply political characterisations and do not shy away from calling things by their name. If I am wrong, the error will turn against me or will serve to make jokes at the expense of my theoretical adventurism. This is why I want to dwell on the reasons that lead me to argue that currently there are two blocs on the international Trotskyist movement.

1. A theoretical-political bloc between Pablo and Lambert?

It is not a matter of comparing here the respective trajectories of Pablo and Lambert, nor their principles or theoretical positions. In this sense, Pablo and Pierre are totally mutually opposed, which is why we talk about bloc. The essential thing is to compare their political positions in the face of the government of Mitterrand. And I consciously speak of Pierre, because I think he is the main author of the document approved by the Central Committee of the OCI (unified) to present to the congress.

I do not want to dwell on the proposals of the OCI (unified) in *Informations Ouvrières*, already dealt with extensively in other parts of this letter. I want to refer to the “*Draft Political Report to the XXVI Congress of the OCI*”, published in the *Internal Bulletin* No. 1.

Any statement made here is worth a thousand articles in *Informations Ouvrières* because here it is not a matter of articles or series of articles on this or that problem. No: This report sets without any possibility of confusion, the official party policy for a whole period, until the next congress.

1) On page 19 of the aforementioned bulletin, four points of support of the OCI (unified) to the government are mentioned. On the need to break the state apparatus of the V Republic: “The OCI (unified) will support any step that the Mitterrand-Mauroy government may give in this regard, without taking charge of its policy”.

2) On economic policy and the nationalisations that the government projects: “The OCI (unified) will support any step that the Mitterrand-Mauroy government takes in this regard. We believe that the measures taken by the government for the workers of Boussac-St Freres to keep their jobs until September are the first step”.

3) On the repeal of the anti-secular laws and the suppression of official funds for private education: “Once again, the OCI supports any progress in this regard”.

4) On the problems of employment, rising prices, education, vocational training: “we will approach them always be from the same angle”.

Let us now compare these positions, which have the merit of being extremely clear, with those expressed in the newspaper *Pour L'autogestion* and other documents of the *Tendance Marxiste-Revolutionnaire Internationale*, the party of Pablo.

1) “... we unconditionally defend the Mitterrand-Mauroy government against attacks from the right and support all the social and political measures that it takes, that meet the demands of the workers...” (*Pour L'autogestion*, #1).

2) “We support every measure favourable to the workers; we fight against every counteroffensive from bourgeois forces...” (*La Victoire Socialiste*, supplement of *Pour L'autogestion* #2. This is the political resolution of the constituent congress of the party).

3) In the same document is proposed a “program of action” of 14 or 15 points: none is against the government or against the counter-revolutionary workers’ parties. The most it goes to say is: “Initially, at least, the workers will come out to fight on behalf of the government, to defend it from the attacks of its internal and external enemies”. And “only the independent mobilisation

of the working masses is capable of generating a dynamic that exceeds the limits imposed by the presidential program and the institutions of the V Republic”.

4) Finally, in an editorial in the magazine *Sous le drapeau du socialisme*, it says: “It is a matter of skilfully combining the unity of action, supporting every progressive measure, with the propaganda of the transitional program...” (10 May).

As we see, neither Pablo nor Lambert attack the government or raise the need to denounce its imperialist and counter-revolutionary character or face the counter-revolutionary workers’ parties. The Mandelist LCR, incidentally, has the same position. I will not bring the quotations to prove it, not to belabour the point. In any case, if there is any difference between Lambert and Pablo, it is that while Lambert talks about “supporting steps”, Pablo speaks of “supporting measures”. In this terminological difference (obviously it is not more than that) we see a rapprochement between Lambert and ... Stalin, who from the pages of Pravda in March 1917 also supported the “progressive steps” of the provisional government.

With these positions, the OCI (U) and Lambert have reached a new theoretical-political conception according to which, when a confrontation between the government and the workers’ movement occurs, one does not take advantage of the situation to denounce mercilessly Mitterrand and his workers’ ministers as traitors, but quite the opposite: the blame for all the ills is laid on all managers or administrators appointed by the previous government. A notable example of this is the dispute in the Charles de Gaulle airport in mid-July when there was a strike against the dismissal of several workers. In the document for the XXVI Congress of the OCI (unified) (already mentioned), Lambert explains the attitude of the OCI (U), as an example of what should be the policy of the party at this stage: “We did not say, the person responsible is [transport] minister Fiterman; we said that it is the Directorate General”. Therefore, according to Lambert, our policy is directed to carefully avoid the masses hate the ministers of the bourgeois government.

2. Kamenev-Stalin against Lenin-Molotov

It seems useful to review a little how the two antagonistic blocs have always emerged under the popular fronts. Let’s start with the Russian Revolution. Before the arrival of Lenin in Russia, there is a deep political differentiation among young leaders like Molotov, who had taken the party leadership and Pravda, and the older leaders like Kamenev and Stalin. What were the differences? Everyone agreed that the slogan “Down with the provisional government” could not be raised for the moment. Now, Molotov and his group came to focus on the systematic denunciation of the government and the counter-revolutionary workers’ parties, and they did not approve any of its measures, however “progressive” they might be.

