

The 23 September Communist League's ideology and Council Communism 1976-1981

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The Revolution and the Mexican Left.

The regime that emerged from the Mexican Revolution was the subject of political debate since the 1940s, when it was considered that the corrupt promotion of “national” industry betrayed the foundations of the popular movement of 1910, or that the bourgeois character of that revolution demanded a socialist stage. However, most of the considerations were centered on the State. Whether it was Stalinist authoritarianism, which predominated and still predominates in the Mexican left, or the “revolutionary nationalism” of the Party of the Mexican Revolution which, in its ideological range had on its “right” the sector that promoted, in quite corrupt ways, Mexican businessmen, or on its “left” the sovereigntist wing concerned with protecting strategic sectors, such as oil and electricity, and trying to keep at bay, by means of diplomatic juggling, its nemesis to the north: the United States.

To this was added the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) which emerged with ties, even before the existence of the PRI, since it was subsumed to the caudillo, his State and the nationalist project of the Mexican Revolution. This can be seen in *El Machete*, organ of the PCM, on August 13, 1927: “Obregón is the representative of those elements that aspire to national reconstruction based on the industrialization of the country and the creation of a strong national bourgeoisie independent of foreign influence.”¹

Revolutionary nationalism, in the two versions mentioned, defined Mexican politics and configured a good part of the “left”. For example, during the six-year term of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) it had its greatest growth in membership and from 1940 onwards, with Manuel Ávila Camacho, it experienced illegality

¹ Aguilar Camín, H. (2012). *Saldo de la Revolución. Historia y política de México 1910-1968*. Mexico: Planeta, p. 61.

and persecution. To this was added the PCM's conditioning to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which had in its embassy in Mexico an opportunity for espionage towards the United States, and was not interested in moving the diplomatic waters. The political and ideological annulment of the PCM, together with its Soviet dependence, made it redundant in an environment where revolutionary nationalism was nationalizing strategic sectors and building an incipient and extremely modest Welfare State.

On the other hand, the regime corporatized peasants, workers and kept the Army out of politics. Through the National Peasant Confederation (CNC) it distributed benefits to the peasantry affiliated, and functional, to the PRI. Meanwhile, the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) controlled the important unions in the country, instituting an indispensable element of the Mexican political picaresque: union charroism. Making union leaders into corrupt puppets who, while enriching themselves with union resources, were more than obedient to the government. This generated distrust and, among the most radical, aversion to official institutions.

By the sixties the "left" was linked to revolutionary nationalism, through its institutions, or to atomized and minority organizations such as the PCM or other organizations such as the *Liga Espartaco*. Therefore:

One of the causes of this peripheral influence was the legitimacy of the regime, since pretending to make the revolution in a country where it had actually occurred was not something easy to propose to the subaltern classes (another important difference with the Latin American lefts) who, in addition, achieved a certain degree of welfare and social mobility during the 'Mexican miracle'.²

However, the erosion of the regime, both economically and in terms of legitimacy due to its evident corruption, led peripheral elements of disappointment and impotence to take up arms. It is not by chance that, disenchanted by corruption and radicalized by State violence, characters such as Lucio Cabañas, Génaro Vazquez and the members who attacked the barracks in Madera, Chihuahua, on September 23, 1965, participated, first, in an institutional manner and then decided to go underground. A part of the left was clear: another revolution was needed, a socialist one, and the State that was

² Illades, C. (2011). La inteligencia rebelde. La izquierda en el debate público en México 1968-1989. México: Oceano, p. 195.

born of the Mexican Revolution could only be dealt with by arms since the elections were not reliable and its institutions were co-opted. The most radical within the PCM refused to follow the policy imposed by its authorities and decided to undertake a project of their own. They would go beyond revolutionary nationalism.

After 1965, the armed organizations became a serious problem for the regime, something that had not happened since the Mexican Revolution, and despite attempts during the six-year term of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) to co-opt or exterminate them, the situation reached unsustainable limits, both for the regime and for the organizations themselves.

To this was added the generational crisis, expressed politically in 1968, which led the government to use state forces at its discretion, in addition to torture and the military occupation of the state of Guerrero, provoking the discredit that the PRI and the Mexican Army continue to this day. The massacre of October 2, 1968 and then the state aggression, called *Halconazo*, on June 10, 1971 radicalized an ideologized sector of the youth that nurtured already existing organizations or founded new ones.

This article concentrates on one of these organizations: the 23 September Communist League and its theoretical texts, to explain its aversion to unions and its proposal, elaborated between 1976 and 1981, of armed combat through workers' councils. And this theory has convergences with that of Anton Pannekoek, although he is not quoted.

Ignacio Arturo Salas Obregón and David Jiménez Sarmiento: From the “Partidaria” to Madera 1973-1976.

The 23 September Communist League was the unification of the remnants of the armed groups formed in response to the state aggressions of 1968 and 1971. In this conglomerate we find *Los Ferores* who confronted the political control of the Student Federation of Guadalajara (FEG).³ First with fists and then with

³ Coming from the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario (FER) and from popular neighborhoods, they tried to exercise political presence at the University of Guadalajara, however, they confronted the political springboard and student arm of the PRI in the region: the Federación de Estudiantes de Guadalajara (feg). When they did not find a channel for their political concerns and were attacked with impunity, they became radicalized and found the League's

bullets. In Sinaloa, radicalization overtook the authorities of the Autonomous University of Sinaloa (UAS) and allowed the *Enfermos*⁴ to take control of it. On the other hand, one of the most industrialized areas of the country with a powerful business sector, Monterrey, was the cradle of the Processes:⁵ the ideologues of the League. In Mexico City, the brigades formed after 1968, such as *Los Lacandones*,⁶ among others, were fundamental. However, before being “the League” this attempt at unification was known as La Orga, or “*Organización Partidaria*” and made unsuccessful attempts at unification with Lucio Cabañas with whom they coordinated joint attacks on the Army⁷ and sent elements⁸ to

proposal attractive. See Aguayo, S. (2001). *La Charola. Una historia de los servicios de inteligencia en México*. Mexico: Grijalbo.

