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IWL-FI

International Workers League
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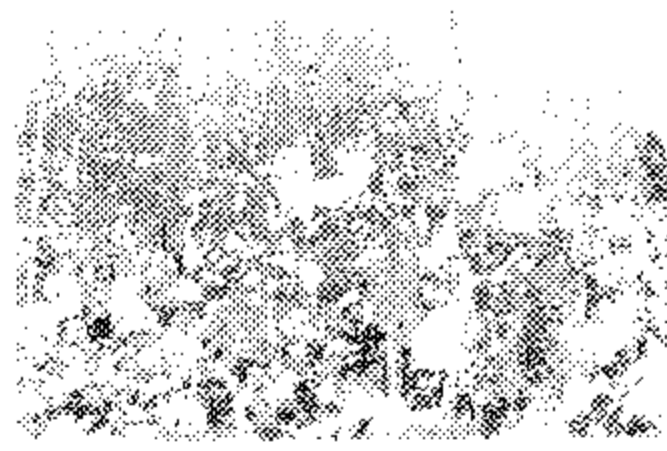
Rank and file dockers, engineering workers, and miners in whose struggles Bill played a part, either directly as shop steward or as editor of the lively left-wing journal Socialist Outlook (1948-54).

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For a Marxist and international revolutionary leadership



Europe is on fire, Greek unions called their 13th general strike in October

On February 23rd 1988, the International Socialist League was formed from members of a tendency (Bolshevik Tendency), which had been fighting for internationalism and seeking to change the political course of the majority leadership of the Workers Revolutionary Party ("Workers Press"). The International Socialist League became a section of the International Workers League (Fourth International). The question of internationalism is vital, not just for the small group of Trotskyists who were involved in this struggle in the WRP it is vital for the whole of the working class. We said in the Socialist Voice in March 1989, commenting on the discussion in our first national conference, that the developments towards a European Integrated Market in 1992, "will not mean the increasing strength of a united capitalist Europe but will mean Europe becoming the cockpit of all the contradictory conflicting world forces. The struggle between Germany, Japan and the United States will be fought here in an increasingly sharpening way, while British capitalism will be driven to the wall."

Today parallel and explosive struggles are taking place throughout Europe and the world and it is Greece, Ireland, Spain, Italy and Portugal that are its weakest links and Britain is deeply mired in the same problems.

The perspective was adopted in 1989 was that Britain would experience:

"A deterioration of conditions of life for the mass of the population - with inflation, worsening education, health, housing; attacks on benefits, workers organisations and corruption. All this means a steady lowering of the conditions of life for the mass of the people while at the same time a small circle of the ruling class increase their wealth enormously."

22 years later the prognosis is confirmed. The organised working class, youth, poor and Black communities over the last year have begun to fight while the attacks continue and deepen. The biggest question we face is the crisis of working class leadership, and the central task is to build a Marxist international struggle against capitalism.

One of the major crimes of Stalinism was the undermining of the internationalism of the working class. In 1923, Stalin discovered the theory of 'Socialism in One Country' as a weapon against Trotsky and his internationalism. Since then, what has been consistent in all the turns of Stalinist policies is its opposition to a struggle for a real internationalist policy for the working class.

Today the working class has no international organisation with mass sections. Yet it is more evident now than ever that world relations dominate working class lives. As the banks and multi-nationals roam and dominate

the globe the crisis of capitalism is threatening a catastrophe throughout the world.

The IMF is warning that they are facing the most serious risk to their world system since 2008. However they continue with a policy attacking all sections of the working class while the banks, hedge fund managers and speculators demand and receive complete freedom to continue with casino capitalism that will result in the devastation of the planet.

In three years the crisis has changed from one of bank debt to one of sovereign debt and is not a new crisis but the product of continued deregulation of capital which has existed since the 1980s and earlier. As the crisis descends and deepens, each step sends shudders throughout the world and the fundamental basis of this crisis is the intractable contradiction of commodity production based in private property.

The Financial Times has reported that the "troika" (the IMF, European commission and European Central Bank) are outlining the need for banks and investors to agree to 60% less than the face value of what they lent the Greek government.

The USA is demanding that the EU resolve this crisis as they seek to unload their crisis onto the rest of the world. At the same time the Chinese leadership

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For a Marxist and international

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is demanding that capitalist leaders in Europe have to pass the crisis onto the European working class.

One of their main aims is to destroy the organisation and militancy of the workers in the former heartlands of capitalism and drive the most exploited nations even further down. However millions of new workers and exploited peoples have entered into struggles in North Africa and the Middle East and now in the heartland of Imperialism, Britain and in other European countries.

We have been here before

There is an increasing understanding in the working class that "we have been here before".

In the decades immediately following the war the leading capitalist citadels were shaken, particularly in Europe their rulers fearful of overturn. They were saved by the policy of Communist Parties — dominant in the working class of France, Italy, Greece and other countries — acting under the framework of the agreements made by the Stalinist bureaucratic elite in the Soviet Union and the leaders of victorious Western capitalism. The meetings at Yalta, Potsdam, and Moscow guaranteed the re-building of capitalism in Western Europe. The Kremlin carried out that agreement, the Communist Parties diverted the upsurges in Europe, entered coalition governments with the old imperialist representatives, capitalist states were rebuilt and consolidated with American aid in the first years after the war.

However, the radicalisation of workers could not be suppressed and expressed itself in the reforms in living conditions (the Welfare State) and economic demands that capitalist governments and employers were forced to make. On the other side, capitalism was preserved.

There is a glaring contrast between the ruling ideas on unemployment and welfare benefits in the late fifties and the sixties and those of today. Labour and Tory politicians embraced "full employment" and the Welfare state. It was said by Labour party and trade union leaders that capitalism had changed from what it was before the

war; that rulers of the great capitalist powers had found ways through international agreement to moderate the pre-war cut-throat international competition, and with Governments manipulating monetary policies in line with the theories of Keynes then the slumps and depression of the 1930s could be prevented.

In 1956, at the beginning of the fifteen years or so expansion which has now been baptised by many writers as a past "Golden Age" of capitalism, that there was a new capitalism and the old type "no longer inhabits the earth". "Contemporary democracy" and "countervailing powers", among which were the Labour Party and trade union organisations, could now control capitalist societies and any tendencies to increasing misery among the working class such as the hardships and suffering they experienced in the past. The popular word which sociologists and political thinkers used about this period was 'consensus'. The country was supposed to be run by consensus between the political leaders, trade union leaders and government with the aims of maintaining employment, improving health, housing, education and social benefits.

Today the ruling ideology of sociology is of 'dependency culture', the 'under-class' and the impossibility of the Welfare State. That was really a cover for transferring huge resources from the public sector to big business, while the richest of the rich gorge themselves on money. The drastic worsening of working conditions in recent decades have gone together with the attacks on the costs of social welfare so that public money can be used to assist capital to continue at its frenzied and unaccountable gambling. The government wants everyone to believe, "we are all in it together" and "everyone has to accept a cut", while the bankers make huge profits through the austerity plans, which is endorsed by Labour and the main trade union leadership.

In 2011 the most expensive apartment in London sold for £135.4 million. Yet nearly one in three of England's children live in poverty. London and other cities such as Manchester and Liverpool have some of the poorest districts in

Europe. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies by 2013 there will be 3.1 million children living in poverty in the UK. The decay of capitalism shows itself today by the huge gulf in society and the growing polarisation of wealth - the luxury, profligacy, corruption and greed at the 'top' of society and the increasing privation and misery at the 'bottom'.

Working class pushes forward

Attempts to break workers' strength are driven by the forces of international competition trying to overcome their own contradictions of over-production and loss of profit.

The British working class on its way to a consciousness of the necessity of a struggle for power can condition and check that offensive, knock it back and win victories.

It is on this that we base our confidence, that out of the working class there can be built an international leadership as an alternative to the old bureaucracies who are afraid of the workers' struggle, seek to inhibit them, and capitulate in front of the imperialists and their governments.

It is not sufficient to say that the trade union and labour leaders in Britain have retreated steadily in face of the state attacks on the unions, the local councils and the communities. The union leadership are aiding, more and more, the aims and the interests of the Tory Government.

The old traditional and powerful trade unions, which were in the advance guard of past industrial struggle, were shattered from the 1980s. That is the miners, dock workers, engineering workers and others. The trade union leadership today have become a source of retreat and betrayal and most workers have little confidence in them and see them as irrelevant to the problems of their lives.

New Labour developed in the Labour Party as a result of the capitalist ideological offensive that was launched against the working class and their organisations in the 1970s. Blair and his anti-socialist clique completed the transformation of a party that had been born over a hundred years earlier out of the struggle of British workers

revolutionary leadership

for an independent class political representation. They disenfranchised the working people by killing the Party that was formed as a political representation of workers and their unions.

Today the Labour Party declares that the cuts are necessary and if elected to government will not reverse them. This is not reformism but a party committed to capitalism dismantling its past reforms.

