



Communist Workers Party
(PCL - Italia)

To all the militants of the organizations of the
Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation
of the Fourth International

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To all the militants of the organizations of the Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International (CRFI)

The text we send you here is a document which the Central Committee of our party, the Communist Workers Party (PCL), adopted in April 2016. It is for us, and also objectively, a fundamental text, because it summarizes our proposals for relaunching the CRFI. On them, and not on imaginary reconstructions, the debate should have taken place regarding the position of the PCL (as well as on the international analyses contained in our extensive congress documents, most recently those of the 2017 congress).

We asked that the text be translated into the national languages of the various sections and distributed to all the militants. Unfortunately, this request has not been granted. It is not the first time that this has happened, and it will happen again, indeed this is the normal method used, in particular, by the leading group of the Partido Obrero. While we, despite the fact that our numbers of militants are far less than those of the PO, have always made provision, in particular in recent years, to make known to our comrades, both militants and adherents (non-militant members without the right to decisive vote), the various texts of the PO and the other sections, translated into Italian, even more so when they are polemics with our party or its leaders.

This attitude of the leading group of the PO is a grave violation of the principles and practice of Leninist democratic-centralism and constitutes an injury not only to us but, first of all, to the militants of the PO itself (and of other sections of the CRFI which have the same attitude). With a method improper for a revolutionary party like the PO it seems that they are afraid to let the militants form their own opinions.

After an initial response to our text, full of insults and falsehoods, titled “End the tolerance by the CRFI of an opportunist camarilla of adventurers”, we replied with a short text in October 2016, this also obviously never translated, which we offer attached to the main text (Appendix 1).

Subsequently, the PCL was the silent protagonist of the 2017 PO congress, which dedicated pages and pages of its document to a wild attack on our party. The strange thing is that not only could we not intervene, but the text was not communicated to us, not even after its approval (we came into its possession in an accidental way). A situation of film of the absurd.

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But evidently the leaders of the PO (and those of the DIP of Turkey and the EEK of Greece who, after having, albeit confusedly and with many fears, defended the prospect of a minimally democratic-centralized functioning of the CRFI, have capitulated to those of the PO) had not the courage to face a political confrontation with us with the involvement of all the militants of their organization.

As for the DIP and the EEK in particular, the leading groups of these parties shared our concern about the crisis of the CRFI and the refusal to convene its second congress. This up to realizing (in 2013, if we remember well) a joint meeting with us to verify the modality of a common activity to try to get out of the absurd situation in which the attitude of comrade Altamira (as a member of the International Secretariat) and the leadership of the PO behind him had put us. But they were inconsistent. Not only comrade Savas and the leadership of the EEK, but also comrade Sungur and that of the DIP. At the pace of a shrimp they stepped back from the commitments and positions they had taken until they finally liquidated them, accepting our exclusion. They used as a pretext for this the political differences existing between us and them. But these differences were not new, they had been expressed for years. Comrade Savas in particular, invited to our congresses, had been freely able to argue against our positions before all the delegates. Our congressional documents, as well as a broad polemical text in response to comrade Poy of the international commission of the PO at the end of 2010, express well the depth of the differences (we take this opportunity to emphasize that the same leading groups of the EEK and the DIP have given not much or no space — as far as we know — to the translation of our texts, which would have allowed their ranks, as it has ours, to be a direct part of the international debate, even if we understand that a small organization does not have the same capacity as an important organization like the PO). But exactly a democratic international congress, involving all the militants of all the organizations of the CRFI, would have been the place of discussion necessary to evaluate the depth of the differences and also the eventuality of separating (by agreement or by unilateral decision). The leaders of the EEK and the DIP did not want to risk either a democratic debate among their own militants or, above all, to challenge the PO, and have capitulated.

As for the hypothetical response that could be given and perhaps was given, explicitly or implicitly, that the positions of the PCL were presented in the documents of the PO, we point out that this is exactly the argument that the Stalinists used in the late 1920s, at the moment of the expulsions, in order not to present the positions of the Trotskyists to the militants of the communist parties.

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And if someone wanted to reply with the silly argument to trust our leaders, we reply that, first, they have really misplaced their trust, especially as regards comrade Altamira, and, second, they should remember the phrase of Lenin, “He who believes in trust is an incurable idiot”.

In this introduction we do not want to respond to all the positions developed by the PO leadership against us and our “Genoese camarilla”, but only to take up some examples to show that the whole method, as well as vulgar, is wrong and that, as with any trial, the PCL should be given the right to defend itself and argue our positions in front of the only “jury” that we recognize, that is, the whole of the militants of the various organizations of the CRFI.

The falsities and distortions of the texts of the PO, in particular those written by comrade Altamira, are numerous. In general, what they try to give is a vision of a “tired” party, with only an image of activity, without political backbone. This vision is wholly fantasy with respect to the commitment of our party in the political fight and in the class struggle, in particular with the activity of the Opposition Current in the main Italian union, the CGIL.

But it is part of our method to have modesty and be realistic. Our party is certainly not comparable to the PO and the role it plays in the class struggle in Argentina, and our development has been and is more contradictory than the one the PO has had in the past few years. So, after having grown more than ten times in the long years of entrism in Communist Refoundation (from 35 to over 400 militants between 1994 and 2006), in our subsequent life as an independent party from 2006 onwards we have stagnated and even lost members (even if not in the terms presented in a public intervention at the CRFI’s preconference last April by one of our comrades, who violated with his intervention the most elementary rules of democratic-centralism). We have acted in a framework of retrocession of the Italian workers’ movement which has few comparisons (as shown by the triumph of the two populist parties today in government, with the vote of the majority of the working class). But certainly there have also been our limits and mistakes, which we try to understand and correct. But the representation that the leaders of the PO make is worse than false, it’s a joke.

Among the hundred facts turned upside down we want to point out only a few.

The first is that we would not pay the CRFI dues. Not only is it not true, but when (at the moment of the break with Communist Refoundation) we quickly passed from 250 to 400 militants, of our own choice, without any request, we increased our dues from 500 to 800

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dollars a month. So much so that we were quoted in a circular by the then-treasurer of the CRFI, comrade Pablo Heller (today, if we do not err, international director of the PO) as an example for the other sections to follow. Those who never paid their dues were instead the Turkish DIP.

The second question is that of the newspaper. It is certainly the weakest point of our party. We have on this ground, we think, some objective justifications. Our party is very dispersed (our militants are in about sixty different provinces), without a section that goes beyond a dozen militants, except a very peripheral one.

We do not have a national center (our secretariat meetings are via Skype).

In this context we, wrongly or rightly, decided to dedicate our only two functionaries (one part-time) to other political-organizational tasks.

We are certainly very criticizable, but why exaggerate in a burlesque, in order to have spurious arguments.

Comrade Altamira states in writing that we publish the paper two or three times a year. The above-mentioned ineffable altamirista comrade of the PCL, in his intervention in Buenos Aires in April, said more baldly that we have no newspaper.

In reality, since the PCL has existed, our newspaper has come out 5 to 7 times a year. We have tried to get it out monthly, we could not do it, and it comes out almost regularly every month and a half (except for the summer). Little, very little, but not what Altamira says. We also distribute tens of thousands of national leaflets each month in front of factories and offices.

But, above all, we have a website, which we think is well done and certainly regular, which every month has about 60,000 visits from different IP addresses. Not a few for a small party like ours.

The third point is that of the *International Worker*. Altamira states that we have not produced an Italian version of this international newspaper. But no one has ever proposed the publication of an Italian edition. Evidently even comrade Altamira, despite his tendency not to consider the problems deriving from the size difference of the various national organizations, took account of the difficulty of realizing such a hypothesis (if not, why not a Greek edition?).

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However, we regularly received 500 copies of the newspaper in Spanish, taking advantage of the relative similarity between this language and Italian and inviting our comrades to develop their knowledge of Spanish through the newspaper.

The fourth point concerns our role in relation to the development of the activity of the CRFI. Contrary to what was stated, the PCL and its predecessor, the AMR, have certainly played their part in the battle for first the MRFI and later the CRFI, also with respect to the various conferences organized. At the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, several “open conferences” were held, in which participated the split from the Lutte Ouvrière organization, Voix des Travailleurs (Workers Voice), which had been involved in discussions with us. They entered the French section of the United Secretariat, the Revolutionary Communist League, and continued to participate in our initiatives. In particular, many Argentine comrades will remember the intervention of its main leader, comrade Yvan, at a meeting in Buenos Aires in the early 2000s. We have continued contact work, particularly in France, in which, despite being in touch with a founding member and leader of Política Obrera, comrade Marcelo Gramar, the CRFI did not give us any support, due to political mistrust of us. Recall also that at least originally the conferences of Athens (or Istanbul) were presented as “Conferences of the Balkans and the Middle East”, not really our geographical space. In any case, again in 2017 we were the ones who introduced the Macedonian Trotskyist group, with whom we had come into contact. So, albeit modestly, we have done our duty. We recall, among other things, that, as far as we know, the last Latin American conference, saw the presence of only the organizations of the CRFI and some individuals, despite the political weight of the PO. Should we condemn it or declare that it is sabotaging the construction of the CRFI?

Certainly we have never agreed to invite (perhaps paying for the trip) individuals and groups scattered about on positions far from revolutionary Marxism. People and groups to whom the organizers of the conferences, first and foremost comrade Savas, never posed the real discussion on the problem of the refoundation of the revolutionary International, contenting themselves with resolutions that are as generic as they are bombastic. Or even openly Stalinist forces, such as the United Party of Russian Communists (which jointly, in the name of the defense of the “Great Russian Homeland”, organized a conference in Crimea with openly fascist forces from across Europe) shamefully invited to the CRFI preconference last April, while our party was excluded for points of political dissent.

These are just some examples of the distortions and falsifications of the facts utilized instrumentally to try to argue, in front of the comrades of the PO and the CRFI, the unjustifiable

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and anti-democratic exclusion of our party.

Finally, we add that comrade Altamira published last March, before the International preconference, a text titled: “International Conference: From where comes and where goes the Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International?” It contains the usual avalanche of falsehoods and distortions (too many to be able to answer here even half). There is talk of our “parasitic” role in the CRFI since 1997 (that is, the birth of the MRFI). So why was it not denounced then, or at the time of the birth of the CRFI in 2004 (when, on the proposal of Altamira, an International Secretariat of only three people was nominated, including one from the PCL)? And why, for example, have we been praised for the fundraising campaign, both at the institutional and the rank-and-file level, in favor of the Polo Obrero after the Argentinazo?

It is then stated that we took only 0.02% at the last political elections (of 4 March).

Now, the last elections were a defeat not only of the workers’ movement, practically non-existent, even in the reformist version, but, in our own small way, also of our party. For various reasons, in their complexity impossible to be examined here. But our electoral defeat was not the total disaster that comrade Altamira presents. In the constituencies where we were able to present (about half of the total) we have taken 0.17% of the votes. Very little, but not as little as Altamira says.

By way of hope, this is substantially the same percentage that the PO took in the 1995 elections, after which the party’s development began (thanks to its intervention in the class struggle, of course).

As mentioned, the texts of the PO, and in particular the “clandestine” ones (for us) of the 2017 congress, contain many such falsifications or distortions of our positions, as well as incorrect conceptions, which would require at least an entire volume to answer. Obviously, this is not possible and, wanting to avoid not responding or responding to patterns, we limit ourselves to two important questions on which comrade Altamira has cried scandal many times regarding our positions: the Gramsci question and that of council power.

The PCL and Gramsci

To argue our alleged “convergence with the PTS” and the consequent alleged “sabotage” of

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the CRFI, the resolution of the 2017 PO congress states (page 34)

“both [PCL and PTS] propose the recuperation of Gramsci. A PCL Congress modified its statutes to incorporate Gramsci as a representative of the “best tradition of Marxism”, together with Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky [here the resolution forgets that we also mention Rosa Luxemburg]. But there’s no escaping that Gramsci condemned the permanent revolution and Trotskyism, accepting the Stalinist takeover of the Italian Communist Party. And the PTS has discovered in the arsenal of the center-left the Gramscian claim to claim [sic] a pseudo “hegemony”, in essence “cultural”, crystallized in an historic “notebook” [Prison Notebooks], in rupture with the dictatorship of the proletariat...”

Comrade Altamira remembers badly. The point of our statutes to which he refers, with the name of Gramsci, has always been present starting from the structure that preceded the PCL, when we practiced entry into the Party of Communist Refoundation, the Revolutionary Marxist Association; this without Altamira, present at various meetings, raising any problem. What happened was exactly the opposite. At one of our congresses there was a proposal by a comrade to eliminate the name of Gramsci, a proposal that was rejected by a large majority. Comrade Altamira, who was present, did not intervene in the debate; but at the end of it he told some delegates, including Franco Grisolia (who had abstained), that Marco Ferrando (who had defended the maintenance of Gramsci’s name in the statutes) had been right, because the PCL was in Italy and therefore there was a logic in referring to Gramsci ... Since then years have passed, the PTS has discovered Gramsci, and we have become renegades because “Gramscian”.