⁴ They were a leftist student group with their center of activities at the Autonomous University of Sinaloa (UAS), who due to their radicalism were adversaries to the “peces” of the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), and were so deeply rooted that they managed to take formal control of the university. In their heyday they joined the League, turning Sinaloa into one of the most important strongholds of the organization. See: Sánchez Parra, S. A. (2012). *Estudiantes en armas. Una historia política y cultural del movimiento estudiantil de los enfermos (1972-1978)*, UAS and Academia de Historia de Sinaloa, A.C.

⁵ Initially influenced by Jesuits of Liberation Theology at the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), Raúl Ramos Zavala and José Ángel García Martínez, who participated in meetings as “Catholic Communists”, as they called themselves, with pure Catholics, including Ignacio Arturo Salas Obregón. The activities of these students became evident to the ITESM board of trustees in 1972 when the Convention of Catholic Universities took place at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, where, led by Ignacio Arturo Salas Obregón, they provoked conflicts and were expelled. The name of their group comes from the text elaborated by Ramos Zavala *El proceso revolucionario*. See: Torres Martínez, H. (2014) *Monterrey rebel 1970-1973. Un estudio sobre la Guerrilla Urbana, la sedición urbana y sus representaciones colectivas*. Thesis for Master's Degree in History, Colegio de San Luis.

⁶ Emerging at the end of 1969 and coming, some of them, from Marxist study circles, they formed beloved brigades that took the names Patria o Muerte, Lacandones and Arturo Gámiz. The appellation of the latter transcended in the press and became the appellation of the rest. They perpetrated assaults to finance themselves and even tried to join the demonstrations of June 10, 1971, but were forbidden to attend with weapons. Eventually, the police managed to capture them and disintegrated their brigades. By 1973, some of the few who remained at liberty joined the League. See: Tamariz Estrada, M. (2007). *Operación 23 de Septiembre. Auge y exterminio de la guerrilla urbana en la Ciudad de México (Reportaje histórico)*. Bachelor's thesis in Communication and Journalism. Mexico: Facultad de Estudios Superiores, Aragón-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

⁷ For example, they participated in the attack on an army convoy on August 23, 1972.

⁸ General Archive of the Nation (AGN), Federal Security Directorate (DFS), Peasant Execution Brigade, File 3, f. 73 and 74. In the declaration of Marisol Orozco Vega, made on July 4, 1974, it is mentioned that by the end of June 1972 “... they also went up to the mountains SAÚL LÓPEZ DE LA TORRE, MARINA ÁVILA SOSA, FABIAN TEPORACA, INES, ROQUE, HÉCTOR ESCAMILLA LIRA and ISIDORA LOPEZ CORREA, who gave political-military instruction to the members of the Party...”.

Guerrero. However, the merger did not solidify. This organizational embryo perpetrated assaults in Monterrey, five on January 15, 1972, and in Chihuahua where Diego Lucero lost his life. Then, on February 6, Raul Ramos Zavala, leader of the Processes, died in a confrontation with the police, whose place would be taken by Ignacio Arturo Salas Obregón.

The League was born in March 1973 with the First National Meeting in Guadalajara, in the territory of the FER, having as its fundamental document the texts known as old Maderas, which were later published as *Cuestiones Fundamentales del Movimiento Revolucionario en México* or *El Cuestiones*. Its name pays homage to the attempted assault on the barracks in Madera, Chihuahua on September 23, 1965.

The organization structured a National Coordinating Committee made up of representatives of the different groups with Ignacio Arturo Salas Obregón as General Coordinator and depending on it a Management Bureau "...considered the highest executive body"⁹ made up of, among others, Ignacio Arturo Salas Obregón and Leopoldo Ángulo Luken. It also formed a Military Committee under the responsibility of Leopoldo Angulo Luken, David Jimenez Sarmiento "Chano" and Francisco Alfonso Perez Rayon "La Papa". Angulo Luken was also in charge of "...controlling and supervising the work of the Political-Military Coordinating Committees..."¹⁰ located in the Federal District, Sinaloa, Sonora, Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Baja California, Durango, State of Mexico, Hidalgo, Tlaxcala, Tamaulipas, Coahuila, Veracruz, Guerrero. From these first meetings the League tried to: "...support the revolutionary movement of the masses",¹¹ also "de-pistolize" police forces by attacking them to take away their weapons and to finance itself by robbing banks and kidnapping "bourgeoisie".

In April 1973 they robbed a branch of the *Banco General de México* in Monterrey. In Guadalajara they "expropriated" the money from cash vans and a Surgical Material Supplier to obtain instruments. They also robbed stationery stores and schools where they were able to obtain propaganda material. They considered these actions as "expropriations". For this purpose they operated

⁹ Rangel Hernández, L. (2011). La Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre 1973-1981. Historia de la organización y sus militantes. PhD thesis in History. Morelia: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, p. 120.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ López Limón, A. (2010). Historia de las organizaciones politico-militares de izquierda en México (1960-1980). PhD thesis in Political and Social Sciences. Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, p. 32.

with armed brigades, made up of around 5 militants, with a defined distribution of tasks, the most important of which were those linked to the distribution of their informative organ Madera, which was elaborated in April 1974.

Between July 1973 and January 1974 we have the Gray Period, with the failed kidnapping attempts that took the lives of businessmen such as Carlos Aranguren, Eugenio Garza Sada and the attempted insurrection, known as “Asalto al Cielo”, in Culiacán,¹² in January 1974, which was put down by the army. The failures generated struggles among the members who considered the possibility of infiltration. In the meantime, they tried to act in other entities, for example, in Oaxaca and the mountains of Sonora.¹³

In order to regroup forces, in July 1973, they held the 2nd National Meeting in Guadalajara. They considered reinforcing activities in the countryside and in the Bajío, in addition to the centralization of command. Internal contradictions appeared but Salas Obregón's faction managed to impose itself over the others which, together with the concern about the suspicion of infiltrators and the disasters, led to a reinforcement of his leadership by centralizing the command in him, which occurred in the Third National Meeting on April 2, 1974,¹⁴ Salas Obregón, or Oseas, was the main promoter of the Madera Newspaper as a collective organizer and tool for political education. He considered it as the main tool of the organization, even above weapons. This idea remained until the end of the armed group. Salas Obregón was captured in April 1974, after supervising the installation of one of the newspaper's printing presses.¹⁵ He is still missing.