Building the revolutionary party

Any perspective for the building of a revolutionary party in Britain must be firmly based on two fundamentals. One, the internationalism of marxist-leninist-trotskyism. In this epoch, internationalism means nothing unless it means the following: that the programme of revolutionaries is based on world economic and political development and that revolutionaries are part of a world organisation, and that they struggle to develop a world leadership.

The second fundamental, is profound consciousness of the nature of the revolutionary period since the end of the war, in which masses throughout the world have again and again hammered at imperialism. This period brings out again the truth of Trotsky's statement about "the instinctive and elemental drive of the proletariat to reconstruct society on communist beginnings."

There is a relationship of forces and an underlying consciousness we can see in Britain which makes it impossible for the imperialists to continue their attacks upon the working class without tremendous class explosions. That is very clear in the present developments in Britain in relation to the National Health Service, education, welfare and workers' rights, which they are seeking to place much more directly under the control of business.

International Socialist League

The International Socialist League seeks to convince the widest layer of workers of the urgent need to unite around a programme of action to break the workers' organisations from



collaboration with the state and the employers; to fight all cuts; to oppose all their wars of intervention; to resist anti-union and anti-militant legislation; and to fight for union democracy. There is a need to build a movement on class struggle lines that can carry out the task of removing the present leadership of the unions which capitulates to the state and the banks and refuses to unite all sections of the class in this country and internationally - it has no international programme.

The central question is to develop the international tasks in all working class struggles with a working class internationalist leadership. We are a tendency who believe that none of the fundamental problems facing the masses across the world can be resolved until the workers take power and control, and end frontiers and exploitation.

Build a mass fourth international

The International Workers League has consistently fought for Trotskyist principles. In words and deeds the IWL-FI stands for internationalism and has sections in many countries, and in Brazil they have very deep roots in the organisation of the working class.

We ask those who agree that there is an urgent need for a world party to join with us in the fight to forge an international leadership of the world struggle for socialism.

From the statutes of the IWL-FI:

"The purpose of the IWL-FI is to overcome the crisis of leadership of the workers' movement and build a Fourth International with mass influence. Only by solving the crisis of proletarian leadership will the permanent mobilisation of the workers and exploited in the world against imperialism and the bourgeoisie finally culminate in the victory of the international socialist revolution and the establishment of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

"The IWL-FI does not claim to be the revolutionary leadership of the world proletariat, nor does its existence imply the overcoming of the present crisis of the Fourth International. However, at present, it constitutes the only democratically centralised world organisation struggling for these aims.

"The IWL-FI reaffirms that the crisis of revolutionary leadership shall be solved in the course of mobilising the masses by means of agreements and fusions with the other tendencies and organisations which, given by the upheaval of the masses, may become committed in the struggle against the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the Stalinists, Social Democrats and the Labour union bureaucracy and the nationalist, opportunist, petty-bourgeois streams as well as against revisionism which claims to be Trotskyist but capitulates to them."

A brief outline of the history of the International Workers League-Fourth International (IWL-FI)

*Alicia Sagra, United Socialist Workers Party, Argentine section of the IWL-FI
Translation revised by Claire Keating of la Voz, sympathising section of IWL in the USA*

Buenos Aires June 2008

We have been fighting, since the 40s, a long and difficult battle to build revolutionary parties with mass influence in all the countries and to build an International. We understand our struggle as the continuation of the one initiated by Marx, Engels, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht¹, Lenin² and Trotsky³ to build the First, the Second, the Third and the Fourth Internationals.

We recognize the First⁴ and the Second⁵ Internationals as part of our own history, but our model world Party is the Third International⁶, conceived as the Communist International. It responds to the needs of the imperialist epoch that we are now living in, both in the programmatic propositions of its first four congresses and in its internal organization: democratic centralism.

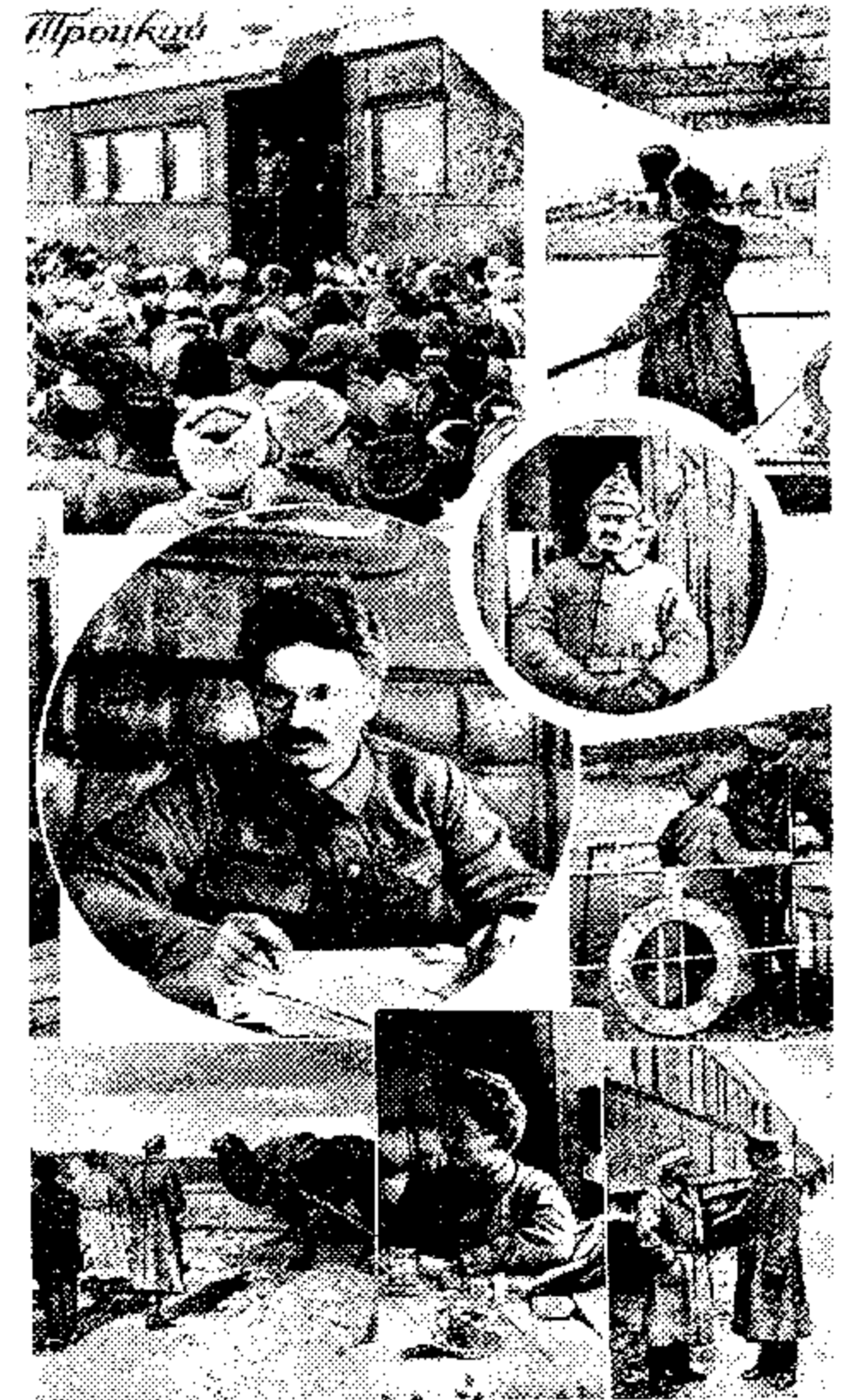
The Third International degenerated and dissolved because of Stalinism. The Left Opposition and then the Fourth International⁷ drew together the revolutionaries who were most principled and who led a sustained fight against the Stalinist degeneration. Many organizations today claim to belong to the Fourth International. They hold forums and joint actions, but a Fourth International as a centralized organization does not exist anymore. The Fourth International exploded because of both the defeats of the class struggle and the deviations of the leaders after Trotsky's death. That is why we fight for its reconstruction.

Many ask us, "why reconstruct the Fourth International if it is barely a symbol of Trotskyism?" Today, to be fair, Trotskyism exists as a separate current because it has come to signify the constant struggle against the bureaucracy and for workers' democracy. Trotsky was always against the use of the term "Trotskyist" because he did not regard himself as a sector differentiated from Marxism and

Leninism. It was Stalinism that invented the term "Trotskyist" - and used it to say that they were not Leninists - for all those who supported Trotsky in his confrontation with Stalin. Trotsky's trend called itself Leninist Bolsheviks. This was the trend that created the Left Opposition and later the Fourth International. It emerged to defend the principles of Marxism and Leninism - internationalism, workers' democracy, and workers' power - and to provide an offensive program with which Nazism and World War II could be confronted after Stalin's capitulation.