From the arrival of Stalin and Kamenev to Petrograd, there is a noticeable change in party policy. Kamenev published in *Pravda* an article where he fully supported the policy of “national defence” promoted by the Menshevik-SR majority of the Soviet. This policy was widely repudiated by the ranks of the Bolshevik Party. For his part, Stalin had a policy that essentially matched that of Kamenev, but much more skilful and careful than Kamenev’s, as it did not raise the support to the government in a forthright manner. Let’s see: “Pillaged by the development of the revolution, the provisional government had to take this first step towards the emancipation of the peoples and it took it (...). The peoples of Russia that until now were considered suspects can now breathe freely and feel citizens of Russia”.

Comrades, in politics it is valid the aphorism “Style makes the man”. Compare the style of Stalin with the style of the OCI (U). Stalin said, “The provisional government had to take this first step towards the emancipation of the peoples and it took it”. *Informations Ouvrières* says regarding the measure to suspend expulsions of immigrants: “It is an important first step towards meeting the demands of immigrant workers...”. None of the two denounces that behind the seemingly “progressive” measures will come a thousand counter-revolutionary measures. So it was in Russia,

where the provisional government was as imperialist as the czarist. So it will be in France with Mitterrand, and we already predict it.

But Stalin did not just support a measure (“step”): he formulated the theory-program of that support in a classic way that Trotskyism subsequently analysed.

In late March a Bolshevik conference began, alongside a meeting of representatives of the Soviets. The conference lasted until the arrival of Lenin, in early April. The informant in the main item on the agenda — the policy against the provisional government — was Stalin. A phrase of Stalin in this report has passed into history as the classic formula of opportunism: “We must support the provisional government to the extent that this consolidates the gains of the revolution; on the contrary, must not support it in what is counter-revolutionary”. Trotsky says that, given the report of what the government was doing, “the conference of the Bolsheviks, restless, had to abandon the formula of support”. And he adds that none of the resolutions of the conference, even those who criticised the “counter-revolutionary machinations” of the government, included a slogan of power to oppose the popular-frontist government.

Since his first article in *Pravda*, Stalin never mentioned the provisional government: he observed complete silence on it. Trotsky comments that “The brief article published by Stalin in *Pravda* on 14 March 1917 (...) did not contain a single reference to the provisional government or war”. We have read the Stalin articles corresponding to this opportunist stage (*Works*, 1917, Spanish edition) and we found only occasional reference to this or that minister. Instead, with the characteristic “cunning” of opportunism, he is always looking for ways to support a “step”, without ever denouncing the government and, therefore, without raising a slogan of power as the core of its policy.

Another one of his characteristics, as we can deduce from reading his articles and from comments by Trotsky, it is to attack the “feudal” elements, the enemies of the government; never the government itself. Since I will soon prepare a historical work on the differences that have taken place in the Marxist movement with regard to popular-frontism, I will just confine myself to give here a few quotes, concerning Lenin’s policy. Already from abroad he stated in a telegram to the Bolshevik leadership, politics against the government was “no trust in and no support... Kerensky is especially suspect...” (VI Lenin, “Telegram to the Bolsheviks Leaving for Russia”, *Collected Works*, op. cit., Vol. 23, p. 292). In a first draft theses, written a few days after the fall of the czar, he says concerning counter-revolutionary workers’ parties: “we cannot consent to any blocs, or alliances, or even agreements” (VI Lenin, “Draft Theses, March 4 (17), 1917, *Collected Works*, op. cit., Vol. 23, p. 287-291).

Once in Petrograd, Lenin insists with characteristic clarity on the line the party must apply: “No support for the Provisional Government; the utter falsity of all its promises should be made clear” (“April Theses”, *Collected Works*, op. cit., Vol. 24, p. 19-26). In the *April Theses*, the main programmatic document of the Russian Revolution, Lenin says: “It is inadmissible that the proletariat lend the slightest support to the new bourgeois government” And not paying the “slightest support” means, in Marxist language, you should not support any of its measures.

Let us have a look at the implementation of this policy at a time of maximum tension: in the middle of Kornilov’s coup. “Even now we must not support Kerensky’s government. This is unprincipled” (VI Lenin, “To the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.”, *Collected Works*, op. cit., Vol. 25, p. 289-293). And in the same article, he denounces the Bolsheviks who adopted an opportunist line wanting to lend some support to the government of Kerensky.

Needless to say that Trotsky has written many pages in support of this policy and criticism of the opportunist line of Kamenev and Stalin.