David Jiménez Sarmiento: the Pen and the Iron 1974-1976

The Red Brigade of Mexico City, led by David Jiménez Sarmiento “Chano”, succeeded Salas Obregón and its leadership maintained the political line but emphasized the military one. The state forces were hunting the organization and it also decided to attack. The period between 1974 and 1976 is notable for the

¹² AGN, DFS, “Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre”, file 1, sheet 259-260.

¹³ Ibid., 1. 3, f. 113 and Madera Newspaper, no. 3, pp. 13023.

¹⁴ Editorial Committee, (1974), “Participación de Oseas en la lucha revolucionaria en México en Periódico Madera No. 5, (35-37). Mexico City, p. 35.

¹⁵ Proceso (2002). “El caso del fundador de la Liga Communist League 23 September, ante la Fiscalía Especial” Available at: <http://www.proceso.com.mx/240057/el-caso-del-fun-dador-de-la-liga-23-de-septiembre-ante-la-fiscalia-especial-2> (accessed May 10, 2020).

increase in ambushes and attacks on security forces, and is considered “militaristic” although activities linked to Madera were a priority. On the other hand, unlike the previous period, the military and political leadership was in one person, as with Salas Obregón, because while Jiménez Sarmiento had the first ideological leadership, reflected in Madera, Luis Miguel Corral García “El piojo blanco” and Migue Ángel Barraza García “El piojo negro” continued the theoretical work of *Los Procesos*. Having as their highest authority the Editorial Committee of Madera, of which they were members.

The activities of the League continued, always in a limited way, even in the most active states (Mexico City, Sinaloa, Jalisco and Chihuahua) while the brigades in states such as Oaxaca, Sonora, Nuevo Leon and Guerrero struggled to survive, but were neutralized by the authorities and eventually exterminated. In other entities the penetration of the armed group, according to the DFS file, was nullified as in Hidalgo¹⁶ and Guanajuato.¹⁷

The most complicated operations were the distribution of Madera because we found people who tried to prevent it and were executed.¹⁸ But where and by whom was the propaganda produced? In mid-1975 the DFS obtained information.

In a report dated May 3, 1975,¹⁹ the authorities obtained information to locate a printing equipment, in the metropolitan area of Mexico City, with a value of 100,000 pesos²⁰ and information on Madera's dissemination activities in factories. It was also learned of the League's intention to “... turn the group's ideology somewhat towards propaganda directed at workers' groups...”.²¹ Later in Guadalajara another printing plant was located, they found: “...the machinery of the printing plant... composed of a photographic camera with plate and rails of approximately 5 meters with a weight of one ton, a heavy guillotine, two one ton printers, an amplifier and several rolls of paper for printing”.²² With this

¹⁶ In Tula, Hidalgo on June 8, 1974 a couple of people “said” to belong to the League were reported to have been “agitating” at the PEMEX refinery. AGN, DFS, Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, I. 3, 1. 20.

¹⁷ Propaganda and safe houses were located in Irapuato and Leon, respectively. Ibid., 1. 2, ff., 294 and 362. Also in 1. 3, f. 80.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1. 3, ff. 328 and 1.4, 1. 126.

¹⁹ Ibid., 1, 5, f. 27-29.

²⁰ Ibid., 1, 5, 1. 34

²¹ Ibid., f. 326.

²² Ibid., 1. 350.

equipment they produced, between December 1974 and the date of the capture of the facilities, around 15,000 Madera.²³

In Sonora the brigades operated in the so-called Golden Triangle of the highlands, and had serious ideological and operational differences with the League's leadership, which is probably why they were abandoned to their fate and quashed in November 1974 by the military. Meanwhile, propaganda activities such as graffiti and leafleting were reported in Obregón City and Empalme between June and October 1975.²⁴ The “rural” brigades disappeared in Sonora. Subsequent activity was urban.

In Oaxaca, the activities of the League worried the Governor of Oaxaca, and at the end of 1974, he requested the intervention of the Army.²⁵ When the League could not provide resources, the Oaxacan brigades also resorted to “expropriations” or kidnappings, however, the state forces were more effective since the activities in Oaxaca after 1975 are scarce. Other brigades in Veracruz and Baja California were also put down. However, in their main strongholds such as Mexico City and its metropolitan area, Culiacán, Guadalajara and Juárez City, their activities did not diminish and even, as in the case of the Red Brigade, they sometimes ambushed the forces of law and order.²⁶

The authorities resorted to the distribution of flyers with photos of the League's militants “using helicopters and airplanes”²⁷ offering \$100,000 pesos for each militant.²⁸ However, they also resorted to State Terrorism by creating a death squad: the White Brigade, as opposed to the League's Red Brigade, made up of 240 elements from the police, the Army and the DFS. Its main function was to “investigate and locate by all means the members of the so-called 23 September Communist League”²⁹ granting resources for their expenses “as many as

²³ Ibid., p. 337.

²⁴ Ibid., l. 6 ff. 31,107, 270 and 272.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 210.

²⁶ Ibid., l. 6, f. 169.

²⁷ Ibid., l. 8, f. 84.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ García, G. (2008). “El gobierno creó en 1976 brigada especial para “aplastar” a guerrilleros en el valle de México” in La Jornada. Available at <http://www.jornada.com.mx/2008/07/07/index.php?section=politica&article=014n1pol> [Last accessed May 10, 2020].

necessary”.³⁰ Their symbol was the tiger and they had the slogan: “the guerrillas must be killed like dogs”.³¹

By mid-1976 the League lost many elements. Although it also hurt the authorities, its attrition was greater and unsustainable. On August 11 of that year David Jiménez Sarmiento “Chano” died in the attempted kidnapping of the sister of the then President-elect. Thus, the most “militaristic” stage of the League ended and later we will find a more “discreet” strategy concentrated on propaganda.

Miguel Ángel Barraza García: For the Workers' Councils 1976-1981.

Barraza García “El Piojo Negro” succeeded Jiménez Sarmiento as leader. The DFS, before Chano's fall in combat, already considered Barraza García as “...one of the main leaders of the LC23S, having under his responsibility the elaboration of the Madera Newspaper.”³²

Under his leadership, the League continued to weaken, although its operational capabilities remained relatively effective. For example, they continued to be functional in the states, according to DFS documentation, where they had a relevant presence since their origin: Federal District, Jalisco and Sinaloa. Nuevo León was languishing. Oaxaca, Veracruz and Guerrero were in losses and, as in some other states, their activity was marginal. However, their activities grew slowly, although not so slowly, in Chihuahua. Ciudad Juárez was a stronghold which even managed to transfer resources and militants to other entities. The League was limited although, by 1976, it was far from being exterminated and was fierce.