The Fourth International is the continuation of the Third, when Lenin was in the leadership, and represents the conscious struggle that emerged against the Stalinist counter-revolution. It is necessary to rebuild the Fourth International, not to build something altogether different, because the principles and the foundation of the theory and program expressed in the Transitional Program continues to be valid no matter what obvious updating needs to be done.

The Transitional Program systematized the resolutions of the first four congresses of the Third International: the fight against sectarianism and opportunism, the position regarding the Parliament, towards oppressed nationalities, workers' control, the workers' United Front, the militias, the Soviets, workers' and peasants governments, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Apart from that, it posed the need to make a new revolution in the USSR, a political revolution against the bureaucracy. The Transitional Program, following the orientation of the 4th Congress of the Third International, overcomes the division between the minimum program and the maximum program. It provides the method to elevate the masses to the program of socialist revolution



through the elaboration of a system of transitional demands. These demands stem out of the need and the current level of awareness of the masses and that lead to the conquest of the power by the proletariat.

The Theory of Permanent Revolution shows clearly that during a revolutionary process, democratic and socialist tasks get combined; it highlights the need for the working class to lead the process and for it to spread all over the world.

The validity of these premises makes it impossible for a revolutionary program to be built without stemming out of the Transitional Program and the Theory of Permanent Revolution. That is why any revolutionary, no matter their origins, who wishes to fight for the defeat of imperialism and of the bureaucracy and for the worldwide triumph of socialism, is fighting - even if unawares - for the central positions of the Fourth International.

Today, faced with the revolutionary struggles in Latin America (Ecuador in 2000, Argentina 2001, Venezuela 2002, Bolivia 2003 and 2005), the mass mobilizations in Europe and the

United States against the war in 2003, the heroic resistance of the Iraqi and Afghani people, we feel the loss of not having a world revolutionary Party to direct these struggles into a unified fight against imperialism and a fight for power in the different countries. We can draw similar conclusions about the revolutionary processes of 1989, '90, and '91 that destroyed the one-Party systems in the ex-USSR and Eastern Europe. In the absence of a revolutionary leadership, they were unable to reverse the process of restoration of capitalism. That is why the reconstruction of the Fourth International is a central task to advance in the struggle against imperialism.

This reconstruction is not a task for the so-called "Trotskyists" alone; it is a task for all those who agree as to the foundation of the program. Trotsky tackled the task of building of the Fourth International not only as a task for the Left Opposition (the "Trotskyists of those days") but for all those who agreed to the Leninist principles and to the need to take up a mortal combat against imperialism, national bourgeoisies and bureaucracies. In the thirties, the advance of Nazism and Stalinism led to the capitulation of organizations and leaders with whom Trotsky was working in order to build a new International. It was for that reason, and because of the urgent need to construct a centralized organization that would fight for revolutionary Marxist principles, that the members of the International Left Opposition built the Fourth International. In spite of everything, Trotsky never gave up the fight to build a mass International, where "Trotskyists" would be a minority.

We do not regard ourselves as the only revolutionaries on earth. Neither do we believe that the solution to the crisis of revolutionary leadership is to be found only in the growth of our tendency. Rather, we have always fought to create revolutionary agreements, both at the national and international levels. That is why our history is the history of attempted mergers and also of splits that the most important events of the class struggle have caused.

In this long and arduous battle to build the International, we have done some things well but also we have committed many mistakes. In January 1982, when the LIT-CI was being founded, Nahuel Moreno said: "the leaders of



Nahuel Moreno

the Trotskyist movement thought they were giants, who never made mistakes. Trotskyism under their leadership, however, was regrettable." "This experience of constantly working with "geniuses" led us, indirectly, to create propaganda for our base to convince them that we made a lot of mistakes and that they must learn how to think for themselves, because our leadership is not a guarantee of perfection. As much as possible, we want to instil a self-critical, Marxist spirit, and not a religious faith in a limited leadership, that is narrow in its formation and unrefined in its culture. That is why we believe in internal democracy and why we see it as an uncompromising necessity. We move ahead through errors and setbacks and we are not ashamed to say so.

"The problem is how to commit fewer errors, both in their number and their significance. In my opinion, the tendency is to commit fewer errors if we are in an international organization based on democratic centralism. This, for me, is a fact. I can say, without a doubt that any national party that is not in a Bolshevik International, with an international leadership, tends to commit more and more mistakes: because being national Trotskyists inevitably ends with disowning the Fourth International and adopting opportunist or sectarian positions, and finally just disappearing."

Our origins

The tendency that today is known as LIT-CI has been around as an international tendency since 1953 and has previously gone under different names. On the national level, it emerged in 1944 in Argentina, as a small group directed by Moreno: the GOM (Marxist Workers Group). Its central aim was to enter the working class, to try to overcome the marginal, bohemian and intellectual origin of the Argentine Trotskyist movement.

During the early years we suffered from a workerist, sectarian and propagandist deviation. No work was done among students and the main thrust of Party activities was lectures on the Communist Manifesto and other classical texts. Between 1944-1948 we also had a national-Trotskyist deviation, that is to say, we believed that there was a solution to all the problems of Trotskyism within the boundaries of our own country. Only in 1948 did we begin to participate in the life of the International, attending its Second Congress.

Through our intervention in workers' struggles and in the International, it was possible for us to overcome these deviations and the group was strengthened. In 1945, we took part in the meat packing workers' great strikes - at that time, the main sector of the working class in Argentina. They were very important and allowed us to recruit nearly all the comrades of the body of shop stewards. We got over our sectarianism and our propagandistic tendency, but we fell into a trade-unionist deviation that, in turn, was to be overcome thanks to our participation in the International.

Slowly but surely we began to grow in strength. We led factories producing cement pipes, leather goods and then the club of a working-class neighbourhood (Villa Pobladora). In spite of the fact that we were a small group of about 100 militants we became deeply rooted in the working class and we built our principal proletarian cadres, the best example was Elías Rodríguez who is today an example of our current.

The Argentinean Party turned into the most proletarian Party within the Trotskyist movement together with the SWP⁶, which was built with Trotsky's personal guidance.

Our participation in the Fourth International

After World War II the leadership of the Fourth International, consisting of the SWP (USA), Pablo (Greece), Mandel (Belgium) and Frank (France)⁹ was very young and inexperienced and did not manage to get over the qualitative weakness caused by the murder of Trotsky in 1940. The essential feature of the Fourth International of those days was its sectarianism. Its Second Congress was an example of that. It was held in 1948, in the midst of great changes: in China, a revolution was under way and it achieved victory a year later; in Czechoslovakia, the bourgeois ministers were swept out of the government and the bourgeoisie was being expropriated, a process that had been happening in Yugoslavia since 1947. The Congress ignored these events, centring their discussion instead around the class character of the USSR and on whether the USSR should be defended from imperialist attacks. That discussion had already been solved in the American party in Trotsky's lifetime, in 1939-40.

In spite of the sectarian and propagandistic character of the Congress, our participation in it was momentous for the GOM. From that moment on, we began to work within an international framework. We gave a lot of attention in crafting our political analysis of imperialism and its relations with national bourgeoisies. There was also a lot of discussion on our international positions, like the position that the GOM - as a part of the Fourth International - defended in favour of North Korea in its confrontation with South Korea. Moreno always highlighted the importance of having joined the Fourth International even if our group was never acknowledged as an official section. At that time, the official section was the group led by Posadas.¹⁰

The discussion on the new states in Eastern Europe

In 1949, the discussion on the class character of these states began. Moreno defended the manner in which this discussion was held as a great example of democratic centralism. There were two main positions. According to Mandel (Belgium) and Cannon (USA), these states were capitalist. The opinion pushed by Pablo (Greece) and supported with some objections by



Bolivia during the 1952 revolution

Hansen (USA) and Moreno was that new workers' states had emerged. The discussion was settled relatively soon. Mandel and Cannon acknowledged the existence of a real revolutionary process in Eastern Europe and that new deformed workers' states had emerged. This political success increased Pablo's prestige among the international rank-and-file and that was how, in 1951, we reached the 3rd Congress.

The struggle against "Pabloism"

In 1951, right in the midst of the Cold War, all the international commentators were pronouncing the inevitability of armed conflict between the USA and USSR. Pablo and Mandel, following the bourgeois press, arrived at a conclusion that proved fatal for the International: in their opinion, World War III was inevitable. Faced with this, the communist Parties, eager to defend the USSR, would adopt violent methods to confront imperialism and seize power. The same was supposed to happen with the bourgeois nationalist Parties in the dependent countries.

Based on this analysis Pablo and Mandel promoted entryism into the communist and bourgeois nationalist Parties. We were expected to follow them without any criticism until after power was seized. Most of the international Trotskyists following the lead of the French section, refused to carry out this policy. We, the POR (the new name given to GOM), denounced this position because it meant forsaking the

definition of Stalinist bureaucracy as counter-revolutionary and abandoning the struggle against it. It was a complete revision of the essential points of the Trotskyist program. We asserted that these positions emerged because of the petty bourgeois, impressionist and intellectual character of the European leaders.