But let’s see things in the concrete.

We recall that Lenin speaks of Gramsci, or better, of his group in the Italian Socialist Party, L’Ordine Nuovo, in the “Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International” (July 1920). We recall that the PSI, unlike the other main parties of the Socialist International, had lined up against the world war, had fully adhered to the Communist International. The three “communist” currents of the party were the “Maximalist” (in reality left-centrist, which had the majority of the party), the Communist Abstentionist (led by Amadeo Bordiga, ultraleft, with whom Lenin polemicized in *Leftwing Communism: an Infantile Disorder*) and the smallest, that of the “New Order” (led by Antonio Gramsci, which had the majority in the section of the city of Turin and was not present elsewhere).

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Here is what Lenin writes on the theses for the National Council of the PSI, written and proposed by Gramsci in May 1920:

17. Concerning the Socialist Party of Italy, the Second Congress of the Third International considers that the criticism of that party and the practical proposals submitted to the National Council of the Socialist Party of Italy in the name of the party's Turin section, as set forth in L'Ordine Nuovo of May 8, 1920, are in the main correct and are fully in keeping with the fundamental principles of the Third International.

The Communist Party of Italy was born as a split from the PSI, whose Maximalist majority refused, in the congress of January 1921, to expel from the party the left-reformist minority (weak in the party, but strong in the parliamentary group). The PCdI was constituted by the Abstentionist current, that of the New Order, and some left Maximalist leaders (most of the Maximalist leaders joined the PCdI at the end of 1923, but with a much reduced militant base). The party remained in the hands of the ultraleft Bordigists, with the “critical” support of the Gramscians, until the middle of 1924 when Gramsci, returning from a year in Russia and then Austria, broke with Bordiga and succeeded in winning the majority first of the CC and then, with more than a year of political battle, of the party, ratified by the congress of January 1926.

It is certainly not necessary to know the origins of Italian Trotskyism for a comrade of Argentina or even a country closer to Italy, but we think it right to remember that it originated from a group of Gramscian leaders, who had fought with him in the political battle against Bordiga.

In 1930s, three of the eight members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Italy (in exile in Paris) opposed the “catastrophist” positions imported into the party on the basis of the analysis by the Stalinized Communist International of the so-called “third period”, and their political consequences. Beaten in the party, they joined the Trotskyist International Left Opposition. These were Leonetti, Ravazzoli and Tresso, all leading cadres of the Gramscian center of the 1920s. Of particular importance in the history of Trotskyism is Pietro Tresso (called Blasco), originally a worker, formerly responsible for the organization of the PCdI, delegate to the founding congress of the Fourth International and member of its first Executive Committee. Tresso was assassinated at the end of 1943 in the French Resistance by Stalinist partisans, on direct orders from Moscow, dying bravely (see the book of the French Trotskyist historian Broué Murders in the Maquis).

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Tresso and the others (while reviewing some errors) never renounced the positions of the Gramscian current in the PCdI of the 1920s.

When Gramsci died in 1937, after 11 years of imprisonment in fascist prisons (or guarded in a clinic near the end because of his serious health conditions), Tresso published a long article in the weekly French Trotskyist party, significantly titled “*A great militant is dead: Gramsci*”.

In it he spoke openly of Gramsci’s “political and moral rupture” with the Stalinized PCI and concluded thus:

Gramsci is dead, but for the proletariat, for the younger generations who come to the revolution through fascist hell, he will always remain the one who better than any other has embodied the sufferings, the aspirations and the will of the workers and poor peasants of Italy in the course of the last twenty years. He remains an example of moral righteousness and intellectual integrity absolutely inconceivable for the congregation of Stalinist parasites whose motto is “arrange”. Gramsci is dead, but after witnessing the decomposition and death of the party which he had, powerfully, helped to create, and after hearing in his ears the revolver shots fired by Stalin, which killed a whole generation of Old Bolsheviks. Gramsci is dead, but after knowing that new Old Bolsheviks, such as Bukharin, Rykov and Rakovsky were already set for slaughter. Gramsci is dead of a heart-attack, we may never know what contributed the most to his death: the eleven years of suffering in Mussolini’s prisons or the shots that Stalin had fired in the necks of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, Piatakov and their comrades in the cellars of the GPU.

Farewell Gramsci.

At this point the reader of the PO document will certainly be confused. But how, the Trotskyists in the 1930s claimed someone who was against the dictatorship of the proletariat? And then, was it not Gramsci who had Stalinized the PCI or at least tolerated it?

We’ll go in order, starting from Gramsci and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The PCdI was declared illegal (along with all the other parties except, obviously, the fascist party) by the regime which governed from October 1922 until November 1926.

The last party congress took place in Lyon in France (for security reasons, because the PCdI,

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although still formally legal, was in fact almost totally impeded by political intervention and was subjected to severe acts of repression) in January 1926.

In this congress the center of the party directed by Gramsci largely triumphed over the left (actually ultraleft) of Bordiga.

The majority theses were written directly by Gramsci.

In point 23 of the thesis, titled “Fundamental tasks of the Communist Party” Gramsci states:

23. Having victoriously resisted the reactionary wave which sought to engulf it (1923); having contributed with its own actions to marking a first halt in the process of dispersal of the working-class forces (1924 elections); having taken advantage of the Matteotti crisis to reorganize a proletarian vanguard which, with notable success, opposed the attempt to instal a petty-bourgeois predominance in political life (Aventine); and having laid the basis of a real peasant policy of the Italian proletariat – the party today finds itself in the phase of political preparation of the revolution.

Its fundamental task can be indicated by these three points:

(a) to organize and unify the industrial and rural proletariat for the revolution;

(b) to organize and mobilize around the proletariat all the forces necessary for the victory of the revolution and the foundation of the workers’ State;

(c) to place before the proletariat and its allies the problem of insurrection against the bourgeois State and of the struggle for proletarian dictatorship, and to guide them politically and materially towards their solution, through a series of partial struggles.

The last point (44) states verbatim:

44. All the particular struggles led by the party, and its activities on every front to mobilize and unite the forces of the working class, must come together and be synthesized in a political formula which can be easily understood by the masses, and which has the greatest possible agitational value for them. This formula is the “workers’ and peasants’ government.” It indicates even to the most backward masses the need to win power in order to solve the vital

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problems which interest them; and it provides the means to transport them onto the terrain of the more advanced proletarian vanguard (struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat). In this sense, it is an agitational slogan, but only corresponds to a real phase of historical development in the same sense as the intermediate solutions dealt with in the preceding paragraph.

The party cannot conceive of a realization of this slogan except as the beginning of a direct revolutionary struggle: i.e., of a civil war waged by the proletariat, in alliance with the peasantry, with the aim of winning power. The party could be led into serious deviations from its task as leader of the revolution if it were to interpret the workers' and peasants' government as corresponding to a real phase of development of the struggle for power: in other words, if it considered that this slogan indicated the possibility for the problem of the State to be resolved in the interests of the working class in any other form than the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Confused more than ever, our reader will ask: But then the question of hegemony? What is it?

The point is that, as already said, Gramsci was arrested, like other leaders of the PCdI, particularly those who, deputies like himself, were in Rome. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

In prison he obtained permission to write and the notebooks (and books) needed to do so. But of course this permission could be revoked, even if his writings were unknown to anyone except himself and his fascist warders. Because of this, Gramsci was cautious and dealt with various issues in disguised terms. Thus the revolutionary party became "The modern Prince" (with reference to the Italian renaissance of the 1500s), and the conquest of the dictatorship of the proletariat became "the conquest of hegemony".

Gramsci's writings from prison may be interesting in many aspects, philosophical, historical, economic, but they do not express, except cryptically, the political positions of Gramsci, for which we must refer to his writings before prison. Among other things, this indicates why we do not consider that we share the positions of the Argentine PTS, which, as far as we know, seems to refer politically to these prison writings.

Let us add that, contrary to what many think and say, including the current leadership of the

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PO, the concept of hegemony is not, in revolutionary Marxism, a Gramscian novelty. The concept of hegemony is very present, e.g., in Lenin's *What to Be Done?*, but not only there. So much so that, in his *History of the Bolshevik Party*, which is actually the collection of a series of lectures given in Moscow in 1923 (when Gramsci was staying in the Russian capital), Zinoviev states literally, referring to the early days of the Marxist movement in Russia: "Today we say Dictatorship of the Proletariat, then we said 'Hegemony'".

Gramsci also uses the term "Hegemony" in a different manner than as a substitute for "Dictatorship of the Proletariat". Substantially in correct terms. That is, in particular as proletarian "hegemony" of the so-called "historical block", that is, the alliance between workers and poor peasants of the South, as indicated in the theses of Lyon, and as "cultural hegemony" (Lenin would have said "ideological") by the class and its vanguard of the masses and in society, as an element of preparation for the revolution. But wherever it was written "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" and Gramsci writes "Hegemony", it is only a self-protective trick.

Gramsci then takes up the concept as a form of self-defense against the fascist jailers.

But, it will be objected, this certainly belies what the document of the PO congress says on Gramsci's general political conceptions, but it does not eliminate Gramsci's anti-Trotskyism.

Gramsci's anti-Trotskyism? Let's see.

In February 1924 Gramsci is in Vienna (among other things, together with Pietro Tresso). From there he directs a long political letter to the main leaders, Togliatti and Terracini, of his "center" faction of the PCdI, which was breaking with the Bordigist ultraleft, as, among other things, Trotsky had proposed. In it Gramsci writes:

It is known that in 1905 Trotsky already believed that in Russia a socialist and workers' revolution could occur, while the Bolsheviks only intended to establish a political dictatorship of the proletariat allied with the peasants that would serve as a shell for the development of capitalism, which was not to be affected in its economic structure. It is also known that in November 1917, while Lenin and the majority of the party had moved on to Trotsky's conception and intended to alter not only the political government but also the industrial government, Zinoviev and Kamenev had remained of the traditional party opinion...

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Formidable! Trotsky was forced to write a book (*The Permanent Revolution*) to respond to the objections of Radek, leader of the Left Opposition, and argue the progressive development of Lenin towards permanent revolution. Gramsci is not so sophisticated; for him the question is simple: “It is known” that Lenin passed in 1917 to Trotsky’s position in 1905 and thus was able to realize the socialist revolution in Russia.

At this point, our honest reader will now be forced to recognize that what the PO congress document says has no relation to reality. He is left with a last question: Perhaps Gramsci, evaluating Trotskyism positively until 1917, unlike the Stalinists, saw in Trotsky’s break with the majority of the Russian party an attack on Leninism and the construction of socialism?

Here is how Gramsci expresses himself on the question in the continuation of the same letter:

The recent polemics in Russia reveal that Trotsky and the opposition, in general, given the prolonged absence of Lenin from the leadership of the party, are strongly concerned with a return to old mentality, which would be deleterious for the revolution. By asking for greater intervention of the working-class element in the life of the party and a reduction in the bureaucracy’s powers, they want, basically, to assure the revolution of its socialist and working-class character and to prevent the democratic dictatorship from becoming slowly enveloped by developing capitalism, which was the program of Zinoviev and his comrades also in November 1917.

No! there is no justification for the ridiculous falsifications (by choice or ignorance) of the congressional text of the PO.

At this point, however, we must add that what could be expected from what Gramsci wrote at the beginning of 1924, that is, his openly siding with Trotskyist positions, does not happen. Gramsci returns to Italy and launches the battle against the Bordigist extremism, which wins definitively with the Lyon congress. He considers it a fundamental battle to put the party in a position to play an essential role in the fight against fascism and for the proletarian revolution, which he still believes a possibility. The Bordigists, though their positions were always condemned by Trotsky, grasp the counterrevolutionary character of Stalinism and openly defend the great Russian revolutionary.

Gramsci evidently fears that his taking a side on that ground too could destroy his current in the party and make it impossible to set the party straight and prepare it for the great tasks

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which he thinks are awaiting it.

Although not all is clear, it is probable that Gramsci's thought is well expressed by his friend and comrade Pietro Tresso in November 1927, at the time of the expulsion of Trotsky from the Russian party.