In this period the League tried to get closer to the industrial workers and not to confront the authorities but only to defend itself. The League “attacked” the businessmen. In December 1976 they kidnapped Isaac Duek Amkie³³ and on

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ Rodríguez Castañeda, R. (2013). El policía. Perseguida, torturaba, mataba. Grijalbo, p. 89.

³² López Limón, A. (2013). La Liga. Una cronología. Guadalajara: La casa del mago, p. 295

³³ AGN, DFS, Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, I 1.9. f. 1. In exchange for his life they demanded the reinstatement of 137 workers and payments for their pension as well as 25

March 29, 1977 they did the same with Antonino Fernández Rodríguez, President of Cervecería Modelo. The DFS also detected the presence of armed militants of the League in a workers' meeting at the brewery where they were negotiating the signing of the Collective Labor Contract. They had a presence, although marginal, in the industry.

In the country's capital, high schools and university centers were important, especially those of the UNAM, and among work centers the DFS identified the Vallejo industrial zone where the League had activities through the brigade "Ignacio A. Salas".³⁴ The last kidnapping in Mexico City was that of Monica Perez Olagaray in 1979.

In Jalisco the focus of activity was Guadalajara with some activities in Zapopan. There are reports in those places until June 1978. And the activities, between 1976 and 1978, were propaganda, assaults and attacks on the police. In Sinaloa the cities of Culiacán and Mazatlán were between 1976 and 1979 the scenes of distribution of Periódico Madera. In the state of Chihuahua they grow in an unusual way, they are more numerous even compared to bastions such as Guadalajara or Culiacan, which we see in the files up to April 1979 where I found propaganda, attacks on the police and raids on safe houses.

On January 22, 1981 Barraza fell in combat against the police and weeks later Jose Grijalva Galaviz "El Zombie" was captured. The first was the visible head and the second the coordinator of contacts and bridges for the elaboration and distribution of Madera, which reached its last issue that year and with it the end of the organization.

The Pen and the Iron: the League's ideology.

The League was an attempt to constitute the party and the army of the proletariat, the "league" being only the embryo in that process, since for that organization the Communist Party (CP) was incapable of being the head of the workers' movement. More or less going through the notion of *El proletariado sin cabeza*³⁵ of Revueltas, Raúl Ramos Zavala, when he was still part of the CP, criticized the docility of the latter calling the Communist Youth to exercise self-

million pesos according to: Editorial Board, "Nota a la Carta a los obreros de la Cervecería Modelo," Madera, no. 30, April 1977, p. 7.

³⁴ AGN, DFS, Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, 1. 11, f. 339.

³⁵ Revueltas, J. (1980). Ensayo sobre un proletariado sin cabeza. Era.

defense since 1968 had evidenced their defenselessness before a regime ready to exterminate them. On this idea, the groups merged in the League for 1973 elaborated texts to justify their existence and methods, thus in this genealogy of texts we find *El tiempo que nos tocó vivir*³⁶ by Ramos Zavala, the so-called *Maderas viejos*, which were written during the meetings prior to the formation of the League, and finally with the League already constituted we have The Thesis of the University-Factory, contributed by the *Enfermos de Sinaloa* and the *Cuestiones*, in the writing of which Salas Obregón had an outstanding participation.

The Thesis of the University-Factory³⁷ considers the university as an institution subsumed to the capitalist production process, given its growing need for highly qualified personnel, thus becoming a “branch of capitalist production”³⁸ where the merchandise is the educational services, the professors by selling their work and the student body after consuming such merchandise and becoming “productive workers”³⁹ become proletarians. Although not only the labor market turns students into proletarians, since these students turned into “workers” are granted a “salary in kind” through student houses, university canteens, sports fields and scholarships,⁴⁰ This justified the presence of students in the revolutionary vanguard and sharing a place with the Marxist historical subject: the proletariat.

On the other hand, the most relevant text for the organization, even eclipsing the Thesis of the University-Factory, is the *Cuestiones* where the ideological basis of the group practically rests and on which they develop further elements. Its main points are:

— They consider the Mexican Revolution a civil war⁴¹ or popular movement which propitiated “...the destruction of the residues of the old relations of production, and at the same time, it was to allow the consolidation and development of bourgeois relations of production”.⁴²

³⁶ Ramos Zavala, R. (2003). *El tiempo que nos tocó vivir*. Huasipungo.

³⁷ Also known as “Acerca del movimiento revolucionario del proletariado estudiantil”. The version from the AGN, Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales, Caja: 2712, Exp : único was used.

³⁸ Ibidem., p. 2.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 42

⁴² Salas Obregón, 1. (1978). *Cuestiones fundamentales del movimiento revolucionario en México*. Red Brigade, p. 91.

— The need to build the army and the party of the proletariat which through revolutionary civil war would impose its dictatorship. Rejecting, and condemning, collaboration with the bourgeoisie embodied for them in the “opportunism” of Echeverría's *“Apertura democrática”* and other democratic groups opposed to “revolutionary” violence.⁴³

— The importance of the factory workers as the main actor and target of the leadership. And although the conditions for revolution were not given, and could not be produced by means of arms as the “theory” of the foco proposed, the mobilizations and the general political strike “educated” the proletariat for revolution.⁴⁴

— 1968 as a reference in the formation of brigades and a council of representation with revocable members from which it was possible to erect a popular army. Eliminating in the process the unions which, for the League, were nothing more than bourgeois disciplining organizations whose leadership was made up of a labor aristocracy obedient to the interests of the bourgeoisie.⁴⁵

Lenin in his pamphlet “Left-Wing” Communism: An Infantile Disorder attacked German communists opposed to trade unions and participation in parliaments. Among these we find Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Otto Rühle and the Dutch Anton Pannekoek. And strangely enough, a supposedly dogmatic Leninist group like the League converged in these elements with the opponents of the Russian revolutionary. A few examples will suffice to prove it:

In 1977 the League recognized⁴⁶ the execution of the “union member” Jesús Martínez Cabrera, which took place in December 1976, and did the same with Celestino Sánchez Rojas and Juan Guerrero Puebla of section 122 of the Metallurgical Miners Union:

... they had been characterized by being more than policemen at the service of the bourgeoisie and its State, denouncing, repressing and

⁴³ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

⁴⁶ Military Committee “15 de junio” (1977). “Nota a la carta a los obreros de la Cervecería Modelo” in Periódico Madera No. 30 (pp. 7 and 8).

humiliating the workers, it was also a revolutionary action carried out by the 23 September Communist League.⁴⁷

To those who might criticize them for considering "... a madness to try to destroy the trade union, executing some of its members..."⁴⁸ they alluded to the damage caused to the operational capacity of the bourgeoisie. And they clearly stated their objective "... to destroy the unions together with the bourgeois order..."⁴⁹

On the other hand, on May 12, 1977, Prof. and militant of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) Alfonso Peralta Reyes was "assassinated"⁵⁰ at the entrance of the College of Sciences and Humanities (CCH) and next to his body was found the cover of the Madera Newspaper with a sheet of paper with the message: "This is how the agents of the bourgeoisie will be executed in the heart of the workers' movement. Commando Miguel A. Crespo Díaz".⁵¹ The League later recognized as their own the attack⁵² against Peralta via the Madera newspaper and accused him of collaborating with the authorities to arrest their militants and obstruct their propaganda.⁵³ In the eyes of the League he was a "political policeman and as such deserved nothing more than execution".⁵⁴ In their communiqué they urged the workers to discard bourgeois politics to mobilize for a General Strike by carrying out propaganda in factories and forming "The brigades and the clandestine and armed struggle committees, organizations that will strengthen the 23 September Communist League so that it becomes the Party of the Working Class in Mexico".⁵⁵

However, how did the League sustain its confrontation against the unions? What was its alternative for the workers?

Faced with the dilemma of strengthening the union organization or "considering its destruction"⁵⁶ the League preferred the second option. They considered the

⁴⁷ Ibidem., p. 7.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ AGN, DFS, Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, l. 9, f. 270.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² Local Committee of the 23 September Communist League in Mexico City, (1977). "El ajusticiamiento de un policía político" in Periódico Madera No. 31 (pp. 50-58).

⁵³ Ibidem., p. 51.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 58.

⁵⁶ Press Committee "David Jiménez Fragoso", (1976). "¿Por qué los obreros no deben organizarse en sindicatos?" in Periódico Madera No. 21 (pp. 23).

political work on the democratization of the unions with charros as useless and were not convinced by the Leninist argument based on "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder: "...because after all Lenin already said that it was necessary to work in the unions no matter how reactionary they were".⁵⁷ In Madera they considered Lenin's works, in the Mexican context of the seventies, out of logic, since imperialism, in which the Mexican economy already participated according to the armed group, favored "the existence of super-profits that allowed the bourgeoisie to corrupt the workers' leaders and the workers' aristocracy",⁵⁸ making the unions, which at the beginning were an organism of the working class, one of the most important institutions of imperialist capital. The League considered this to be visible in the organic structure of the unions where the workers used to participate in the assemblies and in the election of leaders which "today have been transformed into an executive committee, a certain number of delegates and an army of coup plotters. That is the union!".⁵⁹

According to his reasoning the main functions of the unions were: to bring down the price of labor power below its value, to promote and encourage competition among the workers, to provide the necessary labor power with the characteristics required by the capitalist, and in the production process to appear as part of the industrial army of surveillance punishing the workers.

They emphasize the beginning of the unions were born as an instrument of resistance to capital which was even outside the law. However, eventually, in the Mexican case, they were integrated into the bourgeois state, thus becoming "government officials"⁶⁰ in charge of paralyzing and subduing workers' resistance: "This is the reason why the bourgeoisie and its lackeys are so concerned that the workers organize themselves into unions; and just as López Portillo declares himself a trade unionist by conviction".⁶¹ Therefore, these organizations have ceased to belong to the proletarian class and have become organizations of capital and it is necessary to consider their destruction together with that of the bourgeois state of which they are a part".⁶² For this reason they

⁵⁷ Ibidem.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p 25.

⁶¹ Ibid., p 26.

⁶² Ibid.

warned of the struggles between “charros” and “independents” as “struggles between vultures for the control of union dues”.⁶³

Therefore, trade unionism could only be destroyed with the collapse of the bourgeois state. Clarifying their position with respect to the unions, they did not identify them with the “unionized” workers but with their structure seen as “a true bureaucratic apparatus at the service of capital” which can only be destroyed through violence.⁶⁴ For this reason they called on the proletariat to organize itself outside bourgeois law and around a revolutionary policy, building a “Party and its Revolutionary Army to guide them”⁶⁵ creating armed clandestine brigades and struggle committees “as the only possible organization”⁶⁶ and for them the workers had to learn to handle weapons and to organize militarily.

In addition to the armed brigades and the committees of struggle “we distinguish broader organizations, which appear as the proper form of organization of the political leadership of the movement: the Council of Representatives”⁶⁷ which are developed when there is a proletarian party little developed and the military possibilities are few but which are considered as the embryo of political power⁶⁸ outside bourgeois politics, assuming the functions of directing, coordinating and generalizing the mobilization to impose conditions.

For them the most “outstanding” example was that of 1968 with the CNH (National Strike Council) which at times, according to the League, was even exceeded and the struggle went beyond the six points. However, in the CNH the interests of the proletariat did not prevail:

...as a result of the inexistence of a solid revolutionary leadership, of the inexistence of solid revolutionary, illegal, clandestine and armed

⁶³ “David Jiménez Fragoso” Press Committee (1976). “Insistiendo sobre los sindicatos” in Periódico Madera No. 22 (pp. 13-18).

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

⁶⁵ Press Committee “David Jiménez Fragoso”, (1976). “¿Por qué los obreros no deben organizarse en sindicatos?” in Periódico Madera No. 21 (pp. 26).

⁶⁶ Editorial Board (1978). “Las soluciones “democráticas” a los problemas obreros” in Periódico Madera No. 35 (p. 19).

⁶⁷ Editorial Board (1978). “Acerca de los consejos de los representantes” in Periódico Madera No. 36 (p. 5).