The Bolivian revolution and the division in the Fourth International

The positions of the Fourth International's leaders had important political consequences. Because of this position Pablo refused to demand the withdrawal of the Russian tanks confronting the 1953 workers' uprising in Berlin. What this really meant was support for the Soviet bureaucracy. But the most tragic consequence of this policy was the betrayal of the Bolivian revolution.

In 1952 a classic workers' revolution took place in Bolivia. Workers, organized in militias, defeated militarily the police and the army. The COB (Bolivian Workers Central) emerged as a dual power organization. In 1953 the peasant revolution began invading the large estates and occupying land. One of the first gains was the nationalization of the mines. Until 1954, the main armed force in Bolivia was the workers' militias under the leadership of the COB.

Ever since the 1940s, the Bolivian Trotskyist organization (POR) was

gaining enormous influence in the workers movement. Its membership included important leaders of the miners, factory workers and peasants. Its main leader Guillermo Lora¹¹ wrote the Pulacayo Theses, an adaptation of the Transitional Program to Bolivian reality and had it adopted by the Miners' Federation. In the 1946 elections Lora was elected senator by a front headed by the Miners Federation. In the 1952 revolution the POR was the co-leader of the militias and was the co-founder of the COB. The POR had great influence among the masses.

Unfortunately the International Secretariat of the Fourth International led by Pablo did not call for the COB to seize power. Instead they granted critical support to the bourgeois government of the MNR (bourgeois nationalist movement). Without a revolutionary orientation the masses were gradually disarmed and demobilized. A few years later the revolution had been completely crushed. As a consequence of this betrayal Bolivian Trotskyism seriously deteriorated and a process of successive divisions began.

Along with this policy the international leadership led by Pablo employed a deadly strategy: they intervened in the French Party to destroy the leadership who disagreed with their policy and in the United States they tried to form a secret fraction inside the Socialist Workers' Party.

Rejecting entryism, most of the French Trotskyists (led by Lambert)¹² and British Trotskyists (led by Healy)¹³, the SWP (USA) and the South American Trotskyists split from the Pablo-led International Secretariat. In 1953 we created the International Committee (CI).

The Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism: the Peruvian revolution

In Latin America the Argentinean POR together with Trotskyists from Chile and Peru, led a strong campaign against the policy for Bolivia. In April 1953, Nahuel Moreno wrote the text "Two Guidelines", stating that the policy of critical support for the bourgeois MNR Party had been a betrayal and that they should have called for All Power to the COB. At the same time, we demanded that the International Committee (Fourth International) should act as a centralized organization because this



Cuban revolution

was the only way to defeat Pabloist revisionism. The refusal on behalf of the majority forces in the International Committee to act in a centralized way, with an offensive policy, allowed for a further advance of the Pabloist positions, in spite of the fact that most Trotskyists were against them. When our efforts to make the International Committee act in a centralized way failed, we began acting as an international tendency. In 1957 together with leaders from Chile and Peru, we formed the SLATO (the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism).

In 1962, the existence of SLATO allowed us to have a centralized intervention in the process of the agrarian revolution in Peru. We sent Hugo Blanco¹⁴, a Peruvian student militant in Argentina, to participate in the Cuzco process. Following the SLATO orientation, Hugo Blanco led the process of land expropriations and trade union organization unfolding in the countryside. The SLATO sent several cadres to give support to this work. That is how we built the FIR (Revolutionary Left Front). FIR was led by Trotskyists and it formed the origin of what is now our Peruvian section.

In 1963, Hugo Blanco was captured by the army. Between 1963 and 1967 he was kept in isolation. In 1967, he was tried by a military court. There was a possibility that he would receive the death penalty so we launched an international campaign that gained enormous support from well-known people like Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Isaac Deustcher, French, British and Indian trade unions, and French, British and other members of parliaments. Thanks to this campaign, he received a sentence of 25 years prison sentence instead of the death penalty. But the fight didn't end there and another campaign won his release

in 1970. During all these years, in all the Peruvian peasants' congresses, Hugo Blanco continued to be elected as the principal leader of the peasants.

The Cuban revolution and the 1963 reunification

Recognition of and support for the Cuban revolution formed the basis for reunification of the Fourth International in 1963. That is how the United Secretariat¹⁵ was formed. It was led by Ernest Mandel and the Socialist Workers Party (Pablo left the Fourth International to become a consultant for the bourgeois Ben Bela¹⁶ administration in Algeria). All of the Trotskyist forces who saw Cuba as a new workers' state joined the United Secretariat. The British and the French didn't join because they didn't agree with this stance on the Cuban revolution.

We waited a year to join because we asked first to see their evaluation of the poorly thought-out strategy that led to the betrayal of the Bolivian revolution, as a way of preventing similar deviations from taking place in the future. Even though they never made this self-critical balance sheet in 1964 we decided to join. We were convinced that despite of our differences, a reunification based on a revolution was positive. We saw that this would put us in a better position to intervene with more strength in the anticipated future upsurges.

The struggle against the guerrilla deviation, the development of the Argentinean party, and the Portuguese revolution

The Cuban revolution had a strong impact on the international vanguard, especially in Latin America. In Argentina during the 1960s this was combined with a decline in workers' struggle. The Castroite influence had serious consequences for our group.

From 1957 until 1964 our organization (now known as Palabra Obrera - Workers' Word - from the name of its newspaper) used the tactic of entryism in the 62 Peronist Organizations (unions)¹⁷, as a way of building our contact with the best and most advanced sectors of the resistance to the military dictatorship. During this time our group built close links with the workers' movement, much closer than any other left organization had been able to do in Argentina. This became a distinct characteristic of our current.

But in 1964 we went into a serious crisis when Vasco Bengochea¹⁸, who was, along with Moreno, one of the main leaders of our organization, left us to join the Cuban leaders. A couple of years later, in 1968, we experienced a major split in which we lost some of our main cadre who had been won over to support "foquist"¹⁹ positions. The main leader of the split was Roberto Santucho who we had united with in 1965 and who then became the main leader of the ERP²⁰.

But the effects of the pressure of "foquism" extended beyond just our Argentinean group; the leaders of the Fourth International were also hit by it. We had not managed to defeat and go beyond Mandel's poorly thought-out and impressionist methodology. In the late 60s, the continued use of this methodology resulted in a new capitulation, this time to the Castroist guerrilla conception of "foquism". The 9th Congress of the Fourth International (1969) voted to adopt the tactic of guerrilla warfare in Latin America. Consistent with this, Santucho's Party (PRT-El Combatiente) became recognized as the official section of the Fourth International. Our organization (PRT-La Verdad) remained the sympathizing section.

The US Socialist Workers' Party, the Argentinean PST (the name our section adopted after merging with Juan Carlos Coral, a split from the Socialist Party)²¹ and all of the South American groups formed a tendency that led an unrelenting battle against these positions. We said that the "foco" theory was an elitist policy isolated from the mass movement and that it would prove disastrous. Unfortunately, facts proved us right. Trotskyism lost countless valuable militants mainly in Argentina but also in other countries, by following this flawed policy. From that moment on, the United Secretariat began functioning as a federation of tendencies, with each one applying their own policy.

The existence of a united world organization (the United Secretariat) provided the possibility to take advantage of the new opportunities that opened up with the upsurge of struggles in 1968. For example, in France, where Trotskyism had all but disappeared thanks to the policy of entryism sui generis, the LCR²² was created and managed to organize 5,000 militants and to put out a daily



newspaper. In Latin America we saw the enormous growth of the Argentine PST. In the USA the SWP became much stronger through its participation and intervention in the movement against the Vietnam War.

But because we were never able to defeat the guerrilla deviation, in the 1970s we were faced with a new capitulation of Mandel's, this time it was to the massive vanguard that emerged from May '68 in France and that were under the influence of Maoism. Our disagreement with Mandel on this issue is developed in a book by Moreno called "The Party and The Revolution".

In the course of this struggle against the guerrilla orientation and against vanguardism our Argentinean party the PST (which emerged from a merger with a sector that split from social democracy) developed as a strong vanguard Party. And it was able to build its strength by applying a completely different policy than the one of Mandel: a policy of taking part in the emerging struggles, which climaxed with the partial insurrection known as the "cordobazo"²³, and participating in the electoral process. It was during this period that we organized our parties in Uruguay and Venezuela.

In 1974 when the Portuguese revolution broke out, the PST sent cadres to participate in this process. We pushed forward a policy to advance the struggle for power grounded in the development and centralization of the emerging dual power organizations. Thus we recruited a sector of high school students and organized the Portuguese party, which provided important cadres for the International.