3. The Molinier-Pivert-Shachtman bloc against Trotsky

In 1935, when the Popular Front was constituted in France, Pivert and Molinier had a strong fight against Trotsky. This fight is very interesting because it has to do not with the Popular Front government, as it had not yet risen to power, but with the traitorous workers' parties that formed part of the Popular Front project. Molinier-Frank published a newspaper of masses, they broke with the official section and, based on five slogans, began to structure their group. Trotsky not only bitterly criticised that they did not have a program of action, but also that they did not violently denounce the reformist parties and the own Pivert. All this we have already explained. It was necessary to do so to recall the argument of the Old Man. For him, the worst was to tend to make a bloc with Pivert, who in turn was making an indirect bloc with Blum and the CP. That is, Trotsky denounced Molinier as a social patriot for negotiating with Pivert and indirectly making a bloc with the opportunist parties through him. Pivert, meanwhile, attacked Trotsky for sectarian, for criticising very hard the SP and the CP.

Much more interesting is the situation that occurred in Spain with Shachtman, although already in relation to the Popular Front government and the parties that made up the front.

Trotsky, in a letter to Shachtman, told him that "If we were to have a member in the Cortes, he would vote against the military budget of Negrin" ("Answer to Questions on the Spanish Situation (September 14, 1937)", in *The Spanish Revolution (1931-1939)*, op. cit. p. 326). We need to remember that the Negrin government was asking for money in the Cortes to buy weapons to fight against fascism. Shachtman replied with a letter in which he said he was surprised and wondered if it was not a typo in Trotsky's letter. Years later he clarified that the surprise was not only his, rather of the entire leadership of the SWP. Shachtman's arguments, and possibly Cannon's, and of the rest of the SWP leadership are the same as always, of Stalin, of Kamenev, of Nin. How are we to refuse to vote in favour of a measure that goes in this case against fascism or against capitalism? That is to say, the line of supporting the progressive measures of the popular-frontist government instead of denouncing it. Trotsky replied adamantly that "A vote in parliament for the financial budget is not a 'material' aid, but an act of political solidarity. If we can vote for Negrin's budget, why can't we delegate our representative to his government? It can also be interpreted as a 'material aid'. The French Stalinists give their full confidence to the Popular Front government but officially they don't participate in it. We call this kind of non-participation the worst, most pernicious kind of participation. To give Blum and Chautemps all the means they need for their actions signifies political participation in the government coalition" ("Letter to James P. Cannon (September 21, 1937)", in *The Spanish Revolution (1931-1939)*, op. cit., p. 335).

The same Trotsky goes on to state that the position of Shachtman was typical of the reformists. We would add and typical of Stalin and Kamenev, of support to government measures, which are considered progressive, necessary.

Thus the question by Shachtman: "How can we refuse to give a million to buy guns for the Front?" has been made thousands of times to revolutionary Marxists by the reformists. "How can you vote against the millions and millions necessary for schools, for roads, not to speak of national defence? We recognise the necessity of schools and roads no less than the necessity of the fight against Franco. We use the 'capitalist' railroads; our children go to the 'capitalist' schools, but we refuse to vote for the budget of the capitalist government" ("Letter to James P. Cannon (September 21, 1937)", in *The Spanish Revolution (1931-1939)*, op. cit., p. 335-337). And proving that his and Lenin's line was a historical line on the popular-frontist governments, he explains how against the line of the sectarians opposing these measures, measures of a government that enjoys the confidence of the worker's movement, how we must act so that the workers who believe in the government understand us: "From the point of view of agitation, we would not now have in Spain the slightest difficulty explaining our negative vote: 'We asked for two million for rifles and they gave only one million. We asked for distribution of the rifles under workers' control; they refused. We asked that the police be disarmed and their rifles be given to the front; they refused. How can we voluntarily give our money and our confidence to this government?' Every worker would

understand and approve of our action” (Ibid). That is, we must reject the “progressive” measures of the government, although for agitation, for the masses to understand this constantly negative attitude not to vote for any measure, however, positive it may seem of a counter-revolutionary government masquerading as workers’ government, Trotsky tells us that instead of rejecting them we must oppose transitional and higher slogans that go in the direction of the workers’ revolution, and development of control by the working class, especially for the government to reject them, and thus to give clarity to the working class demonstrating that they are measures ultimately in favour of the bourgeoisie.

4. The case of Bolivia

The first discussion in our movement we know of in this post-war period, about the problem of popular-frontist governments and the policy we should have before them, took place in 1952 about Bolivia. It is very interesting because the controversy was already then with Pablo and Mandel.

You all know that in April 1952 the Bolivian proletariat destroyed the army and imposed as the only real power in Bolivia the armed militias of the workers’ and peasants’ movement. At the same time, a government was formed of Paz Estenssoro, the MNR leader, with one or another union leader in the cabinet, mainly Lechín. Faced with this new rarely seen phenomenon, of a totally liquidated army and a popular-frontist government having to ride in this situation — similar to that of Nicaragua today — Pablo and Mandel launched the line of “critical support” to the MNR. Thus in 1954, in July-August, *Quatrième Internationale* said approvingly, that the Trotskyist position in Bolivia was exerting “pressure on the government to meet the deepest aspirations of the workers and peasants”. The line that Lenin defined as the worst kind of opportunism, to trust and demand from a popular-frontist government revolutionary solutions.