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

organizations which were capable of maintaining as dominant the revolutionary policy of the CNH.⁶⁹

And based on Oseas' proposals, they gave a definition of this figure:

The Council of Representatives, comes to be an organ that tries to agglutinate and cohere the politics of the proletariat in diversity of class detachments, and in the diversity of organisms in the same. It is a body composed on the basis of the integration of the political representatives of the various detachments and organizations.⁷⁰

The development of these entities is necessary and inevitable, according to the League, but as in the case of 1968 when they lack "solid clandestine revolutionary organizations among the workers"⁷¹ the opportunists impose their policy and with it: "...they have dedicated themselves to transforming these organizations into simple bureaucratic offices and even to converting them into 'independent' unions or some other legaloid organization of the sort."

And to guarantee the proletarian positions as dominant in that council they considered necessary the brigades and the clandestine and armed struggle committees, like those in the League's project:

...to maintain a constant work of political education among the masses, to spread Marxism-Leninism and to sustain a relentless struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politics, against opportunism in all its forms. This is the proper organization of the advanced elements, of the most conscious.⁷²

In this way they would constitute the Party and the Revolutionary Army by forming a single national movement of the working class. For them they insisted on "breaking with the mechanism imposed by the union", studying Marxism-Leninism and forming study circles around Madera.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷² Editorial Board (1979). "Un sindicato como cualquier otro" in Periódico Madera No. 42, (p. 21).

The League's Council Communism and its convergences with Pannekoek.

The 23 September Communist League is commonly considered a dogmatic Leninist organization whose intransigence and violence, for the lazy historiography, was well represented and sowed by Ignacio Arturo Salas Obregón "Oseas". And if we approach what has been written about his ideology, we find a vacuum seasoned with the absurd distrust of the specialists towards the AGN sources because they consider them: "...police archives, not historical"⁷³ and there are even those who consider those who use sources and information obtained under torture as "torturers of history".⁷⁴ In this way, they are more comfortable with hemerography and the scarce oral testimonies. A widespread shortcoming.

In 2014 a publication on the League saw the light of day.⁷⁵ With four coordinators and the best known names in the field of armed movement studies. Most of the articles work, despite the title of the book, peripheral topics: the null support of Cuba to the Mexican guerrillas, the context in Monterrey prior to the appearance of the League, 1968, the *Halconazo*, chronicles on related groups such as the MAR in addition to memories and testimonies of ex-militants with anecdotal data which provide information already available. The text is generous in providing context but if we want to update ourselves on the supposed subject it denies us that benefit. The main primary sources for learning about the League, the DFS archive and the Madera Newspaper, are not used in most of the articles.

Among them we find *La revolución latinoamericana y la Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre* by Fabian Campos Hernandez in his attempt to approach *Cuestiones Fundamentales del Movimiento Revolucionario en Mexico* considering the null influence of foquismo in it and emphasizes its interest in the political strike.⁷⁶ He also writes: "In his eyes, the objective and subjective conditions of the socialist revolution in Mexico were given"⁷⁷ and it is a mistake, since we already mentioned pages ago the considerations of the armed group in this respect in the *Cuestiones* since, clearly, they deny that the conditions were given. On the other hand, in effect, the League rejected foquismo and that was one of the

⁷³ Glockner, F. (2007). Memoria roja. Historia de la guerrilla en México (1943-1968). Edition B, p. 14.

⁷⁴ Ibidem., p. 14.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 96.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 98.

reasons for the abandonment of the brigades in the mountains of Sonora⁷⁸ although, in spite of what the author affirms, the League did not consider the students as the revolutionary object since the Madera Newspaper promoted the organization of the workers as a priority objective⁷⁹ and even considered it a weakness to have mainly students in their ranks.⁸⁰ They saw in the factory workers, especially in the lower strata, conditions that did not exist, in spite of their combativeness, in the students: discipline, energy and revolutionary strength.⁸¹ Campos Hernández also considers Salas Obregón: "Northern, urban, modern and Marxist, it is not strange that his approach was aimed at the center-north of the country and that the center-south did not have a specific weight in his political and military approach".⁸² Error. The League's project was national, hence the attempts, among others, in Oaxaca, Guerrero, Veracruz and Guanajuato⁸³ and other entities in the south of the country. On the other hand, reference is made to a "purism of victory" which prevented the alliance with the bourgeoisie or trade unionism when the League elaborated in Madera, mentioned pages before, arguments which explained its position before trade unionism and in favor of the workers' councils.⁸⁴ Perhaps by reviewing other primary sources, or simply knowing the subject better, the author would have been more accurate in his conclusions. In the end, he tries to explain the ideology of the League based on non-existent characteristics in a flawed manner. How, then, could we approach a definition of the League's ideology?

Reading the propaganda, mainly Madera, we find convergences with the proposal of the workers' councils which we can compare with that of Anton

⁷⁸ Escamilla Rodríguez, J. A. (2013). La Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre 1973-1976. Tesina de Licenciatura en Historia. Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Iztapalapa, p. 149.

⁷⁹ Press Committee "David Jiménez Fragoso" (1976). "¿Por qué los obreros no deben organizarse en sindicatos?" in Periódico Madera No. 21 (pp. 26).

⁸⁰ National Commission of the 23 September Communist League (1974). La Tercera Reunión Nacional y las "nuevas" aportaciones a la "Teoría de la vinculación partidaria" in Madera No. 4 (p. 13).

⁸¹ Ibidem.

⁸² Gamiño et. al. (2014), p. 99

⁸³ In May and June 1974 propaganda and safe houses were located in Irapuato and Leon, respectively. Ibid., l. 2, ff., 294 and 362. Also in l. 3, f. 80.

⁸⁴ Editorial Board (1978). "La soluciones 'democráticas' a los problemas obreros" in Periódico Madera No. 35 (p. 19) and Editorial Board (1978). "Acerca de los consejos de los representantes" in Periódico Madera No. 36 (p. 5).

Pannekoek⁸⁵ and his main works.⁸⁶ Later the convergences were evident, especially after 1976. Already the League's definition of the Soviet Union as an imperialist state capitalism⁸⁷ converged with those of Council Communism, also in the refusal to collaborate with the bourgeoisie ("opportunism") and the repudiation of trade unions, among other elements developed by the Dutch astronomer.