That revolution demonstrated another capitulation of Mandel's. Following the position of the Maoists he gave support to the MFA (Armed Forces Movement)²⁴ who were in fact co-governing the Portuguese empire. This process also caused the 1975 split in FLT (a fraction that we constituted with the SWP to confront Mandelism)²⁵ because we were unable to agree on a common policy for the revolution. They thought

that the central task was to raise democratic demands and to publish Trotsky's works.

The majority of the organizations and militants of Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Peru left the FLT and, together with the Argentine PST, built a tendency that soon turned into a fraction of the United Secretariat, the FB (Bolshevik Faction)²⁶, which would later on give birth to the LIT-CI.

Our participation in the Portuguese revolution and our polemics with Mandelism and the SWP helped us to develop our theoretical understanding of Party construction during revolutionary processes that was later explained in "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Portugal."

The party in Brazil

A group of young Brazilians exiled in Chile contacted us. After the Pinochet coup, they left for Argentina and began organizing in the PST. In 1974, they returned to Brazil to build the Party. Thus the Workers League²⁷ and later on Socialist Convergence²⁸ were created. The group began to develop itself and in contact with the leaders of the FB they elaborated a program calling for the creation of a Workers' Party (PT).

The young Brazilian organization developed entryism over the next 12 years without dissolving itself into or capitulating to the bureaucratic leadership of the PT. That was only possible because they belonged to an international current that helped to orient and direct entryism in the PT, to centre the work in the opposition caucuses in the unions of the CUT²⁹ and provided clarity as to the bureaucratic character of the Lula leadership.

In this was Socialist Convergence (CS) was able to break with the PT 12 years later³⁰ stronger than it was when it joined and with a policy of building a revolutionary united front aimed at the sectors of the vanguard that were drifting away from Lula's party.

The Colombian party

The 1976 military coup in Argentina produced the semi-fascist Videla dictatorship. The PST had to evacuate important cadres from the country, a situation that we took advantage of to reinforce our international work. It was during this period that we built

our organizations in Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Panama and that we reinforced our work in Portugal and Spain. But the most important process took place in Colombia where we contacted the Socialist Block, an organization moving towards revolutionary positions with cadres coming from Castroism and the church. That is how the Colombian PST was formed.³¹ It was rapidly consolidated and became one of the two pillars on which our international work rested.

The struggle against the Argentine dictatorship

At the same time, the Argentine PST was playing a heroic role in the resistance against the genocidal dictatorship in Argentina. Around 250 PST militants were imprisoned and more than 100 were killed or disappeared. Acting under the most absolutely clandestine conditions, the Party kept on producing its newspaper and developing work among the workers, the youth and the intellectuals.

At the beginning of the Malvinas (Falkland) War we developed a principled policy of identifying and attacking the imperialist invasion as the main enemy despite the enormous hatred for the dictatorship. From the very first moment without at any point blunting our denunciation of the dictatorship the PST stood with the Argentine military organizing for the defeat of imperialism. Coming out of the dictatorship the PST had won enormous prestige among the vanguard and had consolidated 800 strong solid cadres. These 800 militants began the work of building the MAS and recruited a group of cadres coming out of another socialist tendency to help with this project.

The Nicaraguan revolution: the Simon Bolivar brigade

In 1979 when the Nicaraguan revolution began our tendency in spite of our differences with Sandinism, decided to take part physically in the struggle against Somoza. Through the Colombian PST a massive campaign was launched to build the Simon Bolivar Brigade. It was made up of our militants and independent revolutionaries from Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, the USA and Argentina. While maintaining total political independence, the Brigade

joined the Sandinistas and played a heroic role in the liberation of the southern region of Nicaragua, at the cost of many lives and injuries. When the revolution triumphed, the Brigade was received as heroes in Managua. We had been demanding that the Sandinistas split with the bourgeoisie and seize power together with workers' trade unions. But the Sandinistas following Castro's policy formed a coalition government with Violeta Chamorro. The Brigade began the work of trade union organization, and managed in one week to organize over 70 unions. This upset the Sandinista leadership and they decided to expel the Brigade from Nicaragua. Several of the members of the Brigade were imprisoned and tortured by the Panamanian police, allied to the Sandinistas.

The United Secretariat sent a delegation to Managua to tell us that we were an ultra-left group that they wanted nothing to do with and they proceeded to push through a resolution prohibiting the construction of parties independent of the Sandinistas. Their refusal to defend revolutionary militants tortured by the bourgeoisie was the consequence of having voted the internal resolution that, in practice, was a decree of expulsion for our tendency, forcing us to split away from the USec definitively.

These events revealed our real differences with the USec. We defended the need to build revolutionary parties in Nicaragua, they disagreed. This discussion was the same as the one about Cuba, as far as the construction of the Party was concerned and the need for a political revolution. Everything pointed to the increasing capitulation of the USec to Castroism and the Sandinistas.

Our relationship with Lambertism

The Trotskyist trend led by Pierre Lambert did stand in solidarity with the Simon Bolivar Brigade. And that was how our relationship with Lambertism, a trend we had not been in contact with since 1963, began. We began a process of discussion with principled agreements and accords regarding the program expressed in the Thesis de Actualización del Programa de Transición (Theses on the Transitional Program For Today), by Nahuel Moreno. In this piece, Moreno develops a political definition of Stalinism and Castroism as counterrevolutionary and of the processes of the post-war period

(East of Europe, China and Cuba) as revolutionary processes in spite of the fact that they were not led by the working class or a revolutionary Party.

At the same time the piece argues for the necessity of pushing forward a political revolution in the degenerated workers' states that emerged from these processes. It presents an analysis of the guerrilla struggles and the opportunistic policies of their leaderships. The text gives special importance to the defence of the right to self-determination for oppressed nationalities and the democratic tasks. It identifies the beginning of the process of crises in the counterrevolutionary apparatuses, especially of Stalinism, that produced the possibility of fighting for Trotskyist parties and a Fourth International with mass influence.

They founded the Parity Committee that in 1980 resulted in the formation of a joint organization: The Fourth International, International Committee (CI-CI). As such, we carried out a campaign in support of "Solidarity" in Poland. Everything indicated that we would be able now to make a huge step forward towards the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

But this project stalled because our weak presence in Europe led us to commit a serious mistake. We had not realized that Lambertism had strong links with the trade union bureaucracy, which ultimately led Lambert to capitulate to the Popular Front administration when Mitterrand won the elections in France. Lambert refused to discuss the policy in France and began expelling militants who were opposed to that policy. This produced the split in the CI-CI.

This disagreement with the Lambertists forced us to make headway in our theoretical elaboration on Popular Fronts, resulting in the publication of "La Traición de la OCI" (The Betrayal of the OCI) by Nahuel Moreno.

The foundation of the LIT-CI

In January 1982 an international meeting was held of the parties of the FB and two important Lambertist leaders: Ricardo Napuri of Peru and Alberto Franceschi of Venezuela. One of the central points of the meeting was to organize a defence campaign of the revolutionary moral of Napuri, who Lambert attacked for expressing political differences with him. Another important point was how to advance in

the construction of the International.

The reunion in addition to deciding to launch the campaign voted unanimously to become the founding conference of a new International organization. They voted on and approved the founding theses and the statutes of the LIT-CI, which put forward a strategy for the construction of a Fourth International with mass influence. This was not simply the FB with another name now that it included Franceschi and his Party, the workers MIR that had split with Lambertism. Sometime later Napuri joined together with half the Peruvian party that had also split with Lambert.

In 1985 the Dominican party joined the LIT-CI. This group did not come from Trotskyism but from a split with the church. In 1987 the group of Bill Hunter from Britain³², which was not from the Morenist tradition joined and a group of independent young Trotskyists from Paraguay founded the Paraguayan PT, the biggest left wing party in that country.

In 1985 the First Congress of the LIT-CI voted for a manifesto developing a political analysis of the current world situation as revolutionary. Further the manifesto called for the construction of a Revolutionary United Front based in a minimum revolutionary program to confront the imperialist counter-revolutionary front, the national bourgeoisies, the Church, Stalinism, Castroism, the Sandinistas and the trade union bureaucracies. The program would be to push forward the construction of national revolutionary Parties and of an International with mass influence.

The main political campaigns of the LIT-CI

Our first campaign was for the victory of Argentina in the Malvinas (Falklands) war³³. Through this campaign we developed an intervention in the anti-imperialist process in Latin America. The campaign to stop the payment of the foreign debt gave us an opportunity to unite with the mass mobilizations in Bolivia that would force Siles Suazo's³⁴ Popular Front government to suspend the payments of the debt. There was an important campaign against the Esquipulas and Contadora agreements³⁵, which were the initiative of imperialism and were supported by the Castroists and the Sandinistas to constrain the revolutionary process

in Central America. And in 1991 we carried out a campaign for the defeat of imperialism in the Gulf War.