But in December 1957, *Quatrième Internationale* summed up the position that “Trotskyism”, i.e., the disciples of Pablo and Mandel in Bolivia, had taken as follows: “The POR began with a fair but critical support to the MNR government. That is, it avoided launching the slogans of ‘Down with the government of the MNR’ and critically supported it against any attack by imperialism and the reaction, as well as all progressive measures”.

As we see, it is a whole position directly opposed to Lenin’s, who insisted that not even at the time when Kornilov rose against Kerensky we had to give him support. In the same way, supporting every progressive measure went against the line of Lenin and Trotsky, that we could not give the slightest support to the popular-frontist government.

The predecessors of the PST (A) fought energetically against this policy. We denounced that giving critical support, supporting measures of a popular-frontist and therefore the counter-revolutionary government was a betrayal of Trotskyism. And we used the same arguments that Lenin and Trotsky had used to combat previous opportunist deviations. We believe our position at that time was correct. But it was not only correct in this aspect, but also in the problem of power. While the Pabloites and Mandelites in Bolivia were making proposals of power linked to the MNR or to left of the MNR, refusing, at the same time to criticise the different tendencies of the government vindicating them as leftists, trying to make the bureaucratic and Trotskyist differences disappear from the COB rather than accentuating them and denouncing more than ever the bureaucratic currents of Lechín and the CP. We, on the contrary, denounced Lechín violently and made our known proposal of power of “All power to the COB”. That was our line, that we felt was the line of Lenin and Trotsky, we still believe that is the correct line today.

5. A crucial discussion for the Fourth International (International Committee)

The discussion that has begun is not only crucial for the Fourth International (International Committee), but possibly the most important that has taken place within the world Trotskyist

movement. This discussion will have major implications not only for our international organisation as a whole but also for each of the national sections. Among the national sections where possibly the enormous importance of this discussion will be expressed more quickly is in our Spanish movement. And this for an obvious reason: there are many possibilities that in a short-term Felipe González win the election and a popular-frontist or capitalist workers' government is constituted in Spain. Then, the current discussion will acquire decisive importance for you, Spanish comrades. So crucial that if you approve the positions of the OCI (U) and are consistent with them, as soon as González rise to the government you will have to make a radical change in your politics, identical to that of the OCI (U) today .

Bringing down to earth what this would mean. If you do the same as the OCI (U) does, we would see the following: you would cease to mention in your press and your agitation the ETA prisoners and to fight for their freedom. You would say that if the Basques vote for the Socialists they are on track in their struggle for independence. Nothing would be said if the government pursues the Chilean or Argentine political exiles, much less you would fight for their freedom if they are prisoners. You would cease to mention the struggle of the Basque people, it would not be supported and you would reach the height of not publishing any more news about ETA and the repressions ETA may suffer from the government of González. If the Spanish army occupies the Basque country, you will not say anything.

Nothing would be said either if Gonzalez comes to an agreement with Videla to pursue the exiles of the Southern Cone. If Gonzalez joins NATO, logically you would not denounce it, nor would you mention the fact in your press. Much less you would call for a campaign or any demonstration against the government adopting this measure.

If Gonzalez increases the defence budget, if he gives away money to the arms manufacturers, "compensating them", you would seal your mouth and press, taking good care of not making any comment, let alone the slightest criticism.

If Gonzalez promulgates an ultra-bourgeois plan against unemployment, by which — with a lot of luck — in two years there will be a hundred thousand new jobs, while at the same time delivering millions to the capitalists who create jobs through higher profits, you would say they are at the beginning of this plan of Gonzalez and support it.

If there is a strike or dispute in Seat — as there was at Renault, for weeks and weeks — you will not open your mouth once, our newspapers will not publish a single line on the subject, reaching the point of being the only newspaper in the country that does not mention that dispute which is of enormous importance, being the largest industrial company in the country. You will be the only ones within the workers' movement not supporting that dispute.

In exchange for this silence, you will publish brainy articles or draft political resolutions for the congress, which elliptically will say not to strike against state enterprises because they go against the government. If there is a strike of tenant Andalusian workers in Barcelona, against rising rents decreed by the government, you logically will not inform of let alone support it. At the end of the day, it is the government who made the increases and there is no need to fight against it.

And in relation to the cardinal point which defines when a current is opportunistic or revolutionary, which is the question of power, you will have a very clear position: You will search under the microscope for clauses or phrases of a law, or a project or a speech by members of the government appearing as "progressive" or a "useful step" to say that we must support this step in the path the process... etc.

You will never make a systematic campaign denouncing the government and will reach the absurd of saying the blame for the Seat strike lies not on the government but on the managers designated or protected by the government. You will seek all kinds of excuses not to attack the government, and — what is most serious of all — you will abandon the traditional Trotskyist slogan of bourgeois ministers out of the popular-frontist government.