Gramsci has been in prison for a year, and the party is in absolute clandestinity. However, he is not dead. and the leaders of the Federation of Milan, at the news, think to tell the militants to paint (of course at night) "Viva Trotsky!" on the walls of the factories, with all the risks involved. It is Pietro Tresso, the future leader and martyr of the Fourth International, at the moment in Milan as the party's national organizer, who convinces them not to do so. Memoirs recall one of his arguments. Tresso says, "In Russia it went the way it went. We look forward to making the revolution in Italy, and we hope that it will go better for us". We believe that, probably, this was, roughly, the thought of Gramsci in 1924-26. This while a battle was taking place in the Italian party totally different from that which developed in most other parties of the International. In them the revisionist forces, linked to the new leadership of the Communist International, clashed with and marginalized the Leninists; in the Italian party the Leninists clashed with and defeated the ultraleftists who led it from its foundation.

In any case, it is clear to us that the attitude of Gramsci (and of Tresso) was wrong, indeed very wrong. It is one of the reasons why some of us think it is right to remove his name from our statutes.

But this has nothing to do with what the leadership of the PO denounces.
And yet, with reference to the Gramscian error...

In October 1926, the PCdI is still formally legal, but subjected to enormous repression. The fascist regime dominates everything. Its totalitarianization lacks only the formal illegalization of opposition parties.

In this climate Gramsci writes and has approved by the Political Bureau of the PCdI a letter to that of the Communist Party of the USSR, relating to the clash within it. In it, cautious in its conclusions, we read, however,

We believe our duty as internationalists to draw the attention of the most responsible comrades of the Communist Party of the USSR... You today are destroying your work, you degrade and

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run the risk of annulling the leadership function that the Communist Party of the USSR won on the impetus of Lenin. It seems to us that the violent passion of the Russian questions make you lose sight of the international aspects of the Russian questions themselves, make you forget that your duty as Russian militants can and must be fulfilled only in the framework of the interests of the international proletariat... Comrades Zinoviev, Trotsky, Kamenev have contributed powerfully to educating for the revolution, they have sometimes corrected us very energetically and severely, they were our teachers

The future leader of the Stalinist International and absolute boss of the PCI, Togliatti, in Moscow as the Italian representative, decides, prudently, to keep it in his pocket. Two weeks later Gramsci is arrested and begins his 11 years of total removal from active politics, which will end only with death.

In these years Gramsci is far from political reality. He may have books and magazines (Italian, therefore fascist), but he cannot read the newspapers. even fascist ones, because in Mussolini's prisons it is prohibited. This is why, when he writes about political current events, he is confused or frankly mistaken. Just think of the absurdity of criticizing Trotsky (called Br. for "security") for supporting a theory of permanent offensive, at the very moment in which he and the Left Opposition were developing a frontal battle against the "revolutionary catastrophism" of Stalinism of the so-called "third period" (1928-1934) and its theory, in fact, of the permanent offensive (see in this regard Trotsky's text "The Third Period of Errors of the Communist International").

And yet...

And yet the expulsion of three out of eight members of the Political Bureau of the party, Leonetti, Ravazzoli and Tresso, was too serious and the change of line too sharp for its leaders not to seek to inform Gramsci. They then turned to one of his brothers, Gennaro, who lived in France, was communist but not known as such, and as a relative could visit Gramsci.

In June and July 1930 Gennaro Gramsci has therefore several interviews in prison, unsupervised, with his brother, in which he exposes what happened.

On his return he makes a report to the secretary of the PCdI Togliatti, and also puts it in writing, in which he states that his brother approved the new line of the International and, consequently, the expulsion of the three.

All clear?

Not exactly.

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Gennaro Gramsci died in 1965. A few months before his death he was interviewed at length by Giuseppe Fiori, a leftist journalist and historian, who published the following year what is still unanimously considered the best biography of Antonio Gramsci. And to him, finally, after 35 years, he confessed. He had lied. This is what Flowers reports as the literal words of Gennaro Gramsci on the judgment of his brother. “He agreed with Leonetti, Ravazzoli and Tresso. He did not agree with the turn of the Communist International and the way in which Togliatti had accepted it”.

Gennaro Gramsci explained that he lied because, knowing well the new nature of the leading groups of the PCdI and the International, he feared that, telling the truth, they would cease the public campaign (and also the confidential contacts, which led to nothing) for the release of Antonio Gramsci.

The nature of the Gramscian attitude was so well known in the party’s leading group that two members of its secretariat, Di Vittorio and Berti, when Gramsci died and an old leader of the PCdI, passed to the Socialist Party, referred to the letter 1926, proposed to issue a public criticism and disavowal of Gramsci in relation to his positions on Trotsky.

Togliatti refused, understanding that reopening a question known to few and now distant in time, would have favored only the Italian Trotskyists. A few months later Antonio Gramsci died of a heart attack.

We do not know if the next congress of the PCL will remove from its statutes the name of Gramsci. Some of us (secretariat of the PCL) are in favor of this choice, others opposed, others uncertain.

But, if it does, this certainly will not be to capitulate to the absurd appropriations of his memory by some Stalinists (not all, the Greek KKE, as the EEK comrades know, and its satellites consider Gramsci “Trotskyist”), as was the case of the old PCI until its dissolution, or various centrists, social-democrats, liberals or even, at least in Italy, some reactionaries of the so-called social right, certainly not to the incorrect readings of comrade Altamira and the leadership of the PO. No, we will always remember the great little militant man, leader and communist theorist in struggle for the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, of whom, to take again the words of Pietro Tresso, *“We will never know what contributed most to kill him: the eleven years of suffering in Mussolini’s prisons or the shots that Stalin had fired in the necks of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, Piatakov and their comrades in the cellars of the GPU.”*

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Party and councils (soviets)

One of the central accusations advanced against us in the “Resolution on the Crisis of the CRFI” approved by the 2017 PO Congress is to “deny the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat”.

This accusation arose from having discovered that in our statutes (always that, the source of variegated and enormous accusations without concrete political bases) of the concept that our objective is the “dictatorship of the proletariat (democracy of workers’ councils)”. In this formula the PO leadership sees “denying the democratic character of the direct revolutionary dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party in the course of the revolution”.

This general objective is incorrect. It has never been a demand of the communist movement.

We will reconstruct. Originally our statutes contained only the reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat. But having seen that in the statutes of the PO this central concept was followed by the words in parentheses “workers’ democracy” (we do not know if Jorge knows this is present, but it is), we thought it was good to add this essential concept, but in a more precise formula, exactly to avoid confused, democratist formulas or ones that do not pose the problem of the destruction of the bourgeois state.

In doing so we have referred to the statutes of the original communist parties, which make reference to the power of the soviets, a word which in Russian and in other Slavic languages means exactly “council”.

And indeed the criticism of comrade Altamira and the leading group of the PO seems truly incredible for anyone who refers to Leninism-Trotskyism, and we too were amazed when we saw it.

We recall that the state created by the 1917 revolution had the name of “Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic” and that the second major revolution of that era gave life to the “Hungarian Republic of Councils”. And it is to those experiences we look as a perspective.

The question of the power of the soviets (councils) and of soviet democracy is, moreover, clearly expressed in the theses of the early Communist International. We could, in reality, give thousands of citations. We limit ourselves to two very significant ones.

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The letter of invitation to the First Congress of the Communist International (1919), signed for the Central Committee of the Russian Party by Lenin and Trotsky, states:

3. The new apparatus of power must represent the dictatorship of the working class and, in certain places, also that of the small peasants and agricultural labourers; it must, that is to say, be the instrument for the systematic overthrow of the exploiting class and its expropriation. Not false bourgeois democracy – that hypocritical form of domination of the financial oligarchy – with its purely formal equality, but proletarian democracy, with the possibility of realising the freedom of the toiling masses; not Parliamentarianism, but the self-administration of these masses by their elected bodies; not capitalist bureaucracy, but organs of administration created by the masses themselves, with the real participation of the masses in the administration of the country and in the activity of Socialist construction – that is the type of State the proletarian State should be. The power of the workers' councils or the workers' organisations is its concrete form.

In the same First Congress of the International, the “Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”, written by Lenin, states:

19. Only the Soviet government of the state can really affect the immediate breakup and total destruction of the old, i.e., bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial machinery, which has been, and has inevitably had to be, retained under capitalism even in the most democratic republics, and which is, in actual fact, the greatest obstacle to the practical implementation of democracy for the workers and working people generally. The Paris Commune took the first epoch making step along this path. The Soviet system has taken the second.

20. Destruction of state power is the aim set by all Socialists, including Marx above all. Genuine democracy, i.e., Liberty and equality, is unrealizable unless this aim is achieved. But it's practical achievement as possible only through Soviet, or proletarian, democracy, for by enlisting the mass organizations of the working people in constant and unflinching participation in the administration of the state, it immediately begins to prepare the complete withering away of any state.

These concepts are taken up and updated by Trotsky in a myriad of texts, but in particular in the Transitional Program of the Founding Congress of the Fourth International of 1938.

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In the chapter titled “Soviets” is written:

The slogan of soviets, therefore, crowns the program of transitional demands...

Two regimes, the bourgeois and the proletarian, are irreconcilably opposed to each other. Conflict between them is inevitable. The fate of society depends on the outcome. Should the revolution be defeated, the fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie will follow. In the case of victory, the power of the soviets, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist reconstruction of society, will arise.

And in the chapter “The USSR and the Problems of the Transitional Epoch” is written:

*“...The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy. [...] it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets. In the soviets there is room only for representatives of the workers, rank-and-file collective farmers peasants and Red Army men. Democratization of the soviets is impossible without legalization of soviet parties. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties...
Down with the bureaucratic gang of Cain-Stalin!
Long live Soviet democracy!
Long live the international socialist revolution!”*

To the PO militants who might ask us: But did not Lenin and Trotsky declare themselves against soviet fetishism? We can respond: Certainly. And we are perfectly in agreement with them. The realization and safeguarding of the revolution is the supreme law for revolutionaries, but this does not eliminate its principles.

Last year Prensa Obrera published an article by comrade Marcelo Gramar, in the framework of the series of articles on the centenary of the Russian revolution, which referred to the moment in which the Bolshevik Party, after the repression of the proletarian vanguard following the July actions in Petrograd, on Lenin’s proposal, abandoned the slogan of “All power to the Soviets”, which it resumed shortly after, when the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks lost control. This completely correct article is, however, titled “All power to the Soviets?” and does not present some essential elements in Lenin’s position.

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Here is what Lenin wrote in the exact text in which he proposed the change, titled “On Slogans” (July 1917):

“...Now, after the experience of July 1917, it is the revolutionary proletariat that must independently take over state power. Without that the victory of the revolution is impossible. The only solution is for power to be in the hands of the proletariat, and for the latter to be supported by the poor peasants or semi-proletarians. And we have already indicated the factors that can enormously accelerate this solution.

Soviets may appear in this new revolution, and indeed are bound to, but not the present Soviets, not organs collaborating with the bourgeoisie, but organs of revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. It is true that even then we shall be in favour of building the whole state on the model of the Soviets. [our emphasis]”.

Trotsky, polemicizing with the demagogic “soviet fetishism” of “third period” Stalinism, returned to Lenin’s position (the text, of 1931, is titled “The Question of Workers’ Control of Production”). He recalls that Lenin, during the period when he renounced the slogan “All power to the Soviets”, thought to use for the insurrection the factory councils, already with a Bolshevik majority.

Taking up the method with reference to the German situation, Trotsky writes:

“According to the official view prevailing at the present time, the proletarian revolution can be accomplished only by means of the Soviets, where the Soviets have to arise directly for the purpose of the armed uprising. This stereotype is absolutely worthless. The Soviets are only an organizational form, the question is decided by the class content of the policy, and in no case by its form. In Germany, there were Ebert-Scheidemann Soviets. In Russia, the conciliationist Soviets turned against the workers and soldiers in July 1917. That is why Lenin, for a long time, took into account that we would have to carry out the armed uprising not with the aid of the Soviets but of the factory committees. This calculation was refuted by the course of events, for we succeeded, in the month and a half to two months before the uprising, in winning over the most important Soviets...

In Russia, the Bolsheviks were successful in tearing the Soviets from the conciliators. In Germany, they did not succeed and that is why the Soviets disappeared.

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Today, in 1931, the word 'Soviets' sounds quite differently from what it did in 1917–1918. Today it is the synonym of the dictatorship of the Bolsheviks, and by that the bugbear on the lips of the social democracy...

The matter stands quite differently with the factory councils. They already exist today. They are composed of Communists as well as of social democrats. In a certain sense, the factory councils realize the united front of the working class...

The factory councils' central of a city can thoroughly fulfill the role of city Soviets. This could be observed in Germany in 1923. By extending their function, applying themselves to ever bolder tasks, and creating federal organs, the factory councils, intimately connecting the social democratic workers with the Communists, can grow into Soviets and become an organizational support for the uprising. After the victory of the proletariat, these factory councils-Soviets will naturally have to separate themselves into factory councils in the proper sense of the word, and into Soviets as organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Sorry for the length of the citations. They show the correctness of our formula (which has nothing of fetishism) and the inconsistency of the bizarre position of Altamira and the congressional document of the PO.