The construction of the MAS in Argentina

After the fall of the dictatorship in 1982 the LIT-CI leadership resolved to give priority to the work in Argentina, where an objective and subjective possibility existed for the MAS to become a Party with mass influence. In the struggles of the mass movement and through participation in the electoral process the MAS became the strongest Party within the Argentinean Left. The Party built deep roots in the main factories and in working class districts, headed opposition slates in trade unions and held rallies with 20,000 to 30,000 attendants. Due to this work, the first Trotskyist candidate won a seat in the Argentinean Parliament and the party was able to organize and direct a rally of 100,000 in opposition to the government.

In 1987, in the midst of this process, the LIT-CI received a terrible blow: the death of its founder and main leader Nahuel Moreno. His absence caused a qualitative weakening of our international leadership and played a huge role in the development and outcome of the crisis that led to the destruction of our International.

The crisis of the 1990s

In the first years of the 1990s there was an enormous crisis in our international current. Huge changes were happening in the world with the fall of the Berlin Wall that had repercussions across the globe. Significant revolutionary processes destroyed the central apparatus of Stalinism liberating in the process the international workers movement from the restrictive yoke that had been holding it back for decades. But the lack of an international revolutionary leadership prevented this process from being able to reverse the Capitalist Restoration the bureaucracy had been orchestrating. This created an opening for an imperialist political, military, and ideological offensive.

It was in this period that the crisis of the LIT-CI emerged a crisis that would bring it practically to the point of destruction. The new LIT-CI leadership committed many mistakes by responding incorrectly to the 1989-90

events. They were right to understand it as a revolutionary process, but they failed to identify many of the principal contradictions and so they made many unilateral characterizations. That is why the understanding they developed for Eastern Europe and all the former workers' states was self-proclaiming. They developed a policy with opportunistic features of capitulation to the Democratic Reaction³⁶.

At the same time in Argentina we fell into a national-Trotskyist deviation: the international leadership had been actually monopolized by the leadership of the strongest Party, the Argentineans, who started acting as a mother-party and did not respond correctly to the great challenges posed in the country.

All this caused the greatest crisis in our history. Soon this led to splits in the Argentine Party and a loss of membership, a split in the Spanish Party and the Colombian Party leaving the International. There was a split within the Brazilian Party as well. In this process 40% of the Argentinean Party, the Panamanian PST, half of the Peruvian PST, the POS section in Mexico, half of the Ecuadorian section, and portions of the Chilean, German, and Portuguese Parties left the LIT-CI. Formally, the LIT-CI continued to exist. It continued to have an international leadership, organizing international meetings, and publishing an international review. But it was more and more just a formality. The LIT-CI had all but reached its destruction.

The causes of the crisis

A combination of objective and subjective factors help to explain this crisis. However, the objective factors had a more important impact, an impact that extended beyond just our International. In fact, this process affected all of the organizations of the Left, reformist and revolutionary alike. This is evidence of the significance of these objective factors.

After the military defeat in Vietnam in the mid-70s US Imperialism shifted its strategy for confronting the revolutionary processes, focusing now on co-opting them through the institutions and mechanisms of bourgeois democracy. Moreno characterized this process as the "Democratic Reaction." This policy achieved major successes in containing important revolutionary processes. At

the same time, it affected the majority of the Left at the international level: the PLO abandoned the fight for the destruction of Israel; the Sandinistas and the FMLN both integrated themselves into bourgeois regimes; the social-democratization of the Communist Parties, the integration into the government of the majority of the Brazilian Left through the Workers Party (PT), etc. But this process of capitulation of the old anti-imperialist Left experienced a surge after the Capitalist Restoration in the Workers States. And this time, the Trotskyist organizations were affected as well.

The central problem was that the restoration did not proceed along the lines predicted by Trotsky that is via a counter-revolutionary coup, but rather in the name of democratic rights and through the bourgeois institutions. The lack of a revolutionary leadership resulted in a part of the population developing illusions in the institutions of the restoration.

Because of this and because of the imperialist campaign of "the superiority of capitalism" the vast majority of the Left abandoned a socialist perspective and the struggle to take power. Many Parties dissolved thousands and thousands stopped organizing and those that remained active began searching for a new direction...As they were "unable" or unwilling to take power, they began to look for a way to gain "spaces of power". Many new ideas emerged: that the working class is disappearing, that we should look for new social subjects, that Stalinism is the continuity of Leninism that democratic centralism leads to bureaucratization that everything should be done horizontally, that all power corrupts, that workers can resolve their problems without seizing power...In this way, they began developing a new type of reformism, a reformism without any reforms.

This "opportunist tidal wave" that hit the entire Left including the Trotskyist organizations, also hit the LIT-CI. This is reflected, principally, in the flawed policies that the Argentinean leadership used to respond to the huge challenges the reality presented them with.

Following Trotsky Moreno always said that to confront huge changes and the crises that they produce, we must go back more than anything to the working class, to Marxist theory, and to the International.

The Argentinean leadership did the opposite; it fell into an electoralist deviation in which it gave second priority to the construction within the working class. Instead of grounding their policy in Marxist theory, they developed new theories to justify their policies. Because of circumstantial victories and much growth, they considered this work sufficient and fell into a national Trotskyist deviation.

The difference with what happened in the LIT-CI and in other organizations was that there were sectors of resistance to this process within the LIT-CI. For this reason, unlike the United Secretariat, the LIT-CI never reached to point of capitulating entirely to the new conditions. Rather, in the LIT-CI, the "opportunist tidal wave" provoked a crisis and splits, until finally we reversed the process and found our way.

The Fifth World Congress of the LIT-CI

The first steps to reverse this process were taken at the Fifth Congress of the LIT-CI (July 1994). A favourable objective situation (Chiapas, the resistance of the Bosnian people, an uprising in Santiago del Estero - Argentina, a surge in the struggles of the working class in Europe, the process of reorganization in Brazil out of which the PSTU emerged) combined with the subjective predisposition of the leaders to make every effort to bring the organization out of its paralysis.

This Congress produced a resolution to resume the campaign of Workers' Aid to Bosnia³⁷, to regularize the International Courier and to build an International Secretariat with leaders from different countries, with the top priority being the work in Brazil and Europe. Further, they decided to encourage a process of work on theory and policies and to rearm ourselves with a program. All these steps pushed forward the reconstruction of the LIT-CI which, in turn, was to lead the task of the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Related to this strategic task the Congress took the initial step of voting for the formation of a liaison committee with the Workers International (an organization with sections in England, South Africa, Namibia and some Eastern European countries)³⁸. The victorious campaign of Workers Aid to Bosnia,

our participation in the revolutionary process in Mexico, in the construction of a workers internationalist revolutionary Party in Ukraine, the merger of our Party in Spain, the regularity of our international magazine in Spanish, English and Portuguese, the headway in the construction of the PSTU, the strengthening of our work in Europe, the fact that we worked out a proposal of a program for the Liaison committee with WI, that we were moving forward with our work on Cuba, Bosnia, South Africa, and the discussion of new forms of labour, on the states of Eastern Europe..., all this proves that we were able to carry out the resolutions of the World Congress. And that the LIT-CI is advancing in its battle against paralysis and is making the first steps to overcome the crisis that started in 1990.

The new reality of the LIT-CI

Coming out of the Fifth Congress we began a slow and traumatic process of reconstruction. This process was extremely difficult because of the form it happened through. It isn't the first time, in the history of the Internationals, that it was necessary to confront a revisionist offensive. This also happened in the Second International, but there the fight was headed up by part of the main leaders: Kautsky, Rosa Luxembourg, Liebknecht at first and after 1914 by Luxembourg, Lenin, Trotsky, and Liebknecht. In the Third International, this struggle was led by Trotsky. In the SWP-US Trotsky and Cannon were together leading the struggle against those who opposed defending the USSR.

In the LIT-CI it was very different. The key leaders, those who had worked most closely with Moreno, the ones with the most prestige and experience, fell one by one in the face of the "opportunist tidal wave". They began adopting one after the other revisionist positions or they just left and abandoned the struggle. This fight therefore had to be taken up by leaders of the second or third ranks, who had no experience in the International leadership or in theoretical and programmatic struggle. For this reason with many difficulties they began reconstructing the organizations and through this began advancing in their common understanding of the world.

Like this little by little they were able to recover the theoretical, political, and methodological tradition. They

began developing political responses to new situations: the war in Bosnia, the capitalist "globalization", the productive restructuring. We have been able to develop a theoretical interpretation of the capitalist restoration in the degenerated ex-Workers States. The parties of the LIT-CI intervened in the revolutionary processes in Latin America and we have developed a principled program of confrontation with the new popular front and populist governments that originated in these processes.

Through our participation in these processes, the LIT-CI began reconstructing itself, not just in theoretical, programmatic, methodological, and moral terms but also in terms of organization. The biggest organizational advance happened in Brazil, with the construction of the PSTU, which has made itself into an undisputable reference for the struggles and activism in Brazil.