The few times you say something, every five or six newspapers, that it would be desirable for the bourgeois to leave the government, you will say it in a timid, fearful way, as if in shame of hurting the government, and you will never do any campaign or systematically raise any slogan of alternative government and power to confront the sinister popular-frontist government of Gonzalez, agent of the monarchy and the Spanish counter-revolution. You will do the same with respect to the Socialist and Communist parties. Everywhere you will tend to vote with them, avoiding that the workers believe that we have differences. There will be factual or tacit agreements made with them on education, on the student movement, on the support for the “progressive measures” of the government, etc.

That is the faithful mirror of your future policy if you accept the current policy and theory of the OCI (U) for the Mitterrand government.

No need to tell you, comrades, that ours is a diametrically opposite policy. There is not a single of these points where we do the same as the OCI (U) does or raises. It is directly opposite. We agree on just one point, as Lenin agreed with Kamenev: that while the masses still believe in the government we should not raise as an immediate slogan for action “Down with the government”. With two clarifications: that from right now we will tell the masses they have to break with the government because it is their mortal enemy, and that their belief is an irrational belief because it is to believe in their counter-revolutionary enemies, and clearly we will tell the working class that the goal of our party, the main goal, is to make an insurrection to oust this traitor government. The second clarification, that Kamenev, when the time came to oust the popular-frontist government was also against.

CHAPTER VIII

It is **ESSENTIAL** to equip ourselves with a thesis on the front-populist governments

This discussion is due to an error of those of us who wrote the Theses: we believed that the problem of popular-frontist governments was completely solved by the analysis by Trotsky, despite being a crucial issue. Mitterrand's rise to power has revealed to us that it is not so, that there are gaps and serious unresolved problems or which are posed again. Like any theoretical problem not solved, it causes profound differences in policy and practice. Added to this is that all popular-frontist governments have provoked responses, both opportunistic and revolutionary, from leaders, currents and organisations of the own revolutionary Marxism. Both the opportunistic and the revolutionary responses have had, throughout this century, almost the same characteristics and even the same words. Because of the youth of the cadres and sympathisers of the Trotskyist movement in general, we would like to outline the answers, both opportunistic and revolutionary, to serve as a basis for developing Theses that indeed are the product of a basic agreement to overcome the current impasse. Let's see what those characteristics are which are repeated and which we can generalise as the first elements of the future Theses.

1. In relation to the front-populist government

The central point that differentiates the opportunists from the revolutionists and today revisionism from Trotskyism is the one dealing with the policy towards the government. Opportunism and Trotskyism differ sharply on three fundamental aspects in relation to their policy.

The first is the one that has to do with either support or not. Opportunists are characterised by giving its support to the front-populist government. This support may be open, shameful, or may be to the government measures, or factual when one is not clearly opposed to such measures or any other variant of the sort. In opposition to this, Trotskyism is characterised by not giving any support, under any circumstances, neither to the government nor to its measures. This does not mean that it does not defend these measures when they are attacked by the counter-revolution. On some occasions, Trotsky — not Lenin — called this defence support, but it was a support against the attack by others. But, when there is no attack on these measures, we never support when the government proposes them.

Second, the opportunists are characterised by a complicit silence regarding the government. They do not denounce it as a bourgeois government and, like any bourgeois government, as counter-revolutionary. That is, there is no systematic policy of denunciation, of frontal confrontation and opposition to the government. The revolutionist, instead, makes a systematic, relentless denunciation of the government as bourgeois and counter-revolutionary, he calls not to believe any of its promises or measures.

Against this opportunist line, the axis of all revolutionary politics is the systematic agitation of a type of workers' government diametrically opposed to the front-populist, to counterpose to it. These slogans of government are agitated minute by minute, such as "Out the bourgeois ministers

from the government”, “Government of SP and CP”, “workers’ and peasants’ government”. Trotsky has even raised the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat or workers’ government or the most famous of “All Power to the Soviets”. Always, always, the revolutionist has a great slogan, which is the key: the slogan of power to oppose the front-populist government. But this does not at all mean that while the masses still trust the government we raise the slogan to overturn it. But this does not mean we hide from the working class our characterisation and politics. We are preparing to throw the government when we persuade the workers that it is a counter-revolutionary government.

2. On the bourgeoisie, imperialism and feudal reaction

The opportunist only denounces the bourgeoisie, imperialism and feudal reaction as enemies of the workers, remaining silent on the government, as if this were not the axis of revolutionary politics. The opportunist has a mania for attacking the bourgeois parties which were displaced by the front-populist government. Within the Bolshevik Party, the opportunists had a mania for attacking the czar and saying nothing about the government. The revolutionists, in contrast, without ceasing to attack the bourgeoisie, imperialism and the feudal reaction, do not stop systematically denouncing, taking advantage of every opportunity, the government that, ultimately, is an agent of them all.