Lenin, Trotsky, revolutionary Marxism have always seen in mass organizations (soviets, councils) the foundational structure of the proletarian insurrection and of the proletarian dictatorship, that is, "democracy of the soviets or workers' councils".

Something like the direct revolutionary dictatorship of the party has never existed in Leninism-Trotskyism, so much so that those who came to this position (once again the Bordigists, who in the 1930s turned into a small revolutionary ultraleft international current) considered it a new evolution with respect to Leninism.

A different matter is the fact that with the Russian civil war and the very grave economic crisis that it caused, in the political framework of the dissolution of all political parties, including the left, for their counterrevolutionary role, the Russian Communist Party found itself playing a role of power more fundamental than what had been foreseen and the "abstract norms".

But at the same time they tried to keep alive to the maximum the organs of proletarian power, that is, the soviets; and this particular period never represented the example for the program

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of Leninists, as well represented by the citations we have given and above all the Transitional Program, with its demand of the legalization of Soviet parties (but Trotsky, fortunately for him, did not have to torment him a pseudo-Marxist with his own bizarre theories).

We have said that the demand of the “dictatorship of the party” belongs to the Bordigist ultralefts. But they are ultralefts because they reject electoral participation, the workers’ government, the workers’ united front, the anti-imperialist united front and, at least in many cases, the defense of the colonial countries, as they rejected since the 1930s the defense of the USSR, considered a capitalist power.

None of this exists in the PO. For this reason, in the CRFI, the position of Altamira, beyond the verbal ranting, constitutes a dangerous rightwing opportunist deviation.

As we have seen, the soviets or councils constitute the instrument of the revolution and the destruction of the old bourgeois apparatus, “the finally found form of the proletarian dictatorship”.

Their role has been questioned many times by opportunist, centrist and left-reformist forces, who swore on the “dictatorship of the proletariat” but denied the centrality of the soviets (or councils) and therefore in reality the destruction of the bourgeois state.

In Spain the centrist leaders of the POUM affirmed that, given the strength of the union structures, the instrument of the dictatorship had to be these and not structures of the council type, which it therefore did not propose. Trotsky strongly polemicized with them in defense of the soviet perspective.

In France the left-reformist Leon Blum, at least until the mid-1930s, defended the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat (he also wrote a pamphlet on the question), but naturally not that of the soviets or councils.

For him, the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat was the workers’ party, that is, its socialist party.

Without comparing comrade Altamira and the leading group of the PO to these characters, the theoretical and political eclecticism which characterizes these positions can lead very far onto the ground of opportunism and denial, in fact, of the revolutionary break with the

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bourgeois state, with the construction of a real proletarian power, based, as Lenin said, on the self-organization of the class.

At this point, if we reasoned (in this case from an “orthodox” and not “eclectic” point of view) with the method of comrade Altamira, we should conclude that the PO is a revisionist party of a centrist character, an obstacle to the development of a true Trotskyist party in Argentina.

But our method is different (also in this case “orthodox Trotskyist”).

Despite the theoretical confusion, the eclecticism on many grounds, the sectarianism in political relations with other revolutionaries, the dangers of opportunist drift, for us the PO, to date, for its role and its intervention in the class with the transitional method, remains a Trotskyist party; a possible instrument for the construction of the revolutionary leadership of the Argentine proletariat; an interlocutor for the project of the refoundation of the Fourth International.

It is starting from these conceptions that we want to set up a relationship with the CRFI and, within it, with the dominant party, i.e., the PO. In the clarity of political positions, however, as this text (from which certainly the leading group of the PO will try to defend itself with the eternal accusation of revisionists toward consistent Marxists of being “bookish”) shows. The adaptation of the leading groups of the DIP and the EEK is indeed foreign to us.

We conclude this text with an appeal to all the comrades who receive it. We asked to be present at the international preconference last April, not as a concession, but as our right (see the attached letter). We know from a letter of the DIP comrades that, on the part of the CRFI leaders, it was decided not even to respond, here too with a disgraceful attitude for revolutionary Marxists. We ask to be present at the next conference, and the congress in next year. We know that the fear of political confrontation with us will presumably lead to a flat rejection through silence towards us, perhaps a new flurry of falsehoods and distortions of our actions and our positions.

We clearly tell you that a militant Trotskyist worthy of this name cannot passively accept all that. Even if the political differences were such as to reach the conclusion (which we do not think logical) that it is necessary to separate, after more than twenty years of political relations (preceded, in the “prehistory” of some of us, by an in part common battle with PO against the Lambertist positions in the OCRFI in the distant 1970s), this can only be determined through

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an open debate involving all the militants of all the organizations. Democratic-centralism, including international, is not only a possibility for Leninists-Trotskyists, but a question of principle.

Therefore, we send this text to all the comrades of the CRFI whom we can reach (a number unfortunately limited), asking you to circulate it as widely as possible, so that it can be discussed and evaluated in every location (cells, sections, conferences, congresses). For a really democratic congress of the CRFI, on the road to a consistent refoundation, democratic-centralist, truly on Leninist-Trotskyist bases, of the Fourth International, World Party of the Socialist Revolution.

PCL (Communist Workers Party) Secretariat

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The historic crisis of the Fourth International, the impasse of the CRFI and the tasks of its organizations and militants (2016)

The construction of the international party of socialist revolution as a constant of marxism and its urgency today

The construction of the international party of socialist revolution marks the program and the commitment of revolutionary Marxists. Internationalism is not just solidarity with the struggles of the workers and the oppressed peoples of other countries. For revolutionary Marxism it is the natural implication of the communist program: a program that can only be fully realized on an international scale.

The construction of the International Communist Party is an inseparable part of the history of the communist movement.

The communist revolutionaries of the early 1900s, heirs of Marxism, could not even imagine the birth and development of “national” communist parties, without an international organization or the process of its formation.

The necessity that the communists of a century ago felt so so pressing and so ingrained in their program, is objectively no less compelling today. This both in reference to what is described above in terms of causality between the existence of a revolutionary proletarian International and the possibility of a socialist alternative, and also with respect to the framework of the capitalist crisis, which constitutes the global reality.

From all points of view the global reality offers socialist revolution as the only rational solution. And hence this reality would imply the existence of a revolutionary International of the proletariat, which instead does not exist even in terms of a nucleus.

And what's more, even in the face of the capitalist crisis and offensive on a world scale and in each country, the proletariat, in its great majority, lacks the revolutionary class consciousness which would lead it to see, even if confusedly, in a socialist revolution the alternative to the current situation of crisis.

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The crisis of class consciousness

The crisis of class consciousness is a negative determinant of the present world situation. This crisis is partly the product of the objective situation. That is, the significant conquests made by the working class of the imperialist countries in the epoch of the boom had, as a contradictory byproduct, the development, in broad sections of the proletariat, of the illusion that they were fixed and could be enlarged, even within the capitalist system (perhaps with social or “socialist” elements in it). But this element, while important, is not the only one. If class-unconscious illusions were only the product of a situation of reformist achievements, logically they should be reduced or nullified in the face of the development of a situation of destruction of the conquests, of mass unemployment and job insecurity: there should develop, as a result of the negative objective reality, a more radical consciousness at the level of the great masses. Which to date it has not.

Because in reality the question of class consciousness is much more complex. History has shown the full validity of the conception masterfully expressed by Lenin in his *What to Be Done?* (1902), taking up, in reality, the conceptions already expressed by Marx and Engels and by the main parties of the Second International, then still Marxist in its majority. The conception that affirms that class consciousness is not innate in the proletariat, starting from its situation of exploitation, nor is born spontaneously from economic struggles. But that it must be brought to the class from outside, that is, from the political vanguard organized in a revolutionary Marxist party, combatting pure spontaneous consciousness of a “trade-unionist” type, which is assertive but not revolutionary. Moreover, Trotsky stated in the ‘30s, taking a concept repeatedly expressed by Marxism: “The workers’ parties exist to change the consciousness of the class.” Naturally, this is not a change based solely on propaganda, although this is a fundamental aspect (not by chance scorned and ridiculed by all opportunists and movementists); but intervention in the concrete struggles of workers and those subjected to social oppression, seeking to lead, to hegemonize, to clarify the lessons to those involved and help them grow and develop on the terrain of political confrontation with the bourgeoisie and its state, building and consolidating in this manner the class consciousness of the proletariat.

The role of the Internationals of which we have spoken was just that. And it was largely positive. At the time of the First Congress of the Communist International a large part of the proletariat, many tens of millions, if not the majority, had a clear revolutionary class consciousness. One can only suggest the dramatic step backward since then. The point is that for eighty years the proletariat has been deprived of a mass revolutionary Marxist International and, instead,

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the parties that claimed to represent it, in reality agents of the bourgeoisie, have helped to progressively destroy the class consciousness of the broad vanguard of the workers. But the historical origin of this global defeat was the destruction, first political-programmatic and then also organizational, of the Communist International by Stalinism.

The initial lack of success of the Fourth International

At the time of its constitution, the Fourth International had much reduced forces. It did not have behind the driving force of a great revolutionary victory, as had been the case for the Third, and was forced to contend with a terrible scenario: the consolidation of the Stalinist counterrevolution in the USSR, the rise of fascism in Europe, the approach of the second imperialist war.

But the Fourth International was not born with the vocation of witness, or of the mere memory of the revolutionary tradition. It was born with the ambition of becoming the new leadership of the world proletariat, in the face of the overt betrayal of the past Internationals. The imperialist war which was fast approaching was considered by Trotsky as an historic opportunity: as the first war had been the forge for the development of a new revolutionary leadership, so could it be with the second war. The second war, like the first, could bring with it the revolution, accelerating the political maturing of the great masses, and above all of their vanguard, and hasten the joint crisis of capitalism and Stalinism. In that context, the Fourth International could progressively become the reference point of the international proletarian vanguard.

The revolutionary method was correct and the perspective was a real possibility. But history did not go in the direction that Trotsky had hoped. Certainly, the second imperialist war brought huge political and social upheavals. The ascent of revolution was undeniable. But Stalinism not only did not disintegrate, but, in the wake of the defeat of Nazism, experienced a great expansion, both in material terms, with the structural assimilation of Eastern Europe and the extension in Yugoslavia and China, and in terms of mass prestige, among decisive sectors of the international proletariat. Thus were the Stalinist parties to save the European bourgeoisie from the revolutionary processes of the postwar period and to ensure capitalist reconstruction. Just as the ruins of the war permitted the capitalist reconstruction, the extraordinary boom acted as a factor of relative social stabilization under the paramount control of US Imperialism.

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The succeeding “cold war” between imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy did not change the counterrevolutionary framework. On the contrary. The rise of military spending helped to prolong the economic boom; the ouster of the Stalinist opposition parties, after the receipt of their valuable services, favored the revival of the mass credibility of the Stalinists as heirs of October among broad sectors of the proletariat, and thus their function of counterrevolutionary control of the masses. All to the advantage of the bourgeoisie.

The Fourth International did not survive the change of scenario. The murder of Trotsky by the Stalinist assassins in 1940 in Mexico had deprived it of its main political and theoretical leader. In the first phase (the International Conference of 1946, the Second World Congress of 1948) the organization, while preserving its revolutionary program and its project of independent development, denied the reality of both the capitalist recovery and the strengthening of Stalinism, repeating, albeit with a rich discussion and a more nuanced position of some sectors, the perspective of the eve of the war (the crisis of capitalism, the crisis of Stalinism, imminence of the revolution). It was an attempt to “defend” themselves by denying an unfavorable scenario, rather than recognize it and analyze it to update their own revolutionary intervention. And yet, with all its errors of assessment, the International continued to defend the program of revolutionary Marxism and, in some countries, in Asia and Latin America, was beginning its own significant development. Taking the balance of the real evolution of the situation, and developing it, there remained an entirely realistic possibility, certainly more slowly than hypothesized at its foundation, in the face of the political treachery of the social democrats, the Stalinists, and the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists of the dependent countries.

The crisis of ‘51-’53. “pabloist” revisionism

In a second phase (Third International Congress of 1951) the denial turned into adaptation: with the emergence of a programmatic deviation of a centrist type, rejecting the necessity of building independent revolutionary parties in the name of a critical pressure on international Stalinism. The main leader of the turn was the secretary of the International, Michael Raptus, known by the pseudonym “Pablo”: from which the term “Pabloism” to indicate the origin of the revisionism.