But it wasn't the only advance. The LIT-CI sections continued deepening their insertion in the mass movements. The Argentinean section began reconstituting itself, we built new sections in Ecuador and Costa Rica, the POI in Russia joined the LIT-CI. We have been publishing the *International Courier* and *Marxism Alive* reviews regularly, and through them have demonstrated our political understandings of the main facts of the class struggle and have advanced our theoretical-programmatic elaborations. Since then, new events have confirmed this definition: the unification with the CITO³⁹, which meant the reincorporation of the Colombian PST and of the organizations and cadre in Per, Costa Rica, and Argentina. The continued development of the PSTU, its correct stance in full opposition to Lula's Popular Front government, and the success of building CONLUTAS as a militant workers and popular Centre and as an alternative⁴⁰, the entrance into the LIT-CI of the Italian Party, the founding of the Venezuelan section, the development of a work in Central America, the founding of the Belgian section. There were also some events that indicated the opposite: the withdrawal of the Mexican POS, of the Bolivian MST, and of the Dominican PST⁴¹. But these negative developments don't change the generally good moment the LIT-CI is experiencing now. Rather, they are remnants of the old crisis and the reactions to the process



New Party in Argentina from a fusion of the IWI section and one other group

of reincorporation and Bolshevization that we are pushing forward.

Our strategic project: the reconstruction of the Fourth International

The new reality of the LIT-CI intersects with a new reality in the class struggle at the level of both Latin America and the World. The global and Latin American revolutionary situation that began to show itself with force at the beginning of the 21st century is now passing through a new period.

The Iraqi resistance is showing the possibility of a new military defeat for US imperialism. The United States' stabilization plans for the Middle East are not going well, as can be seen from the defeat of the Israeli military in Lebanon. Bush's prestige has experienced a huge drop. In the imperialist countries, the responses to the economic crisis have provoked the reaction of the workers, in addition to the fierce struggles of the immigrant workers. In the case of the United States, this means that they are constructing a bridge with the struggles in Latin America.

But the imperialist attack continues. In Latin America the colonizing imperialist offensive, the plundering of natural resources, the insistence on adjustment policies in order to pay back the foreign debt, all of these are increasing and are further sharpening today as a result of the world economic crisis. The response of the masses to this permanent plundering also continues. The difference is that today the workers and popular upsurge is beginning to be directed against the ones who are imposing the planes, that is, against the new governments that emerged in order to contain or prevent the upsurge: Lula, Chavez, Evo, Kirchner, Tabare.

Undoubtedly this reality demonstrates the urgent need to progress in solving the crisis of revolutionary leadership, by constructing an international revolutionary leadership. At the same time, this new period of the world

situation is producing important changes in the consciousness of the mass movement that are themselves facilitating this task. With the emergence of these governments, we can see the maximum expression of the effects of this "opportunist tidal wave". The majority of the currents in the Left, including the majority of those that consider themselves Trotskyist, have capitulated to them. But this new reality, which had its ultimate expression in the electoral defeat of Chavez's referendum, is producing splits of sectors to the left within these organizations that are looking for new national and international references.

Returning to what was laid out in the Introduction, facing this situation, the LIT-CI reaffirms its strategic project - the reconstruction of the Fourth International - and calls for unity around a revolutionary program that contemplates not just the political answers to the principle facts of the class struggle, to bring the workers closer to the struggle for power, but also aspects of the conception of a Party and of revolutionary method and morality.

For the reconstruction of the Fourth International, we propose applying the same method that Trotsky used in its construction. In the first place, this means putting forth a call not only to those who come from a Trotskyist tradition, but to all revolutionaries with whom we have programmatic agreement, regardless of their origin.

In the second place it means not directing this call to all of those who consider themselves Trotskyist. On the one hand, this is because there are organizations that call themselves Trotskyist yet have abandoned a revolutionary program to support or participate in bourgeois governments. On the other, it is because there are self-proclaimed sects that, though they recite the program, use factionalist and disloyal methods that play an extremely destructive role.

In the third place it means proposing unification not through open conferences and big events, but rather through patient programmatic discussion and common intervention in the class struggle. This will permit this advance to happen on the basis of solid agreements and relationships of revolutionary loyalty.

Given the deterioration that the "opportunist tidal wave" produced, it is critical that we emphasize and clarify

some of the most important points:

1. The defence of class independence against all bourgeois governments, including the Popular Front and populist governments. No support for their policies either. Total opposition to all.
2. Support for the struggle of the working class and its allies.
3. The struggle against the bureaucracy and for workers' democracy in all organizations of the working class.
4. To have as a central task the struggle against imperialism in all of its manifestations.
5. Our objective is the destruction of the bourgeois state and its armed forces and the construction of a new workers state, based in democratic working class bodies that will push forward the international socialist revolution.
6. The defence of revolutionary morality and the rejection of the methods of "the end justifies the means" of physical attacks, slander, disloyal work, and unfulfilled agreements.
7. The reaffirmation of the role of the working class as the social subject of the revolution.
8. The defence of the need to construct democratically-centralized revolutionary proletarian Parties.
9. The defence of the imperative necessity to construct a democratically-centralized revolutionary International.

This brief overview of our history aimed to demonstrate the central aspects of the long history of our construction, showing our achievements, our strengths, and our weaknesses, our deviations, our crises. As Moreno said, "we move forward through errors and setbacks, and we are not ashamed to say so." Our close link with the working class and our permanent relation with the International are what has always allowed us to overcome the errors committed throughout our history. Apart from that, a feature of our trend has always been extreme flexibility as far as tactics are concerned and extreme rigidity on issues of principles.

We continue searching for the best way of establishing relations with the mass movement, working out our demands taking into consideration the existing degree of consciousness in order to push forward the mobilization. But at the same time, we never water down our program in the slightest nor do we

fear confronting the existing level of consciousness when it is a question of defending a principled policy.

That is why in spite of all the errors committed we are proud of our history. Obviously we do not pretend that all of the LIT-CI militants agree with everything we did over the last 50 years. We come from different backgrounds and, more likely than not, we have different interpretations of many events. Certainly there will also be differences in some theoretic definitions because events have happened that changed the face of the earth and that are producing great debates within international Marxism. Apart from that, we do not want an International where there is unanimity on everything. We want a centralized organization as far as the central issues of program are concerned but it must be a living thing, with open discussion on aspects of theory and policies in order to allow for constant improvement.

Today after many years of crisis and upheavals, we are living a new reality. We are experiencing a process of strengthening that is placing us in better conditions to push forward this strategic project. We have a history, much accumulated experience, a program that we are continuing to construct, a structure for our sections, publications, and a strong base of cadre, who we place at the disposal of the toiling masses to advance towards the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Endnotes

1 Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were leaders of the leftwing of the German Social Democracy, which later became known as the Spartacist League. They took a revolutionary position in opposition to WWI on the grounds of it being an imperialist war. Both were killed by the Social Democracy in 1918.

2 Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov - Lenin - was the main leader of the Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution. He was the founder of the Third International.

3 Together with Lenin, Leon Trotsky was a leader of the Russian Revolution. He was the leader of the Russian Red Army and he led the struggle against the bureaucratization of the CP, the Third International and the Soviet Union. He was the founder of the Fourth International.

4 First International - The International Workingmen's Association, founded by Karl Marx in 1864, uniting workers groups, unions and parties from many countries particularly Europeans.

5 Second International - The Social Democratic World Party founded by Friedrich Engels in 1889. It lost completely its revolutionary character

during WWI after supporting the war efforts of each national bourgeoisie.

6 Third International - The World Revolutionary Party was founded by Lenin and Trotsky in 1919. It promoted struggles and Revolutions worldwide but it lost its revolutionary character after its 4th Congress due to Stalinist rule.

7 Fourth International - The World Revolutionary Party founded by Trotsky in 1938. It reclaims the continuity of the 1st, 2nd and the four first congresses of the Third International. The Transitional Program was adopted as its program at its founding Congress.

8 SWP - The Socialist Workers Party. The American section of the Left Opposition and then of the Fourth International. Led by James Cannon it was the most consolidated section of the Fourth International in its founding. It broke with Trotskyism and the Fourth International in the 80s under the leadership of Jack Barnes.

9 [9] Michel Pablo, Ernest Mandel and Pierre Frank were the main European leaders of the Fourth International after WWII.

10 Juan Posadas was the main ally of Michel Pablo in Latin America. He broke with the Fourth International in 1962, founding his own International. Politically, he capitulated to nationalist and reformist groups and leaders.

11 Guillermo Lora was the main leader of the Ecuatorian Partido Obrero Revolucionario and one of the leader of the Bolivian Revolution of 1952 when he capitulated, giving critical support to the nationalist bourgeois government.

12 Pierre Lambert was the leader of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, the French Section of the Fourth International. In 1953, the PCI joined the International Committee of the Fourth International. Critical of the Cuban Revolution, the PCI (renamed Organisation Communiste Internationaliste in 1966) stood together with the Gerry Healy-led Socialist Labour League from 1963 until 1971. His OCI had a brief unification with Nahue Moreno's tendency from 1979 until 1981 when his critical support for the Mitterrand government in France led to a split.