3. On imperialism

The opportunist does not permanently agitate on the imperialist character of the government or the country itself. From the moment the popular-frontist government rises, a criminal silence occurs in relation to the character of the government and the country. In contrast, the revolutionist denounces the imperialist character of the government and the country with as much or greater strength than previously.

4. On the nationalist movements and the oppressed nations facing the exploitation of imperialism

The opportunist makes no agitational campaigns, or struggles, or demonstrations or statements in favour of the colonies, semi-colonies, or nationalist movements which are facing his own imperialism. In contrast, the revolutionist makes more agitation than ever, because the situation allows him to do practical activities in its favour. He systematically raises the slogan of independence of the colonies and semi-colonies or the absolute right to national self-determination. Likewise, he vindicates the nationalist movements, even though he disagrees with their politics, staunchly defending them in a public and agitational manner.

5. On the state apparatus

The opportunist does not denounce the government as a staunch defender of the bureaucratic structure of the state and, therefore, does not make a permanent agitation for the destruction of the bourgeois state. The revolutionist, on the contrary, systematically denounces the bureaucratic apparatus of the bourgeois state and calls to destroy it to impose a new type of state: commune according to Lenin, Soviet according to Trotsky.

6. On with the armed forces

The opportunist does not denounce the sinister government policy of consolidating the hierarchical structure of the armed forces, the last bastion of the capitalist regime. Therefore he

makes no campaign to destroy them. The revolutionist, on the contrary, in this stage, makes a ferocious campaign and has a transitional program to destroy them.

7. On the counter-revolutionary workers' parties

The opportunist, as soon as the counter-revolutionary workers' parties rise to power, ceases all criticism and denunciation of them as counter-revolutionaries and as the ultimate guarantee of the survival of the capitalist and imperialist regime in the world. He thus abandons one of the primary tasks of the revolutionary Marxist. As a result, he tends to dilute the differences with the other parties instead of exacerbating them. The revolutionist does exactly the opposite: he denounces more than ever such parties as counter-revolutionary, agents of imperialism and the bourgeoisie, and tries, by all means, to mobilise the masses to face and fight against them. That is, he increases his denunciation and stresses the differences taking advantage that they are part of the bourgeois government. Just as he does not support any measure of the government, he does the same with the counter-revolutionary parties; he makes no agreements with them to prevent obscuring their rejection.

8. On the world revolution

The opportunist ignores the world revolution and has no policy to develop it. Thus he abandons any proposal — like Nin, or Molinier-Frank, or Kamenev-Stalin in Russia — of the development of the world revolution. The revolutionist, on the contrary, gives as much importance to the development of the world revolution and to the revolutionary process in his own country, and he denounces the government as an agent of the world counter-revolution, raising slogans such as the Federation of European Socialist Republics and other suchlike variants, attacking the chauvinist character of the popular-frontist government.

9. On the Fourth International

The opportunist, by abandoning a strict delimitation of the counter-revolutionary workers' parties, by ceasing to denounce them daily, abandons the main task of our program which is to put to the mass movement and the vanguard, which repudiates the counter-revolutionary workers' parties, that the main task is the construction of a revolutionary party to confront them. That this party cannot be other than a Trotskyist or Trotskyist-like party with mass influence.

CHAPTER IX

What's to be done?

After this long letter, I believe that all who attend your meeting will agree with me, that the differences, apparently at least, are total. This means that the OCI (U) and we do not agree on any line, not even a slogan. Those slogans the OCI (U) raises, we would not and those we believe should be raised, the OCI (U) does not. In short, the whole policy of the OCI (U) seems wrong to us. A few weeks ago, a comrade and friend, a staunch defender of the positions of the OCI (U), told me that all my attacks were aimed to show that the OCI (U) is revisionist. He added that he had the impression that the Bolshevik Fraction was being restructured, and that meant factional politics, of rupture of the Fourth International (International Committee). As conclusion, this comrade told me that we could continue to have very cordial, even fraternal relations, but that he would stop any discussion with me, if I did not begin to acknowledge that neither the OCI (U) nor its leadership were revisionists, because revisionism and Trotskyism are incompatible and, if this is the case, we must break rather than discuss in common. I replied that I indeed consider revisionist the positions and the current policy of the OCI (U). I further clarified — I consider as revisionist the positions and policies of the OCI (U), but not so the organisation or its leadership. That is to say, I distinguish between the characterisation of an organisation and of its leaders and the characterisation of its policy. Logically a dialectical relationship between the two is established, although they may not be identical. For example, I believe that Rosa Luxemburg had a completely revisionist position on the national question, but I would have voted for her with both hands to occupy the most important position, along with Lenin and Trotsky, in the Third International, if she had lived at this time. Another example: I have denounced and continue denouncing the position of Pierre and Felipe on the anti-imperialist front as completely revisionist. During various periods of my life, I have it had a similar position to that of these comrades, and a young comrade, in the early 1950s, arguing very hard with me and my party, telling me I was revisionist for defending the theory of the anti-imperialist front, and I was not offended at all. On the contrary, I listened carefully to try to see in what he was right. Take another example. For 20 years Pierre had a revisionist, almost classic revisionist position, on Cuba. He defined Cuba as a capitalist and not as a workers' state. But no one would have thought we had to break with Pierre because of that problem. Quite the opposite. I put forth to the SWP we did not have to break with Pierre or Healy for that position.