Pannekoek was one of the main theorists of Council communism. During his studies of Astronomy he participated in the Social-Democratic Workers Party (SDAP in Dutch) where together with Herman Gorter he represented the left. This party preceded the Social Democratic Party (SDP) which was distant from the Second International having anti-militarism as its main concern, considering the General Strike as the main tool to prevent war and repudiated the expulsion of anarchists. They did not get the necessary support and their "anarcho-syndicalist" tendencies divided the organization, giving rise to the political publication *De Nieuwe Tijd*, which was nourished with the collaboration of Gorter and Pannekoek. In 1909 the group was expelled from the party. Pannekoek lived in Germany where he taught at the cadre school of the German Social Democratic Party and collaborated in publications. Later he participated in the Spartacus League which preceded the German Communist Party. Then the First World War returned him to Holland where he participated in the anti-militarist mobilization while in Germany Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring did the same. Both groups agreed with Lenin in their condemnation of the war and their exhortation to workers' action. However, "Rosa Luxemburg expressed doubts about the authoritarian tendencies of Bolshevism. She feared for the socialist content of the Russian Revolution if it did

⁸⁵ Anton Pannekoek (January 2, 1873 - April 28, 1960) was a Dutch astronomer and communist theorist. He began his militancy in the left wing of German social democracy, in positions close to those of Rosa Luxemburg. Then he was part of the German-Dutch Communist Left that ended up breaking with Russian Bolshevism. He is one of the founders of Council Communism. The political vision of Marxism developed by Anton Pannekoek has received the name of councilism for considering that in the Workers' Councils generated by the revolutionary processes should reside all the decision-making and management capacity, as opposed to the statist and partisan options of communism developed by Lenin, Trotsky and, on the other hand, Stalin, whom Pannekoek considered totally alien to Marxism. For him, the regime of the USSR was not a deformed form of socialism, but state capitalism. He considered that communism could be nothing other than the result of a revolutionary process leading to a considerable development of democracy together with the collectivization of the means of production.

⁸⁶ Pannekoek, A. (1973). *Lenin as Philosopher*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI. Also useful was his text *Workers' Councils*.

⁸⁷ Editorial Board (1974). Editorial in *Madera Newspaper* No. 3 (p. 3).

not find rectifying support from the proletarian revolution in the West”.⁸⁸ But the main contradiction was observed in the Leninist instrumentation of parliamentarism and trade unionism.

The Dutch astronomer elaborated his critique of Bolshevism and his proposal regarding Council Communism in his text *Workers' Councils*, elaborated between 1941 and 1942 in the Netherlands, where he gave a characterization of the process following the Russian Revolution and explained his rejection of parliamentarism and trade unionism. These two elements are of interest to us.

He considered the plight of the workers, between the crises and the condemnation of surplus value, as a consequence of “the anarchy of capitalist production”⁸⁹ which among its recurrent crises led to the Second World War where the imperialists were trying to divide up the world once again. Pannekoek warned:

Thus the working class is confronted with the necessity of taking production into its own hands. Control over the machines, over the means of production, must be taken out of the unworthy hands that abuse them..... (being) masters of their own labor, to drive it under their will. Thus the machines will be put to their true use, the abundant production of goods that provide for the daily needs of all.⁹⁰

He trusted in the workers and their capacity to organize production, thus turning the world economy into a system, no longer of competitors, but of collaborators.⁹¹ And he warns about the confusion between common property and public property, since in the latter “the State or other political body is the master of production”⁹² and the workers do not govern their work, but are members of the State who direct production, becoming the exploiters. For the author: “...public property is a program... of a modernized and disguised form of capitalism. While common property on the part of the producers was the only objective of the working class”.⁹³

⁸⁸ Mattick, P. (1960). Anton Pannekoek.

⁸⁹ Pannekoek, A. (1947). *Workers' Councils*.

⁹⁰ Ibidem.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid. Reason why the League defined the USSR as state capitalism.

⁹³ Ibid.

He considered necessary the assemblies where decisions are discussed and made, so that “anyone who takes part in the work takes part in the regulation of the common work”.⁹⁴ While union officials propose, workers only vote. This contrasts with community management where workers propose, vote and decide. Although in places with large numbers of workers it proposes to combine the action of different assemblies or assemblies of central committees of delegates. These delegates have no command but the responsibility to obey the instructions of their respective assemblies “with special instructions.... (then) they return to those assemblies to report on the discussion and its results”. And furthermore, they are permanently replaceable according to their abilities and explains: “their weight does not rest on their individual strength but on the strength of the community delegated to them.”⁹⁵

However, to achieve this it would not be possible to convince the members of the capitalist class: “We do not have to convince them by reasoning but to defeat them by means of power”.⁹⁶ Which also necessarily involves defeating the “spiritual power” over the minds of the workers imposed by education, propaganda, the church, the press, literature and the audiovisual media of the time, for which reason capitalism “must be theoretically demolished before being materially demolished”. A newspaper such as *Madera* fulfilled this function.

On the other hand, the vote and the parliament would not be useful because there the capitalists would defend their wealth. In the eyes of the astronomer:

There is only one power in the world capable of defeating capitalism: the power of the working class. The working class cannot be liberated by others; it can only be liberated by itself... they must first be awakened and activated by practical struggle.⁹⁷

Pannekoek considers the workers' councils as the form of organization during the transition period where the working class fights for its domination. Destroying capitalism and organizing social production. Thus materializing the dictatorship of the proletariat by excluding the capitalist class “from taking part in the decisions”⁹⁸ and annulling parliamentarism by assuming the functions of

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

legislative and executive power: "And everything that in the councils is discussed and decided delineates its real power from the understanding, the will, the action of working humanity itself".⁹⁹

Unlike the unions which, in Pannekoek's opinion, sanction exploitation by neutralizing the reduction of the working day through productivity practices, becoming "an essential element of capitalism".¹⁰⁰ Pannekoek considers the union bureaucracy as a dominant class among its members "because all the factors of power are in their hands"¹⁰¹ and also their living conditions are different from those of the workers, because while the subsistence of their rank and file is threatened by crises and unemployment, the officials have the "security that is necessary for union officials for the good management of the union's affairs".¹⁰² The Dutch astronomer concludes: Trade unions "are the apparatus by means of which monopoly capital imposes its conditions on the entire working class".¹⁰³

It also considers, among the tactics useful for workers, "direct actions by workers without the mediation of the unions"¹⁰⁴ such as illegal strikes without rules and regulations (wild strikes) which prevent the union from concluding them as it sees fit. On the other hand, if these are expanded and spread to the masses, branches of industry or communities, deliberative assemblies become useful through their delegates who are different from union assemblies due to the absence of leadership, the rotation of their delegates and their decision-making capacity is directly linked to the will of the assembly.