The original Pabloist argument, in its essential terms, was simple. The world scene was now dominated by the counterposition between imperialism and the Stalinist camp. The “third world war” was on the horizon. Under the pressure of events and of the masses, the Stalinist

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parties - but also progressive nationalist forces - could proceed, if purely empirically, to the socialist revolution: Yugoslavia and China were “the proof”. The task of Trotskyists was not to build their own independent parties on the basis of their own program, but to strategically enter into Stalinist parties to facilitate their evolution (“*entryism sui generis*”).

It was a position liquidating the reason for revolutionary Marxism. Replacing the centrality of the class struggle with the centrality of the contradiction between the imperialist camp and the Stalinist bureaucracy. Embellishing the reality of Stalinism, contrary to the entire analysis of Trotsky, presenting the Yugoslav and Chinese regimes as socialist regimes (albeit with bureaucratic limits) and not as true deformed workers’ states (in which, in addition to the new social bases, power was concentrated from the beginning in the hands of the bureaucracy and not the workers). Generalizing in universal terms the exceptional cases (which Trotsky had foreseen in the “Transitional Program”) in which the Stalinist parties “may go further than they wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie”, without ceasing to be Stalinists. But above all, destroying the historical reason for the Fourth International as a “world party of socialist revolution”, relegating the revolutionary Marxists to an instrument of pressure on the Kremlin and its counterrevolutionary parties.

This “Pabloist” position won the majority of the international Trotskyist movement. It consolidated itself in the following decades as the line of the International Secretariat. The forms in which it expressed itself repeatedly changed in relation to the change of scene and to the national peculiarities or the phase. But the fundamental constant of Pabloism remained unchanged: the renunciation of the building of revolutionary communist parties and their International as alternative leadership of the proletariat and the masses, in favor of a policy of pressure on Stalinist sectors, nationalist forces, petty-bourgeois radical circles, reformist parties, centrist forces, bureaucratic leaders. Every turn identified as “the train of history” on which to mount, and to which to give good advice. Every turn in the name of the “objective dynamic”, to support and push forward. That they were called at the beginning Mao and Tito and at the end Lula, Bertinotti or Tsipras is only an indication that the Pabloist forces, in their evolution, have gone further and further away from revolutionary Marxism.

Every expression of Pabloism has had its specificity. But the common base line has been clear since the 50’s: the liquidation of Trotskyism, and therefore of the Fourth International. Its consequences have often been destructive to the Trotskyist organizations and/or to the potential of their development, and in general have dramatically blocked the possibility for the Fourth International to build itself as the leadership of at least a broad sector of the

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vanguard at the international level and to organize, as would have been possible, the best revolutionary cadres, in the tens and tens of thousands, in its ranks.

The opposition to pabloism and its failure

The long process of the Pabloist drift has met some opposition, even important, in the international Trotskyist movement: starting from the split of 1953 with the birth of the International Committee, composed mainly of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of the US, the French Internationalist Communist Party (PCI) and the British section. But the anti-Pablist camp was marked by profound limits from its origins. It was constituted mainly as a summation and alliance on a federalist basis of the national resistance to the Pabloist politics in their respective countries. Not as an instrument to revive the Fourth International around a coherent global project. From these presuppositions derived a long parabola of fragmentation and political degeneration of the anti-Pablist camp. The SWP returned to the arms of Pabloism in 1963, to create the “United Secretariat (SU) of the Fourth International”, on the basis of the common glorification of Castroism. The French organization (OCI), so-called “Lambertist” (from the name of its principal leader, Pierre Lambert), was transformed, on the wave of an obsessive “Stalinophobia”, into a critical appendage of French social democracy. The English organization, the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), so-called Healyist (from the name of its principal leader, Gerry Healy), maneuvered between sectarianism and opportunism, even to political support to Arab nationalist dictators, arriving at its own final disintegration.

The most dynamic current of anti-Pablism was, in some aspects, the so-called “Morenoist” current (from the name of its principal leader, Nahuel Moreno), led by the Argentine Socialist Workers Party (PST). But this current, the International Workers League (LIT) since 1982, bears the characteristic imprint of its leader and his school: a mixture of maneuverism and impressionism (from opportunist adaptation to Peronism to ideological glorification of the revolutions of Eastern Europe of ‘89 as anti-bureaucratic socialist revolution, passing through numerous turns in the Trotskyist movement). The result was, in the early nineties, the destruction of the principal section - the Argentine MAS, one of the most substantial parties of the international Trotskyist movement - and a deep political crisis and organizational breakup of the LIT. The current LIT is what remains of the diaspora and is grouped around the Brazilian PSTU.

Overall, the set of forces of the Trotskyist movement that were counterposed, in various forms, to the liquidationist centrism of Pabloism, and that have developed nationally and

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internationally out of its furrow, have represented and represent a substantial part and today, as a whole, the majority of the Trotskyist movement. But their failure in the refoundation of the Fourth International is an objective fact. Each of these forces, on a national or international basis, worked, in reality, not to reconstruct the Fourth, but to defend “their” current, on the basis of “their” tradition, around “their” leading groups and their history. The continuing processes of political disorientation and organizational fragmentation have been an aspect of this approach. In fact, at least since the beginning of the ‘70s (the 1971 split of the International Committee between the Lambertists and the Healyists), various forces of the left of the Trotskyist movement, including those which, beyond these limits, remained on the ground of consistent Trotskyism, have in substance and sometimes in form substituted the Leninist and Trotskyist conception of the International with that of the international-faction.

For the Leninist conception of the party (and the International is a world party) is a structure of the militant political vanguard which regroups all those who recognize the revolutionary communist program. This recognition must be substantive, not formal, and must be carefully evaluated for opportunist drift; but, within the common programmatic accord, even broadly different positions have legitimate existence. This explains why the Leninist conception of democratic-centralism implies the right of tendencies and even factions. Among the different groupings of the “left” of those who affirm Trotskyism, the differences are significant, but not enough to touch, either in form or in practice, the fundamental principles of the communist and revolutionary program. Logically, according to the Leninist-Trotskyist method, and by the needs of the struggle for the socialist revolution, these diverse forces should be in the same International, in factions or just distinct tendencies, possibly in struggle, on the basis of the criteria of democratic-centralism, for the triumph of their specific positions, but united. Instead, these diverse potential factions of an International defend, with a practice objectively anti-Leninist, their specific faction and consider it, in fact, the unique nucleus of the Fourth International. In this way, even those forces which are really based on the general program of Trotskyism play an objective role of obstacle to and not of development of the refoundation of the Fourth International.

For the refoundation of the Fourth International

More than 60 years ago the Fourth International, as a united organization of the tiny world revolutionary Marxist vanguard, entered into crisis and ceased, in those terms, to exist. In the ‘50s one could speak of the need for reunification (which in fact was tried), despite the need for a fight to wrest the majority from Pabloist revisionism. In the following period, one

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could speak of “reform” or “regeneration”. Today, too much time has passed, the revisionism of some sectors that come from the Fourth has gone too far, to use these concepts. The very term “reconstruction” seems obsolete.

For this reason, the correct term to use is “refoundation”. Leaving aside the semantic discussion, the sense that we want to give to it is that the organization that today’s revolutionary Marxists must build is both the Fourth International and also a new International based on the program of the original Fourth.

Not the Fifth however, for various reasons. The general program of the International is that of the original Fourth. It might be objected that this was also the original program of the Third International. However, that of the Fourth encompassed the analysis of two new historical phenomena, with respect to that of the Communist International. First, Stalinism and then fascism, the latter just emerging at the time of the construction of the Third. However, it is true that the fundamental point of programmatic commonality is not sufficient to negate the name of Fifth. To this element must be added the consideration that the Fourth, unlike the Third, was never a mass organization and thus its destruction occurred before its process of construction on substantial organizational bases was completed.

In this framework there is no substantial degenerated “Fourth International” to which to counterpose a new “Fifth International” (the pretensions of the Pabloist revisionists to represent the current “Fourth International”, used ultimately only against the other forces which identify with “Trotskyism”, is simply ridiculous, not regrouping, among other things, even the majority of those who identify with the Fourth). In addition, the forces which today which can be counted on to envisage the refoundation of a communist and revolutionary International are largely, if not almost totality, organizations that identify with the program of the Fourth International. Finally, a minor thing, but not without meaning, the perspective of founding a Fifth International is or has been proposed by sectarian (usually tiny) or opportunistic forces, and therefore an additional reference to a “Fifth” could only create confusion (even if the potentially most significant initiative, that of the petty-bourgeois nationalist Chávez, proved early what it was, that is, rally buffoonery).

The Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International

The regroupment process started in 1997 has been a contrast: the creation of the Movement for the Refoundation of the Fourth International (MRFI) by the International Trotskyist

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Opposition, of which the AMR Progetto Comunista was part, the Greek EEK, the Argentine Partido Obrero and the Latin American organizations linked with it, transformed into the Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International (CRFI) with the Congress of Buenos Aires in 2004, and in which the PCL is a section. The contrast is provided by two factors.

First, this regroupment was not an extension of an existing current but a unification of organizations that had had a different history and a different affiliation in the Trotskyist movement: from this point of view it marked a moment of real recomposition and “refoundation”.

Secondly, and as a result, the new regroupment was not constituted around the primacy of one of its sections, or, at least formally, around a contingent analysis of the international framework (on which there were different methods of approach), but around the essential and discriminating programmatic points of revolutionary Marxism. Points that mark the fundamental dividing line between revolutionary Marxism, on the one hand, and reformism and centrism, on the other.

It was, ultimately, the recovery of the same method that had accompanied the gestation of the Third and the Fourth Internationals at their origins: the method of revolutionary regroupment on programmatic bases, wide but discriminating, of all vanguard forces, independently of their paths and backgrounds, which share those principles and are ready to develop around them the building of the party of world socialist revolution.

From this point of view the MRFI and then the CRFI represented, for their genesis and their method of approach, a real breakthrough with respect to the sectarian and self-centered tradition of the anti-Pabloist camp. And a consistent action to revive the perspective of the refoundation of the Fourth International. That is, the perspective of overcoming the historic crisis of leadership of international workers’ movement.

The PCL, which is the Italian section of the CRFI, believes that this method and this perspective should be safeguarded and developed coherently starting from the common bases set in 1997: against any risk of sectarian involution, of replacing the common programmatic basis with the primacy of specific readings of the capitalist crisis and contingent dynamics of the class struggle, and has fought against the process of federalist retreat of the CRFI.

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Revive the CRFI in the fight for the refoundation of the international

The CRFI is emerging, but to the negative, from a grave situation of political and organizational difficulties. This crisis did not develop in a vacuum. But in the framework of an international situation in total motion: from the development of a capitalist crisis unprecedented since the '30s, not yet concluded; to the new contradictions of imperialist rule; to the development of great revolutionary movements as in the Arab countries, which go toward defeat for lack of a revolutionary Marxist leadership; to the presence of "anti-imperialist" petit-bourgeois nationalist regimes that have appeared as a point of reference for sectors of the the left, though not primarily of the working class. In this world full of developing contradictions, the CRFI is both a modest and an important factor.

Modest, because our forces today are minimal compared to the tasks we set ourselves: we are present in few countries and not the most populous; our intervention has almost no concrete effect on the relations among classes on a world scale, and even where we may be modestly present, with the partial exception of Argentina, where the recent failure of the "Front of the Left and the Workers" (FIT) in the elections of 2015 (whatever the self-centered triumphalism of the PTS) indicates that the process of regrouping the broad vanguard of the working class around a revolutionary Marxist leadership has been momentarily blocked. However, the past successes of the FIT and the possibility, real and tangible, of its recovery have the potential to influence developments in the vanguard on an international scale, in particular in Latin America, but, for the moment, just the potential.

Very important, because we set ourselves concretely the task of restoring to the revolutionary proletariat the organization that is lacking: the parties and the International which alone can transform the revolutionary potential of the world situation into the reality of the overthrow of capitalism and the construction of a classless society. We are the nucleus-builders (if we don't fail) of the most fundamental instrument of the evolution of human history.

And this is the level at which we must conceive our existence and our activity, whatever may be its limits.

The crisis we face

In this context it is necessary to consider our perspectives for the next phase and within that the political and organizational problems that we face. The CRFI has spoken of the need of

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“immediate refounding” of the Fourth International. The term “immediate” left (and leaves) room for some ambiguity, understandable as both a real process which we assumed (which it was not, otherwise we would have realized it) and as a general political need, correct, but abstract and, therefore, in theory timeless.

The comrades of the PCL in the international structures of the CRFI, and our party as such, with its official decisions (see the document of the Conference of May 2011) have declared that it is time to move from an abstract, even if correct, fight for the “immediate refounding” to a concrete and precise action of “rapid refoundation” of the Fourth International.