I could go on giving examples of opportunistic and revisionist positions of mine. It is logical; it is a consequence of the crisis of our International, which appears much more frequently than we think. Recently, I realised that the position I had about El Salvador on a number of issues, pointed to revisionism, to a capitulation to the guerrillas. And I realised this when I was informed of the positions, for me, perfectly orthodox, of comrades Pierre and Felipe with respect to that country. Then I did not tear my raiment. It is also clear that current differences do not exist in one segment of reality, as were those of Rosa Luxemburg with Lenin on the national question. Our differences now revolve around the basic problem of all revolutionary politics at this stage — the response that we have to give to face the popular-frontist governments. Moreover, this is combined with many other problems. In this case, in my opinion, also with the theoretically revisionist position of the comrades on the Anti-Imperialist United Front.

Precisely, the way the issue of the Anti-Imperialist United Front was solved, is an example of how we have to act. Through the discussion, observing the results of a particular policy. In Bogota,

between Felipe, Pierre and myself, we produced a document that I consider extraordinary progress, a well-principled document in which we oppose the revisionism of the POMR [Revolutionary Marxist Workers Party], which, for me, was the ultimate expression of revisionism by Pierre and Felipe. The concrete, in this case, is that the fraternal relations and discussion, allowed us to produce that document. And when I say prepare, I'm exaggerating my intervention, because it was written from beginning to end by Pierre. I did only an important, so I think, theoretical change and some observations made by Felipe.

I would like to take advantage of this letter to respond to other observations made to me by this friend, comrade of the OCI (U). First and foremost, I want to assure you that the Bolshevik Fraction is not being restructured at all, nor do we have as a goal the rupture. We consider the Fourth International (International Committee) the greatest achievement of the Trotskyist movement since 1938. Furthermore, we also consider its theses, its leadership and organisation, as the greatest achievement of the Argentine PST, even greater than its own construction. Raising half a finger against the Fourth International (International Committee) at this time, it would be a crime for us. We have not given even half a step to restructure the Bolshevik Fraction, as evidenced by the fact that we have not made any effort to convince the leadership of the Argentine PST of our positions in the current discussion. And there can be no Bolshevik Fraction without the homogeneous intervention of the Argentine PST.

All we want is a broad, fraternal discussion, to ensure a positive outcome to the current discussion. We believe that a strong discussion is on the agenda and nothing more than that.

Having made these clarifications, which I consider very useful because I think I'm not responding only to the comrade mentioned but many of you who must have the same ideas, I think convenient to answer the position of the Comrade, about whether we cannot discuss if we say that they are revisionists. First of all, I must tell you that not all the leadership of the Argentine PST considers that the current policy of the OCI (U) is opportunistic. Moreover, to attach conditions to the discussion is very bad, because it restrains it or forces to hide what you think. Trotsky, when he argued with Burnham and Shachtman noted that despite characterising them as opportunists, there was no problem to continue in the same organisation, whether they win or lose the majority. The discussion should be open so that everyone says what they want. That is our only concern. On the other hand, when the Comrade raises the ultimatum that the condition to discuss among us was that we did not say they are revisionists, he was forgetting the character of our international organisation, the Fourth International (International Committee). You, the leaderships of the POSI and the PST know very well that at the last meeting of the General Council, both Raul and Enrique were defined as revisionists, opportunists, capitulators, etc., etc., without they being offended in the least and without Pierre and I not saying what we thought, or without they responding to us in the same way. So the ultimatum of the comrade makes me think, and I do not understand why, there are two different measuring sticks of how the discussion should be carried out; one, for those who are not French or Argentines, and another for those of these nationalities. For us, the discussions have to be fraternal, but at the same time frank, where everyone says what he thinks. I insist that we have great differences, i.e. differences that have nothing to do with the appearance of one or another slogan in the development of our activity in France, but with an entire global policy. But this cannot be a reason to jeopardise in the least the great achievement which means the Fourth International (International Committee). The only thing that is raised, I repeat, is a broad discussion of all these problems. Along with this, it is imperative to denounce and avoid anyone who wants to break our organisational structure and our achievements.

To all the comrades of national leadership with whom I have spoken — whether they come from former OCRFI or the former BF — I have put to them a very simple thing, that they ensure the broadest freedom in the discussion. And at the same time, that they try to make it a useful, not academic discussion.