Thus appear the main tools of combat for Pannekoek: the councils and the strikes. Elements present in the Russian Revolution which, according to Pannekoek, were limited by the economic development of tsarist Russia with an incipient bourgeoisie, a backward industry and a population with a limited development which propitiated the victory of the Bolsheviks "organized and hardened by years of devoted struggle"¹⁰⁵ who led the reconstruction of the country and eventually limited the soviets "reducing them to subordinate organs of the government apparatus".¹⁰⁶ They organized industry in the face of a

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

counter-revolutionary war, kept the peasants under control and introduced modern science into education although “The name Soviet Republic was preserved as a camouflage and the ruling party government retained the name Communist Party”¹⁰⁷ and organized production by developing state communism as “master of the complete apparatus of production”¹⁰⁸ and the workers have the same decision-making capacity with respect to capitalism having as an exploiting class, owner of the means of production, the party bureaucracy which had the historical mission of the bourgeoisie in the West: “...to develop industry and the productivity of labor. They had to change Russia from a primitive and barbarous country of peasants into a modern and civilized country of great industry”.¹⁰⁹

And although the Russian Revolution, in Pannekoek's view, is not as advertised by the official propaganda, as a place “where the workers are the masters and communism reigns”,¹¹⁰ its historical importance is comparable to that of the French Revolution, its historical importance is comparable to the French Revolution giving a lesson to the world of the capacity of strikes and the development of workers' committees but whose workers were subjected to class exploitation in deplorable conditions “under a strong and oppressive dictatorial government without freedom of speech, press, association, more strongly enslaved than their brothers under Western capitalism”¹¹¹ justified by a Marxism of 'caricature' product of:

...primitive barbarism, where the fight with superstitious religion is spiritual and modern industry is progress — with atheism as philosophy, party rule as goal and obedience to dictatorship as the highest commandment.¹¹²

Thus the Communist Party did not favor the transformation of the workers into independent fighters “capable by their own strength of building the new world, but by making them obedient followers ready to put the party in power”.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. More or less what the League considered about the Mexican Revolution.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Nevertheless, it is noticeable in Madera's documents, as in the others of the League, references to Pannekoek or his texts but the convergences are evident. As if the above were not enough, the sources continue to speak:

El Madera No. 43, printed in October 1979, in the article *La izquierda en la Cámara* considered the Political Reform of 1977 as a “trick... of ideological domination”¹¹⁴ and on the integration of the left in the electoral dynamics they clarify:

...when we mention the 'left', we are referring above all to the PCM and its 'left coalition', since both the PPS and the PST appear more like government-oriented parties and they reproach the PCM for its actions to who the League considers to be its 'masters.'¹¹⁵

They also consider parliamentarism during the imperialist stage, in which they placed Mexico, as “the purest empty charlatanism with the purpose of deceiving the masses”¹¹⁶ where the Executive Power uses the Legislative Branch simply as a “sounding board”¹¹⁷ and as a tool to co-opt leaders with benefits and deceive the population.

In the same issue of Madera they responded to an article by Adolfo Gilly, which appeared in *Revista Nexos*,¹¹⁸ on the socialist transition and outlined their differences with the Trotskyist, and what they considered a stuffed left, and again agreed with Pannekoek. In their opinion the article was aimed at justifying:

...historically what is happening today in many of the so-called socialist countries, the prototypes of which are Russia and China; countries in which... there is no socialism, nor are they “societies in transition”, but under the protection of the State capitalist monopoly, capitalism has been restored.¹¹⁹

It also supported the existence of a necessary bureaucracy, as well as the nationalization of the means of production, but the League responded: “... the

¹¹⁴ Editorial Board (1979), *La izquierda en la Cámara* in Madera No. 43, Mexico, p. 12.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Gilly, A. (1979). “La transición socialista” in *Nexos*.

¹¹⁹ Editorial Board (1979). *La dictadura del proletariado o poder de la burocracia. La tergiversación del marxismo por el Sr. Gilly*, in *Periódico Madera* No. 43 (pp. 29 and 30), Mexico.

capitalist monopoly of the State is not socialism. The transition, the socialist transition is something else”¹²⁰ and reiterated:

... they are nothing more than an open justification of the bourgeois policies of countries like Russia, China, Yugoslavia, etc. and an attempt to continue deceiving the workers with the story that in those countries socialism exists or that socialism is being built, or that this is the type of socialism for which it is necessary to fight. Those states that the Trotskyists call bureaucratized workers' states, are nothing more than capitalist states. (By the way, did you know that for the PRT, which is the most important Trotskyist organization in the country, Fidel Velázquez and other charros are neither bourgeois nor representatives of the bourgeoisie, but “workers' leaders”, nothing more than... “bureaucratized”? coincidence, isn't it?).¹²¹

Their analysis was closer to the councilists and far from Leninist dogmatism. After 1976 they abandoned the idea of constituting the Party of the proletariat and, through the workers councils, they tried to build an articulated force, from the “proletariat” itself, to overthrow the bourgeoisie. They went from trying to constitute the Party and the Army of the “proletariat” to, in practice, erecting a machinery of armed propaganda for the education and formation of councils: they considered the overthrow of the bourgeois order only possible from the workers themselves.

Conclusion.

Although the League does not quote Pannekoek, nor any other councilist author, its convergences with them are remarkable. Also in their notions of state capitalism, anti-parliamentarism and their open confrontation against trade unions. Furthermore, their criticism of the Soviet Union and their stance towards workers' councils, especially after 1976, is so similar as to make possible the suspicion of some influence, perhaps minimal, which tied in with the theory constructed by Ramos Zavala and Ignacio Arturo Salas Obregón. Apparently they reached the same conclusions by different routes. But some used weapons and the others did not.

¹²⁰ Ibidem., p. 33.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 34.

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