Sixty-five years since the beginning of the destructive crisis of the historic Fourth International are, in fact, too many not to close the period of political transition. And this scenario, alongside the development of the international situation, already determined our attempt in 1997. An attempt that has largely failed; although we should not underestimate what we have gained, which is not something “separate” from the fight for the refoundation of the Fourth International. A fight that today we must resume at a higher level. There are objective and subjective elements that allow us to (and force us to) do so, despite the failure of ‘97 and the years following.

The objective elements are those already mentioned above, of the capitalist crisis, the development of revolutionary processes (where Trotskyism is dramatically absent), the international challenge of petty-bourgeois *chavismo*, although now in deep crisis, if not at sunset; but an objective element is also the fact that the perspective of refoundation cannot be transformed into a purely abstract ideal but must, in fact, more than sixty years after the crisis, be transformed into a reality.

The subjective elements are represented, firstly, by the significant jump in our regroupment, whatever the limitations of the CRFI. In 1997 it looked very modest, even by the tiny measure of the far left. Today, things are a little different. We mentioned the FIT. The PO has grown on the basis of its electoral and social success, from 700 to over 3,000 militants, with a parliamentary presence in the ambit of the FIT, and has a union presence incomparably more significant; the Italian section, which had around 150 militants in 1997 and was a current, albeit not insignificant, within the PRC, is a small independent party of 400 militants (5-600 more enrolled members) which has an electoral support of about 150,000 people, with a strong proletarian connotation; the EEK has doubled its militants from less than 150 to over 250, has had a significant role in the recent struggles, and appears, beyond the modesty of its

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election results, an alternative reference point to the far left of the Greek political chessboard; the Uruguayan PT has also approximately doubled the number of its militants; finally, we have the establishment of the Turkish section, with the breakthrough of the birth of the Revolutionary Workers Party. This contrasts with the loss (never definitively formalized on statutory basis) of the Brazilian PCO, which, with uncertainty of numbers due to the transition from an ultramilitant to a “broad” structure, we can consider at the time to have had about 2-300 militants, and the impasse of the small group of the USA. As mentioned, our forces remain modest. We are also absent from whole macro-regions of the world (Central and East Asia and Africa) and central countries of the continents where we are present, which have broad forces that identify with revolutionary Marxism (just think of France and Britain). But there is no doubt that we are, and we appear, more significant than we were in 1997.

The set of objective and subjective elements mentioned make it possible and necessary to resume, at a higher level, the 1997 initiative, of course updating it. This means that it is possible that to the four/five points indicated then as the basis of a regroupment will be added a few others and/or that we will clarify the original ones. But the method must remain what it was then.

The CRFI program is a central element of the fight that we must develop. The PCL reiterates what it affirmed in the resolution of the second and last national conference of the Revolutionary Marxist Association (AMR, predecessor of the PCL) in January 2006. It affirmed:

The Second National Conference of the Revolutionary Marxist Association “Communist Project” confirms its full accord with the programmatic and political line, both general and particular, of the central document approved at the international congress constituting the Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International (Buenos Aires, April 2004), “Draft programmatic thesis for the World Congress for the refoundation of the Fourth International”. This beyond the persistence of differences of analytical or particular points, on which, in any case, the international discussion will continue. Therefore, the Second National Conference of AMR “Communist Project” decides to express formally a vote favorable to the document in question. Confirming at the same time the favorable vote already expressed by all the AMR delegates at the World Congress on the Statutes of the CRFI.

We reaffirm the words of this resolution. Programmatic and political accord, and differences on analytical and particular points. Beyond the latter, quite minor, there are essentially the differences on the “catastrophism” versus dialectical analysis of the economic and social

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reality. On this ground, we underline in any case, that it would be a grave error to consider these differences, while important, as “determinants” of our relationship, which is instead defined by the commonality of political and general programmatic positions.

In this context, we reaffirm the importance of the CRFI program. We also believe that we should take up the hypothesis formulated by Comrade Altamira several years ago (and since then not revived by him or by the PO) to turn it into programmatic thesis.

Having said that, we think it necessary to understand that the CRFI program must be entered as a contribution to the elaboration of the program of the refounded International, but it cannot be, in itself, the “*sine qua non*” element of delimitation for such a refoundation. This has always been the method of previous Internationals. As Trotsky reminds us in his essay “Critique of the draft program of the Communist International” (also known as “The Third International After Lenin”), the Comintern at its origins did not have a programmatic text, but based its delimitation on the 21 Points of the Second Congress (1920). So the Left Opposition was based on the 11 points of February 1933, the Fourth was built first on the 10-point appeal “On the necessity and the principles of a new International” (called the Appeal of the Four, the number of signatory organizations) of August 1933, then on its reformulation with the Open Letter of the Five Organizations, of 1935. It is therefore to use, as always in the past, elements of delimitation to carry out a fight for regroupment. This was the spirit in which we moved in ‘97 (exactly with the words of Trotsky and the concept of a refounded Fourth International with rights of tendencies and, it should be added, factions, according to the Leninist democratic-centralist tradition).

Today it comes to reproducing that method, placing as discriminant the independence of the proletariat, also with respect to the break with the destructive forces of Trotskyism: first, the former “International Secretariat” (then SU), but also the Lambertist pseudo-Fourth International, sectarian and right ultrarevisionist. But next to this, the need to break also with what has been the main concrete obstacle encountered in ‘97 (not said, but real): sectarian self-sufficiency, against which we must underline our expression not as a faction, but as a first revolutionary Marxist regroupment. It is then to turn, to a large extent, to the same forces to which we turned in 1997. On the one hand, as mentioned, our weight is, and appears, clearly superior to theirs. On the other, there are not insignificant objective changes; which have determined relevant attitudes, such as political demarcation from petty-bourgeois nationalism (chavista and analogous in Latin America) and capitulation to it (Alan Woods and his self-styled “International Marxist Tendency”, the United Secretariat, etc.). Finally,

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whatever the result of this new attempt to regroup at a higher level than that of '97, the goal that we have set ourselves, that is, the rapid real refoundation of the International, requires us to revive the Trotskyist method on this ground.

The current situation of impasse of the CRFI

This balance sheet and these perspectives would be elements of discussion at the Second Congress of the CRFI. The problem is that this congress, which was to be convened by statute in 2007, has been blocked and postponed indefinitely by choice of the Argentine PO and its maximum leader (and also maximum leader of the CRFI), comrade Jorge Altamira.

The CRFI has therefore found itself at an impasse. There are many responsibilities which, in varying degrees, involve all actors of its history. But the decisive responsibility is of the Partido Obrero and comrade Jorge Altamira. Endorsed by the PO leadership, he has blocked, for almost two years, all functioning of the CRFI, without any serious explanation.

It is not to be believed that the root of this situation consists of political differences on specific questions, as there is on the part of comrade Altamira and the PO an "overreaction" to every contradiction of their vision of the situation or their political proposals. What they did not want to accept was democratic-centralist functioning, on the international level. Everything that was not under their direct and continuous control seemed unacceptable to them. In this framework is expressed contempt for the rules of Leninism, the open rejection of any discussion that would involve all the sections and militants of the CRFI; the refusal to translate and bring to the attention of their own militants critical texts by other sections and leaders of the CRFI (this applies in particular to our party, which, despite the difficulties, has consistently done so); the distortion, in some cases, of the activity and positions of other sections, as we several times have had to highlight with respect, in particular, to our party; the determination and public explanation of strategic and tactical lines for situations in which there is a section of the CRFI, without opening a discussion with those sections and without respecting them (this was seen in 2012 in relation to the Greek section, leaving aside judgment of the merit of the concrete positions and proposals put forward by the PO).

Despite this grave attitude and its consequences, the CRFI remains a legacy, albeit small, of the international revolutionary movement. All its sections, beyond their limits and errors, are consistently revolutionary Trotskyist organizations. It would be a political crime to question their membership in the CRFI for these errors, given the lack of democratic-centralism

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determined by comrade Altamira and the PO. This is not to break with the CRFI and the PO, but to try to save the CRFI from its objective dissolution, to revive its role in the fight for the refoundation of the Fourth International; that certainly implies, for us, a process of revolutionary regroupment, particularly with the best forces outside the CRFI that identify with the Trotskyist tradition and program, and, even with errors or limits, really apply this in the class struggle. This is why we set out to develop the activity and also the reflection of the CRFI, as to what is possible, and the possible grounds. But the fight for the CRFI is not limited to the search for a minimum common political activity by sectors opposed, with contradictions among them, to its process of dissolution, represented by the European and Turkish sections. To think that this could have, by itself, imposed a change of the subjective situation that would result in enough pressure to push the PO to a change of course, would be wrong.

It was necessary, therefore, to develop an open fight against the positions of comrade Altamira and the PO on the ground of international democratic-centralism and the method of relations among revolutionary Marxists. Not only as a political necessity, but as an obligation of principle. We cannot accept, albeit unwillingly and with a thousand reserves, a constant attack on our principled positions on democratic-centralism, which represents, in addition to an element of degeneration in itself, a serious risk of overall degeneration. Because democratic-centralism is not an addition to a more political and programmatic line of a Trotskyist organization, but an integral and fundamental part. This is true at the international level, in the final analysis, whether it constitutes the International or a transitional regroupment to that end. And the organizational form through which revolutionary Marxist militants can democratically confront each other on an equal footing and democratically determine the positions to be followed; to the limit of verifying the possible existence of incompatible differences of general principle (but just of general principle and not of specific, although important, political-organizational or analytical issues, not wanting to repeat the absurd and tragic history of anti-Pablite forces over the last 60 years). Moreover, democratic-centralism was precisely the regroupment approach of Trotsky in the various forms (Left Opposition; Internationalist Communist League, Movement for the Fourth International) that it took before the founding of the Fourth International at the end of '38.

Precisely because the PCL has always fully considered the CRFI as its organization, it was only right to try to protect it with an open fight. We could not start solely from the risk that those who have shown themselves not to respect internal democracy would get angry and break with us. And which we, as the PCL, have started to do for some time: in particular, in addition

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to the constant fight of our comrades present in the bodies and meetings of the CRFI, with the document of our conference on international questions in May 2011, approved by an overwhelming majority, and on the political-organizational part even without opposition. On this road we thought we had gathered the first fruit. After two years of interruption the CRFI had resumed its meetings at the end of 2012, albeit in an undetermined statutory framework and rejecting our proposal to convene its Executive Council, which - however reduced for various reasons, compared to its original composition, with the inclusion of alternates and the cooptation, for a long time substantively decided but never formalized, of comrade Sungur of the Turkish DIP - could and should have been the deciding instrument with respect to common activity and calling the Second Congress.

At the meetings in December 2012 and April and June 2013, in reality, we we found ourselves faced with a total rejection of our proposals on the realization of the Second Congress, as a space for democratic discussion and decision-making on political-organizational questions.

At the meeting of December 2013, at the conclusion of a debate that had seen us repeat our principled positions, we found ourselves faced with a formal turn, to the positive, of the PO delegation, which itself proposed the hypothesis of a path toward revival of the CRFI as an international organization and the realization of the Second Congress in 2015. Comrade Altamira, although not present, was constantly informed via Skype of the whole debate. But this sudden opening proved entirely extemporaneous. Although in a climate of strong contrast, the meeting of 30 March-1 April 2014 seemed to confirm this path. In fact, a few weeks later, faced with a legitimate and correct request by comrade Sungur of the DIP to clarify, in the summary text of the debate in that forum, that the discussion on the points in question at that meeting, in particular the Ukrainian question, would be a element of the preparation of the Second Congress, we had a response from comrade Altamira, who claimed not to see any element to hypothesize going towards a Second Congress; closing, given the role of the comrade in question in the PO, at least for the moment, this perspective. A further demonstration of the fact that democratic-centralism not only is not present in the PO with regard to the CRFI and the International in general, but also that it does not exist, beyond the forms and the possible acceptance of that up to now by the vast majority, if not all, of the militants, even inside the PO itself. We then found ourselves faced with, instead of democratic-centralism, the “anarchic Bonapartism” we have repeatedly denounced, where there are no firm rules, with erratic behavior, sudden changes of positions, no respect for minorities (in this case the smaller sections and primarily the PCL, and then the DIP, for critical positions), refusal to bring to the attention of its militants texts of internal debate (we as the

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PCL have constantly put forward this proposal, but we always found ourselves faced with the bad non-argument that this represented an offense by us to the PO militants, apparently considered incapable of thinking for themselves). In short, an erratic method, much more similar to the Bonapartism of the Cuban Communist Party than the democratic-centralism of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) at the time of Lenin and Trotsky..

Our proposals to change the activity of the CRFI and advance toward the refoundation of the Fourth International

For years we have advanced proposals for getting out of the situation, starting precisely from the simplest and most logical: the realization of the Second Congress of the CRFI. In it we could have debated the different political positions and also the organizational proposals, which might have included, although wrong in our judgment, the formal dissolution of the CRFI as a democratic-centralist organization and its reconversion into pure coordination of independent organizations.