13 Gerry Healy was the leader of the British SLI, renamed Workers Revolutionary Party. In the 80s, the WRP exploded after financial and political links to the Libyan and Iraq governments were revealed, together with denunciations of sexual abuse.

14 Hugo Blanco later broke politically with the Moreno-led tendency and joined the positions of the American SWP.

15 The United Secretariat of the Fourth International was founded in 1963, after the Mandel-led International Secretariat and the SWP merged. The Moreno-led group joined in 1964 and broke in 1979, after the United Secretariat supported the Sandinista repression against the membership of the Simon Bolivar Brigade (formed by the FB to fight in Nicaragua). The SWP also broke in the 80s, after formally abandoning Trotskyism.

16 Ben Bela was the leader of the nationalist FNL that led the Algerian Revolution. After the victorious revolution, he became the prime minister of a bourgeois government.

17 The 62 Organizations were 62 trade-unions that fought back the 1955 coup d'état against the nationalist bourgeois president Juan Perón. They carried out marches, strikes and occupations. Later, they went through a process of bureaucratization under the leadership of Augusto Vandor, the president of the largest

union, the metalworkers UOM.

18 Vasco Bengochea and Roberto Santucho were leading members of the Argentinean Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores - PRT. They broke with Leninism to join guerrilla warfare efforts inspired by the Cuban Revolution.

19 Foquism is a vanguardist strategy inspired by Che Guevara's experience. It consists in starting a guerrilla warfare as a way to spark a revolution.

20 ERP are the initials of Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo, one of the most important guerrilla groups in Argentina in the 70s, after the Montoneros (a leftwing Peronist guerrilla)

21 PST - Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores is the organization led by Moreno that emerged in 1973 after the fusion between the PRT - La Verdad and the Juan Coral-led split from the Socialist Party. It's known to have resisted under harsh military dictatorship (1976-1983), when it had 100 members killed. Afterwards, it became the Movimiento al Socialismo MAS, the Argentinean section of the LIT-CI.

22 The French LCR is Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire the largest section of the USec.

23 The Cordobazo was a mass workers' and people's uprising in the city of Cordoba in Argentina in May, 1969 against the dictatorship. It was very influential, leading to the formation of a strong national class struggle-oriented union tendency (tendencia clasista) and increased workers and students alliance-oriented groups on the campuses.

24 MFA is the Movimento das Forças Armadas, the leading force in the beginning of the Portuguese Revolution. It opposed the independence of the colonies and opposed a socialist perspective.

25 TLT (Tendencia Leninista Trotskista), which became later a faction inside the USec (FLT), was led by the US SWP and the Argentinean PST to oppose the guerrillaist and vanguardist deviation of the majority of the USec led by Mandel.

26 The TB (Tendencia Bolchevique), later a faction inside the USec (FB), was led by the Argentinean PST gathering the majority of Latin American Trotskyism.

27 The Workers League was formed from the "Ponto de Partida" (Starting Point) group by 5 Brazilian activists in exile in Chile in 1972 with a critical evaluation of the "foquism" tactic of guerrilla warfare in Brazil. Standing for the building of Leninist-type parties, they linked themselves to the Fourth International since its formation.

28 The Socialist Convergence was one of the few Trotskyist groups that survived the entryism in the Brazilian PT. The DS (Socialist Democracy, the USec section) fully capitulated, joining Lula's bourgeois administration with a minister appointed, and later breaking with the Fourth International. The OT (The Labour, Lambertist organization in Brazil) after an initial sectarian approach towards the PT, joined it and capitulated to Lula leadership. In 1986, they lost the majority of their leadership, who broke with the Fourth International to join Lula's group. Currently they

have 10% of the strength they used to have in the end of the 70s, when they led a militant and strong student tendency. Their current understanding is that the PT is a "strategic" Party in which they form a fraternal internal tendency. They are supportive of the bourgeois administration of Lula.

29 The CUT is the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores, the main Labour Federation in Brazil, founded in 1983. Socialist Convergence developed as part of a strong leftwing based mainly in the opposition caucuses, some of which managed to overthrow bureaucratic leaders in important unions like the metalworkers of Belo Horizonte and Sao Jose dos Campos, and the bank workers of Rio de Janeiro.

30 The Socialist Convergence was expelled from the PT in May 1992 after standing publicly for the immediate overthrow of President Collor de Mello, who was ousted a few months later. In June 1994, together with around 40 regional organizations mainly from the PT, the CS members founded the PSTU (Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificado), a 2,000 strong Leninist-type party. A year later, the PSTU became the Brazilian section of the LIT-CI, allowing members of other International organizations to remain in the Party. Even so, 1% of the membership left the Party to form the section of the CWI.

31 Founded in September of 1977, the Colombian PST became the centre of the Moreno's International tendency inside the USec (Tendencia Bolchevique and then Fracción Bolchevique - Bolshevik Tendency turned into Faction). They played a critical role in diverse areas, among them the critique of guerrillaism, work among industrial workers, the formation of the Internationalist Simon Bolivar Brigade to fight in the Nicaraguan Revolution and the founding of Editorial Pluma - that published the only version in Spanish of Trotsky writings.

32 The British group led by Bill Hunter, whose militancy in the Trotskyist movement dates back to WWII, comes from the Healyite tradition. His adherence to the LIT-CI was critical as to bringing the strong tradition of the British workers movement to the recently-founded International.

33 The Malvinas war (also called the Falklands war by the British) happened in 1982 in the southern Atlantic Ocean. A remnant from colonial times, British imperialism wanted to keep this outpost for geopolitical and economic reasons, as prospects showed the presence of oil under their sea bed. The Argentinian dictatorship tried a diversionist manoeuvre in order to redirect the workers attention from their struggles to war efforts. Ultimately, the British Navy with the support of US imperialism defeated the much weaker Argentinean forces, whose strength was limited by the military junta. The PST pushed for a strong campaign demanding the military to provide arms and military training in the workplaces during working hours under workers control, the nationalization of all British and US assets and the call for the TIAR (defence agreement of countries of all Americas to provide support for any member under military attack), among others. As the military did not meet any of these demands, the PST traded its "no confidence in the Dictatorship" gradually to "Down with

the Dictatorship". A year after the defeat, the Dictatorship was overthrown.

34 Siles Suazo was the bourgeois president of Bolivia from 1982-1985. Facing huge inflation, a lack of reserves and a strong wave of strikes, he suspended the payment of the foreign debt.

35 The Esquipulas and Contadora agreements were decided respectively in Guatemala and Panama by bourgeois governments with the support of the guerrilla leaders and Fidel Castro in order to disarm the armed resistance and to provide a solution for the in the area through bourgeois democratic institutions.

36 Democratic Reaction is the name employed in LIT-CI analyses to describe the new preferential policy of US imperialism after their defeat in Vietnam in 1974. Instead of the big stick (military intervention and dictatorships enforcement), the Carter administration talked about Human Rights and preferably used institutions of bourgeois democracy, like electoral processes and agreements/talks, to attract Leftwing leaders to capitulate and to prevent revolutionary processes. Later on, Ronald Reagan resorted to the same instrument, despite more aggressive speeches and threats.

37 Workers Aid to Bosnia was a campaign led by the Liaison Committee between the Workers International and the LIT-CI. Strongly based on the efforts of the British WRP (WP) and the Spanish PST (LIT-CI section), they organized solidarity to Bosnian workers, under attack by both Serbian and Croatian nationalist armies. On top of building political solidarity, they organized ten convoys carrying primarily food, which were delivered inside Bosnia to the Miners Union of Tuzla during the 3 year war (1993-1996).

38 Workers International was an International formed in 1990, centred on the British Workers Revolutionary Party (Workers Press,) led by Cliff Slaughter. The WRP, former SLL, came from the Healyite tradition. In 1985, Healy was expelled and the WRP suffered a process of fragmentation. A faction led by Bill Hunter split in 1987 and joined the LIT-CI.

39 The CITO - Centro Internacional do Trotskysmo Ortodoxo - was formed in 1994, in the midst of the crisis of the LIT-CI. It was a split led by the Colombian PST (historically one of the main sections of LIT-CI) and an important sector of the MAS (the Argentinean section). It gathered support among cadres in many other sections, particularly in Peru and Central America. In 2005, a Liaison Committee was formed between the LIT-CI and the CITO and, in 2008, the CITO was formally reintegrated into the International.

40 Conlutas is a new militant Labour and People's Federation formed after the main Brazilian Labour Federation, the CUT, sided with Lula's administration against public workers who went on strike for 40 days against Pension Reform. Its last Congress had nearly 2,000 delegates, representing nearly two million workers.

41 The Mexican POS, Bolivian MST and Dominican LST were official sections of LIT-CI in those countries. Currently, the reorganization of LIT-CI sections in Bolivia and Mexico are under way.

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