In this sense, to all these comrades, I told them that I will demand that we be granted seven¹ conditions to ensure a broad discussion and a positive solution. These conditions for me, as a minimum, are as follows:

1. To open now a discussion of six or seven months. The culmination of this discussion should be a world conference under the regime of democratic centralism on the basis of reports of membership dues to the organisations at that time and a system of representation similar to that of the previous conference.

2. This discussion will necessarily encompass the official sections or sympathising groups, which means the following obligations: conducting an extraordinary national congress between one month and fifteen days before the World Conference; the publication in all official organs of each recognised group or section of a page for each position; the publication of all documents, i.e. that there are no internal discussion bulletins, because the discussion will be public.

3. A moral and organising commission shall be appointed, elected and formed by organisations of the Fourth International (International Committee), other than the OCI (U) and the Argentine PST. As alternative formulas, we can opt: if there is an agreement between the two last named parties as to the names, the commission shall be constituted ipso facto. If there is no agreement in the other formulas, countries that are home to the two old tendencies of OCRFI and BF in a process of unification, or have already been unified as in Portugal and Venezuela, would meet for them in a democratic manner to appoint a Control Commission which may not be constituted by Argentine and French comrades.

4. The commission would vote by a simple majority of votes and its decisions will final and immediately applicable.

5. Each of the groups that defend either position shall have the right to send to the parties of the Fourth International (International Committee) the comrades they consider necessary, during the six months of discussion, to defend viva voce and in the organisms that these comrades consider useful for the defence of their positions. This would mean that the Argentine PST has the right to send ten comrades to be active for six months in the OCI (U) to defend the positions and documents of the Argentine PST on the French problem in France. The OCI (U) would have to pay living and travel expenses. I am authorised to inform now, immediately, that the Argentine PST offers the same right to the OCI (U). But it is not a question of deals between parties, but that this right has to be regulated. Otherwise, the discussion becomes abstract, easily manipulated by the leaderships, despite any goodwill they have. As of now the leadership in the exterior of the Argentine PST are granted a permanent page in *Informations Ouvrières*; so will the PST do with the OCI (U), but as the Argentine PST publications are monthly, they will be given four pages instead of one to offset those given by the OCI (U).

6. The Congress of the OCI (U) will try to not vote any resolution and will only have an informative congress to enable the congress to truly resolve the final policy of the OCI (U) is the one that takes place in four months.

Comrades, I would have some other urgent problems to add. Rereading this document I see it, on the one hand, as very lengthy and, on the other, full of imperfections, oversights and possibly exaggerations, and quotes wrongly made. In a few days, I will have the final document ready, my open letter, if the course of the discussions does not lead me to believe it is not appropriate to publish it.

Since I do not have the time, I will dedicate a few lines to what I thought, in my original draft, that it would be a whole heading. It is quite possible that I will not edit the document because I consider there are two key elements to it. The first one is that we must, as always, go from the more theoretical and abstract aspects to the more concrete ones. This means what I most want to discuss to see whether we have the possibility of reaching an agreement are the theses, the draft theses I have about the popular front. If we have a basis for agreement on those theses, everything will

¹ This is clearly a slip of the pen, as the conditions that Nahuel Moreno enumerates are only six. [Editor]

be on its way to being ok, as it happened regarding Peru and the Anti-Imperialist United Front. If there is no basis for agreement on these theses, I believe we will be moving to a potentially critical situation, because that would mean we have very deep differences over the most important fact of the class struggle at this time, which is the French popular-frontist government. The second fact I wanted to point out is that, quite possibly, all will be easily fixed. Because it is not the first time that between Comrade Pierre and me great theoretical differences arise, and so far we have always solved them in a very fraternal way, through close cooperation, despite the very strong arguments. Those discussions never discouraged the concept I have of Comrade Pierre.

In the same way, I think the core leadership of the Fourth International (International Committee) that so far have made up Pierre and myself, quite possibly will re-emerge unscathed from the test that will be this strong discussion, and that we will achieve a superior synthesis. For that, we need urgently to know whether the very simple and very clear schema of draft theses that I bring in this letter to you, can give way to the development of common theses that begin to overcome this tremendous discussion ahead.

Whether we reach an agreement or not, whether we elaborate together a thesis on the popular-frontist governments or not, my appreciation, my consideration towards Comrade Pierre will not diminish even by half a millimetre. At most, I would say that the laws of history are not only superior to a bureaucratic Secretary General but to the most talented Trotskyist leader I have ever met in my political life.

That is to say, comrades, I am deeply optimistic because — today more than ever — I believe in the Trotskyist passion and talent of Comrade Pierre, as well as of the comrades who accompany him, Stephan, Francois and Felipe, in the secretariat of the Fourth International (International Committee). I believe so much in them that I am almost sure that this ongoing discussion will mean a great leap forward for the common organisation we have built with the invaluable contribution of the comrades I have mentioned. Because I believe in them, I am very optimistic. Apologising again for the length of this letter, I leave you wishing you success in your meeting and in the unification process.

Nahuel Moreno