As we said, we found ourselves confronted with an opposition, incomprehensible to Leninists, by the PO and comrade Altamira, unmotivated in substance, with some confused zig-zagging.

We are not formalists. For years (starting from the above-mentioned two-year interruption) we recognized that as an organization in any way democratic-centralist the CRFI had ceased to exist, and that, therefore, its meetings could not in any way be considered as meetings of the Executive Council or International Secretariat (positions defended by comrade Savas Matsas, thus demonstrating the defense more of the form than the substance of democratic-centralism). What we wanted was to gain the instruments to build it on a higher plane, in the only way possible, that is, with free discussion and debate among all militants of the organizations of the CRFI, in a Second International Congress.

Today the fight against the anti-democratic methods and lack of seriousness of comrade Altamira and the PO leadership is lost. Because of this, we immediately agreed with the proposal of the DIP comrades to rationalize the existing situation and to come back formally to a structure of pure coordination of national organizations. As mentioned, it is a defeat, imposed from within. But not the end of the struggle for the refoundation (“rapid” or “immediate”, whichever) of the Fourth International. Provided that it functions seriously, and that comrade Altamira and the PO leadership don’t limit it, in practice, to a label, perhaps by meeting every two years.

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The realization of a new congress that creates democratic-centralism in CRFI would naturally be useful, in addition to corresponding to the principled criteria of Leninism-Trotskyism. But it is not necessarily an obligatory stage of the fight for the refoundation of the Fourth. What is needed is to revive, in the new global context, the fight for the refoundation of the International. Develop it to the best of our ability for 3-4 years; then, in an International Congress, take the balance. Possibly participating in a refounding congress with other significant forces (and then dissolving the CRFI). If this is not possible, we will have to decide, evaluating all aspects of the situation, whether we proclaim the refoundation of the Fourth with our own forces, or, instead, continue for a period (not unlimited, in any case) the regroupment fight for the refoundation

For the unity of consistent trotskyists

The fight for the refoundation of the Fourth, developing with the evolution of the proletarian vanguard, has inevitably some algebraic aspects with respect to the subjects to target. This algebra cannot, however, be absolute, otherwise it risks turning the fight for the refoundation into an abstraction. Following the example of Lenin and Trotsky in the process of formation of the Third and the original Fourth International (and even more so today, given the context of division among the forces that identify with revolutionary Marxism), we must identify the forces to prioritize in our proposal of unification. The PCL, to date, identifies those that follow.

First, the international Trotskyist Fraction (FT), which has its strong point in the Socialist Workers Party (PTS) of Argentina. The PTS was formed 25 years ago by a significant split, mainly of youth, from the then-important Morenoist party (MAS). During the '90s it completely broke with the political traditions of its origin. In this sense, it is certainly a post-Morenoist force, which has passed onto the ground of consistent Trotskyism. Indeed, from an analytical point of view, on some issues (particularly on the issue of the capitalist crisis, the restoration of capitalism in the former bureaucratized workers' states, the revolutionary processes) it has used, in our opinion, the Trotskyist method more consistently than the majority of the CRFI. Unfortunately, it remains prey to various methodological defects of Morenismo, particularly an accentuated maneuverism, seeming to take some important political positions only in debate with other Trotskyists and expressing various concrete political positions that reflect an obvious self-centering. The PTS is now the main partner of the PO in the Front of the Left and Workers (FIT) in Argentina, a front which is based, not really on a common political platform, but on a common general programmatic base. In conclusion, we must say that the

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the fact that the PO and PTS are not united in one party (and their international currents in one), on the basis of Leninist democratic-centralism with the right to tendencies and/or factions, is politically absurd.

Second, the International Workers League (LIT in Spanish and Portuguese), left-Morenoist. During the '90s the Argentine Morenoist organization, then probably the strongest in the world to identify with Trotskyism, exploded into several counterposed organizations, and this reverberated in the international organization, the LIT, the majority of which was taken over by the section that became the most important, the United Socialist Party of Workers (PSTU) of Brazil (with a strong working-class and trade-union presence, then as now). The LIT abandoned some previous positions (for example, reading the processes in the USSR and in Central and Eastern Europe as “progressive” events, “democratic revolutions”), and in programmatic elaboration there was a general shift to the left. However, there remain strong traits of Morenism in method of action (maneuverism), in catastrophism and “optimism” without Marxist analyses of the contradictions the processes of mass mobilization, with serious repetitions of the characterization of reactionary processes as revolutionary (see Ukraine and, initially, even Brazil this year). This does not exclude that there may exist today the bases for a unification in a refounded Fourth. We do not hide the difficulty of this process, as shown by the case of the Italian section of the LIT (the small group of the PDAC), which since its founding has adopted toward the PCL a slanderous and mystificatory line. Independent of this, we consider it necessary for consistent Trotskyists to advance the line of unification.

Third, the International Workers Union (UIT in Spanish and Portuguese), Morenoist. When the PSTU and its allies took over the LIT, the forces counterposed to them founded this rival organization, with forces of some significance in Argentina and Brazil. The political bases were entirely traditional Morenoist, and, in this sense, revisionist, if of the “left”. Its role, therefore, was negative. From 2003, however, the UIT has had a further split in half. The bases for this break were fundamental. One part (which now has taken the name of CIT and has as its main party the Argentine MST) has capitulated openly to chavismo, accentuating its revisionism (now the CIT is developing sympathizing political relations with the former SU). The UIT has maintained a class position against such reformist or petty-bourgeois nationalist forces. This positioning was evidenced in Venezuela. There, the UIT has a small workers’ group, whose main leader (Orlando Chirino) is the leader of a class-struggle left opposition in the unions. Although with limitations and errors, Chirino has always been counterposed to chavismo, in the name of revolutionary Marxism. We add also that the Argentine section of the UIT, Socialist Left (IS), is, after the PO and the PTS, the third component of the FIT. The UIT remains in many

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respects in the Morenoist tradition, but its policy towards petty-bourgeois nationalism and its programmatic alliance in the FIT indicate that it might rightly participate in the refounding.

Fourth, there exist in the world small Trotskyist groups, sometimes connected internationally with some nuclei or individuals from other countries in international minifactions, which place themselves on the ground of the Trotskyist program, and, in general, the anti-Pabloist tradition. What often characterizes them is a pronounced sectarianism, which explains, at least in most cases, their isolation from the main forces that identify with Trotskyism. Some of them gather cadre of value, which might be important to build sections of the refounded Fourth in countries where there are no organized forces of the CRFI (or possibly FT, LIT or UIT), or else significantly strengthen a scarce presence. We cannot make an exhaustive and specific list. But we need a discussion with each of them to check the possibility of Trotskyist regroupment, or whether it is an incurable small sect, perhaps ultraleft.

Among them it is worth underlining the political importance, geographical and also, relatively, numerical, of the newly formed left tendency of the former SU. Its most significant national group is the Aticapitalism & Revolution tendency of the the French NPA. In the light of the practical fight against various forms of Pabloism in the concrete, this tendency has come, in fact, to place itself on the ground of consistent Trotskyism, as have the majority of groups linked to it in the fight against the majority of the United Secretariat. A problem is the presence in it of the US organization Socialist Action (with a connected group in Canada). It is a sectarian organization, which reproduces on a small scale the politics and analyses of the SWP during the '60s (for example, on the nature, even now, of Cuba as a "healthy" workers' state). But its presence, with positions that the rest of the current does not share, does not eliminate the overall consistently Trotskyist nature of the latter.

It is also useful to clarify the assessments to be given with respect to other components of the variegated political world that refers to Trotskyism. In reality, in our judgment, this is essentially of one well-consolidated international organization: the Committee for a Workers International (CWI in English).

The CWI, whose "dominant" section is present in England and Wales (the Socialist Party, that of Scotland is separate), is the current which as the "Militant" developed for about thirty years (until about the end of the 1990s) an entrust policy in the British Labour Party with good success, characterized, however, by a progressive adaptation to reformism, although partial. In the early '90s, breaking with its old leader and theorist, Ted Grant, and his companion,

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Alan Woods, the CWI has also broken with the above-mentioned thirty-year policy and with adaptation to the Labour Party. This choice of class independence was also expressed with regard to chavismo. However, there are still significant theoretical elements of the previous stage, which of course can have consequences, even serious ones, in concrete political action. In particular, two aspects. The first is the idea that there could be a “peaceful” socialist revolution, in particular in the advanced capitalist countries. The second is the denial of the fundamental Marxist and Leninist concept of the political construction of class-consciousness, sustaining, with great contempt of reality, that the workers develop their own consciousness spontaneously. The risks, and not only risks, of adapting to the current levels of consciousness are evident.

It is important to understand that we pose this list of organizations, naturally, because we believe it is valid, but also, first and foremost, to reaffirm the indispensability of a fight for the refoundation of the Fourth International and the need to be concrete. It would not be dramatic if, in the development of this process on a coherent basis, there was discussion of this or that organization and the need to exclude or include it in our unity project. What is important is to get out of the current situation and to adopt a method consistent with our political principles and proclamations, at the time purely demagogic, on the “immediate” refounding of the Fourth International.

That we consider the priority for the refoundation of the Fourth to be a Trotskyist regroupment process does not mean excluding that other revolutionary class-struggle political forces could be involved in this process. Forces attracted, for example, by our successes, such as those realized by the FIT. The latter, as already mentioned, is in fact a “single strategic and programmatic front” of the Argentine Trotskyists and should just unite in a single party. Its development might influence other political forces, including not directly of Trotskyist origin. But it is important to be clear. Our goal is to involve these forces, starting from a programmatic convergence. Not to develop “strategic united fronts” with left-centrists. The refounded Fourth International must not only be “class-struggle revolutionary”, but also revolutionary Marxist, like the original Fourth.

In this context, we find it useful to be clear with regard to the diverse spectrum of the left groups, currents, nuclei and political “personalities” with which we have had relations for years, particularly with participation in conferences organized by us. Some of the initiatives were interesting, sometimes even with a certain importance. But for us they must be framed in the fight for the refoundation of the Fourth in concrete terms. We must put to these forces

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the problem of a real discussion of our perspective and our program. Are they or are they not in agreement with refoundation and the program of revolutionary Marxism? If they agree, join with us, at least in the general political fight; if not ... friends as before, but political alternatives in their countries (without sectarianism, of course). We cannot underline all the flaws of those who identify with Trotskyism and then be conciliatory toward centrists of various types, which, perhaps at the beginning progressive, become, by their indeterminacy, negative for our consistent struggle in their countries.

The fight of the PCL for the revival of the CRFI and the development of the struggle for the refoundation of the Fourth now and in the next phase

We have explicitly indicated the political proposal that the PCL has advanced to the CRFI, beginning with the opening of a clear debate for realizing the Second International Congress and reestablishing democratic-centralism, in the elementary forms contained in the CRFI's own Statutes.

We have, however, noted long ago that the CRFI has been objectively transformed back into a coordination of parties and organizations (as was the MRQI), instead of a democratic-centralist organization, while refusing to accept this politically and developing a fight, at the same time cautious and sharp, on this question.

Eventually, after some confused zigzags, comrade Altamira has determined definitively, in a mode that was undemocratic and, as has often happened, disrespectful of the other organizations of the CRFI, that there was no space for any resumption (actually initiation) of functioning on the basis of democratic-centralism.

Let us repeat, once again, democratic-centralist functioning, both nationally and, with appropriate differences, internationally, it is not an organizational detail, but a matter of principle.

Based on this, if we had repeated the method that has reigned in the international anti-Pabloist left for more than 50 years, we could have said that the PO had betrayed Trotskyism, was programmatically revisionist and centrist, perhaps listing a series of political and analytical differences for emphasis. We might thus have realized a break and attempted to build a new international organization, thus becoming one of the dozens of small sectarian faction-parties

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into which the Trotskyist movement is divided. We did not and have no intention of doing so.

Because of this, we immediately agreed to the proposal of the comrades of the DIP of Turkey, to take account of the reality and to formalize the reconversion of CRFI into a structure purely of debate and coordination (although accompanied by a series of measures to make its functioning serious and effective)

This does not mean that the political-programmatic problems that were at the base of the conflict in the CRFI and of its impasse will be overcome, on the contrary.

We believe that the Partido Obrero is, for its general programmatic and strategic positions and for its concrete role in the class struggle, a consistently Trotskyist organization and that the differences that may arise are fully within coherent revolutionary Marxism. But on the specific programmatic point of democratic-centralism, certainly on the international ground and perhaps on the national, the PO expresses positions that break with our Leninist-Trotskyist foundations. From this point of view it must be stated that if on the national level the PO has an absolutely positive role, on the international level it had it, although contradictorily, in a first phase, but for years has lost that role, assuming, through its action, a negative role. Since the PO is largely the dominant party of the CRFI, and since its leadership and comrade Altamira have imposed a Bonapartist method of functioning, as we have indicated in this text, all that has become the dominant feature of the life of the CRFI. Changing these methods is now the central question for the CRFI and, therefore, for the refoundation of the Fourth International.

Because of this, we will with patience and consistency continue the political fight that we have developed in these years, in part with the DIP, in the new situation.

But this fight is not just about the PO and the PCL, let alone their leading bodies. It must necessarily involve, so that they can express their positions, all the militants of the sections and nuclei and the CRFI or linked to it, from Italy to Argentina, from Greece to Uruguay, from Turkey to Chile (“from Anatolia to Patagonia”, as the Turkish saying goes, to indicate two extreme geographical points among them), and everywhere.

This is the sense of the present document, to clarify the positions of the PCL on the general question of the refoundation of the Fourth International, to invite all to fight for the CRFI and its organizations (democratic-centralism, as would be right and logical, or no) to affirm these

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positions, which are the classic ones of Leninism-Trotskyism

With the goal of the methodological rectification of the CRFI as the basis for a real process leading rapidly to refoundation of the Fourth International, on a consistently democratic-centralist basis, with a necessary fight, without sectarianism, for the regroupment on the fundamental programmatic bases of revolutionary Marxism of the world proletarian vanguard, in particular in reference to the forces that identify with Trotskyism and seek to apply consistent principles and strategy.

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(October 2016)



To all the organizations of the CRFI

The response of the PO to the text we produced on the “Crisis of the CRFI, the refoundation of the Fourth International and our tasks” is not a response. We have formulated a political balance sheet and advanced political proposals, which can be agreed or not. We are answered with insults, obvious falsifications, vulgar denigration (“parasitic camarilla”, “intriguing sect”, “adventurers”, etc.). Moreover, without even sending us the papal bull of excommunication. In Italy we say “throw the ball in the stands”, that is, wanting to avoid confrontation by provoking a fight. We will not reply to insults with insults. We will not descend to this level. We will not be distracted by diversions. We are interested only in political discussion, open and sincere, among the organizations of the CRFI on the tasks of revolutionaries in the international class struggle and in the refoundation of the Fourth International. Everything that falls within the ambit of political confrontation, even the most bitter criticism, if needed, is welcome. What is foreign to political confrontation must be shelved, because it damages our common enterprise. More: it is irresponsible politically, and therefore unacceptable.

No to falsifications and insults

First of all, we want to clear the field of any obvious falsification.

We are not referring to grotesque accusations aimed at pure denigration. (The leaflet distributed to a segment of the French LCR, during a no global demonstration thirteen years ago, denounced the police repression against the Sem Terra by the Lula government, with the Pabloist leader Rossetto as the minister responsible for agrarian reform. Hence our critique of co-responsibility. The United Secretariat has subsequently broken with Rossetto, and we are invited to the congresses of the NPA without any aftereffects from that just polemic, as is natural, preserving moreover in all these years friendly relations with old leaders like Sabado, Krivine and, until his death, Bensaid.) Nor do we refer to the accusation made to some leaders of the Italian section of “not having built anything in 40 years”: it is enough to look at the reality of the PCL and its daily work to have the measure of the gratuitous and offensive falsehood.

We refer instead to the accusation of having boycotted the CRFI from birth and of being political “chameleons”. They are accusations not only without any argumentation, but contradicted by the evidence of years. If there is a trait that we claim for our method and our experience, it is precisely the absolute transparency of our positions. Always. We dissolved the ITO at the same time as the birth of the CRFI in 2004, considering the birth of the CRFI as

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a step forward of the prospect of the refoundation of the Fourth International and therefore a crowning of the work (also) of the ITO itself. (Incidentally, comrade Peter Johnson was elected to the International Executive of the CRFI at the 2004 Congress. His translation of our document, to allow its dissemination, is not proof of a “clandestine fraction”, but a normal democratic service in favor of international discussion. A service of translation of texts that the PO should do and does not.) Inside the CRFI, within a common framework of program and principle, we have never hidden our different evaluations regarding particular aspects of international analysis (e.g., tempos and aspects of the capitalist crisis), considering them an honest contribution to our discussion, as in the best revolutionary tradition: without ever taking this or that particular difference of analysis as the navel of the life of the CRFI. On the contrary, affirming every time that the CRFI must be built on its own common programmatic basis, without assuming as central this or that particular point of analysis, however important.

The reasons for the battle: unlock the paralysis

Precisely for this reason we have openly opposed the real and unjustified paralysis of the CRFI after 2010. Pointing out a resounding contradiction: the paralysis was produced without the emergence of any programmatic and principled difference among the sections of the CRFI, and indeed in the face of the confirmation of all our common reasoning on the ground of the international class struggle and the common basic political positioning of all sections of the CRFI on the main world facts (crises of Latin American nationalism, Arab revolutions...). If international facts confirm the reasons for the CRFI, if the underlying convergence of its sections on the main world events testifies to the holding of the common principled basis, why paralysis?

It was not a matter of hiding the political/organizational problems which emerged in the course of our experience (the functioning of the organisms launched at the 2004 congress, the problem of dues, the subject of editorial instruments...), difficulties in part physiological, on which we have openly spoken of our own, even with practical proposals which have never been answered and have never been made known to all the comrades and companions of other sections (International Conference of the PCL of 2010). It was a matter of confronting the difficulties and political-organizational problems inside an open and broader political discussion, within the recovery of the democratic life and the international initiative of the CRFI on the decisive ground of the refoundation of the Fourth International, starting from the involvement of all the militants of its sections. Hence our open battle for the second congress of the CRFI, as a natural site for debate and decisions, whatever they may be. Not

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a congress for the “self-proclamation of the Fourth International by the CRFI “, as today the PO imputes to us, a ridiculous hypothesis, totally invented, which finds no trace in any of our elaboration or intervention. But a congress which defines an orientation of the international work of the CRFI, able to resume, update, revive its original project to arrive on this basis at the refoundation of the the Fourth International, in time not “immediate”, a formula which we have always considered ridiculous, but instead rapid.

After losing this battle for the congress in the face of the unwillingness of the PO, we accepted the proposal advanced by the DIP of a new configuration of the CRFI as a coordination of its various sections: a step back which, however, maintained the CRFI, favored a resumption of activity and debate, put in place the conditions for a possible relaunch. And, above all, a solution which would unlock the paralysis of discussion and initiative of the CRFI on the ground of the refoundation of the Fourth International, the reason why the CRFI was born.

This is another reason why our document was not limited to a critical assessment of the experience of the CRFI and of the political responsibility for its crisis, but advanced a political proposal to relaunch its international political initiative.

But now the same leading group of the PO which is responsible for an unjustified six-year paralysis of the CRFI, comes to condition the unlocking of the paralysis on “our expulsion”. The accusation? ... To have paralyzed and “sabotaged” the CRFI. We are really at the theater of the absurd. And the absurdity is all the more tragic if we consider the absence of any serious motivation and political argumentation behind this sentence. Insinuations, like insults, are not arguments. And the PO is not, in any case, the CRFI court.

The insinuation of relations with the FT

In particular, the insinuation that the PCL would maneuver with the method of intrigue with the perspective of joining the FT is totally false. The PCL has no occult perspectives. What we think and do is all in the light of the sun. Our third Congress, in 2014, defined a framework, not new, of possible international interlocutors for the activity of the CRFI with regard to the perspective of the refoundation of the Fourth International; a framework taken up in the text of our CC last May. Among these, there is naturally, firstly, the FT, and the set of international organizations which participate with their own sections in the experience of the Argentine FIT. We do not ignore the political differences, also important, between the CRFI and the FT. But we do not think that these differences involve principled and general programmatic questions. This is why we believe that the perspective of the unification between PO and

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PTS should be pursued in Argentina, and so on the international level between CRFI and FT. This has been our public position for a long time. You can share it or not, but that's another question. At the same time, we do not limit the scope of a necessary interlocution and verification to the FT: for example, we need an attentive relationship and political verification with opposition forces inside the United Secretariat, such as, in particular, Anticapitalism and revolution in France and Izar in Spain. With the European sections of the FT and with A&R and Izar we have had normal relations of hospitality and interlocution during conventions, seminars, congresses, as it is completely natural for an organization which really wants to move on the ground of the international initiative in Europe. With A&R/Izar we are looking for a political and programmatic deepening to verify their political evolution, by openly placing the perspective of breaking with the United Secretariat (and trying to avert their being won by the FT). We would have liked to socialize this international work in the CRFI, in a common reflection and assessment. The paralysis of the CRFI prevented us from doing so. But this paralysis certainly cannot prevent us from having an international life of relationships and contacts. As also it rightly does not prevent the PO from having autonomous relations and contacts. Because it would be strange to have international coordination with sections of limited sovereignty and a section with unlimited sovereignty.

For the revival of political discussion. For the relaunching of the CRFI

Let's get back to the point.

We not only reject the method of insult, but ask for the revival of a serious political discussion inside the CRFI. Addressing political issues, on the terrain of political confrontation. Without fear of possible differences, but with respect for the positions of all. The EEK comrades, for example, have harshly polemicized against the political content of our text and with our proposals on the subject of the refoundation of the Fourth International, opposing another line of orientation. We will reply on the merits of their document. But we appreciate the political character of their arguments, that is, the readiness for political discussion.

For the same reason we, like the DIP, agree with the proposal put forward by the EEK of an international assembly of delegates of the CRFI sections, accompanied by the translation and diffusion of all the documents produced by the different sections, to address the crisis of the CRFI, define the its orientation, relaunch its initiative.

It is the same necessity which we have long posed. The only honest way to unlock paralysis.

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Appendix 2: PCL letter demanding the right to participate in the CRFI Preconference (March 2018)



To all the organizations participating in the Coordinating Committee for the Refoundation of the Fourth International

Dear comrades,

Following the meeting held in Athens last May between the delegation of our party and those of the PO, the DIP and the EEK, we had to recognize that, with different arguments, the other three main organizations of the CRFI had decided to break political-organizational relations with our party.

All without any element of seriousness and democratic correctness from the point of view of the most basic Leninist traditions (enough to think that the PO delegation had not the minimal decency to bring to our knowledge the fact that a large part of the text of the PO Congress of April 2017 was dedicated to a harsh — and partly imaginary — controversy with our party, so we came to know this text only many months later).

Having previously seen, with the DIP and the PO, that the old CRFI, as constituted in the International Conference, had long since in fact died, we noted in our Central Committee meeting of June 2017 the intention of the other three main organizations to exclude us from any international regroupment of any type.

We do not want to continue a useless battle on the criteria of democracy and organizational seriousness within communist organizations, which, evidently, did not find the least response on the part of the PO nor, although in partially different forms, of the EEK and the DIP.

This does not signify passively accepting our exclusion and renouncing our relationship with the various organizations of the ex-CRFI.

This in particular because, accustomed to using the Trotskyist method in a consistent manner, we believe that, despite very serious opportunist and undemocratic deviations on the political-organizational level, none of the ex-CRFI organizations has “crossed the Rubicon” which divides revolutionary Marxism from centrism.

We then learned that you are preparing to relaunch the CRFI, realizing a preconference in a few weeks and, at the end of the year, an international conference.

We believe, as a founding organization of the CRFI (through our predecessor the AMR) — and

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of the previous MRFI — never excluded in formal terms, that it is our right to participate in this schedule of events and that if there is a break (presumably on your part) this can only take place on the basis of at least a minimum of real and open confrontation in a space such as that indicated.

For this reason we ask you to let us know the place, date and criteria of the preconference, so that our official delegation can participate. We also ask you to send us, by email, the preparatory texts of the preconference.

Waiting for your response, we send you our Trotskyist greetings,

Secretariat of the Communist Workers Party

Milan 14/3/2018

P.S.

1) We do not know the structure or structures responsible for the organization of the preconference and therefore from whom, precisely, to ask a response. In any case, we invite all the organizations linked to the ex-CRFI to give their answer.

2) We send this, as information, also to the Partido da Causa Operaria of Brazil. We are extremely critical of the PCO's politics. However, we recall that when the CRFI had a minimum semiregular functioning, the PCO was suspended (we believe in 2007) from the CRFI by its Executive Council. This decision has never turned into expulsion. The PCO some years later (2009?) requested, with a letter, to reopen a discussion for its full return to the CRFI. To this letter the CRFI, incorrectly, has never replied.

Given these facts, we believe that the PCO has the right, if it wishes, to participate in the preconference, which only, together with the end-of-the-year conference, can definitively decide on the relationship between the reconstructed CRFI and the PCO.