



**Nahuel Moreno**

**Argentina,  
a country  
in crisis**

# Nahuel Moreno

## Argentina, a country in crisis

1964

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# Foreword

Mercedes Petit <sup>1</sup>

In July 1963 the People's Radical Civic Union (UCRP) won the election with 25 per cent of the votes. At the end of that month, Doctor Arturo U. Illia took up office. Peronism had achieved electoral status with a new party, Union Popular (People's Union – UP). Some political sectors considered it was time to open channels to legalise the followers of the “fugitive tyrant” as the gorillas called the defeated former president Peron, exiled in Madrid. A front was being formed UP, Frondizi's Intransigent Radical Civic Union (UCRI), Christian Democracy, and Popular Conservative and others. In February of that year, the Catholic Church had publicly lifted the ex-communication to former president Juan Domingo Peron.

In May, the ticket Vicente Solano Lima (Popular Conservative) – Sylvestre Begnis (UCRI) was proclaimed. A few days before the election, Solano Lima's candidacy was vetoed, as he looked like a possible winner. Hours before the opening of the polls, the Front called for a blank vote.

At the time, Nahuel Moreno headed the Trotskyist organisation Palabra Obrera (Workers' Word), which had rejected the negotiations between Peron (exiled in Madrid) and Frondizi (confined to Bariloche) that led to the frustrated Solano Lima's candidacy and campaigned for a blank vote.

A few days after that Sunday 7 July, Moreno wrote a short text on the new situation. In November, he presented an extensive oral report at a national plenum. In it, he analysed the crisis of the country, the different stages of struggle of the workers' movement, the central characteristics of the new government of the UCRP, also the proposals to respond to the incipient recovery of the workers after the defeat of 1959 and to advance towards a revolutionary and socialist solution.

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<sup>1</sup> **Mercedes Petit** is a Trotskyist militant, a journalist, and a researcher. In the 1960s, she joined the current headed by Nahuel Moreno ([www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org)), with whom she collaborated in theoretical elaboration and propaganda tasks. After the 1976 military coup, they shared exile in Colombia. Petit wrote *Elementary Political Concepts* and *Our Experience with Lambertism* in 1986 together with Nahuel Moreno (both available in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org)); *Notes for a History of Trotskyism* (2005) and *Working Women and Marxism* (2009, with Carmen Carrasco). She writes in *El Socialista* ([www.izquierdasocialista.org.ar](http://www.izquierdasocialista.org.ar)) and *International Correspondence* ([www.uit-ci.org.ar](http://www.uit-ci.org.ar)).

To guide the party's activity in this new period In April 1964, Palabra Obrera published these two works, together with two editorials in the 1964 March paper in response to the plan of struggle launched by the CGT, with the title *Argentina, a country in crisis*. It was part of the 2012 book *From Illia to Onganía*, which included two other works available at [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org): *Report by Nahuel Moreno and debate with Roberto Santucho* from 1965, and *The struggle has just begun*, a booklet published in 1966, after the victory of Onganía's coup.

## Palabra Obrera and the entryism to Peronism

Since its origins in the 1940s, the current that Nahuel Moreno built had as its central orientation to develop within the workers' movement. Its young founders learned and tempered themselves in the daily life of the factories and the working-class neighbourhoods, accompanying the struggles, the steps forward and the setbacks, to promote a policy of class independence.

Under the military dictatorship that overthrew Perón, the tactic of entryism had allowed the Movement of Workers Groups (MAO) first and Palabra Obrera later to accompany factories "from within", from the delegate committees and internal commissions to the Peronist workers who were the protagonists of the resistance and the recovery of the unions and the CGT taken over by the government.

When the Radical government took office in 1963, a new situation opened up, with greater margins of legality but amid a bosses' offensive. The workers were recovering their combativeness. May 1964 was the peak of the CGT Plan of Struggle, with factory occupations. Throughout several pages of *Argentina, a country in crisis*, the issues to be taken into account to participate in those phenomena are broken down, to promote the organisation of the workers from the grassroots, from the delegates committees and internal commissions. It starts with the two fundamental questions: what is the situation of the bosses? What is the atmosphere among the workers? The placement of the revolutionary militants sought to promote the organisation from below, with democratic and assembly methods, strengthening the unity and development of the new anti-bureaucratic activists, which would allow them to be in the best balance of forces in the event of reaching a dispute, the strike and try to lead it to victory.

The winds of the Cuban Revolution were blowing hard, so it was common for Palabra Obrera to polemise against the sectors of the left that sponsored the creation of the rural guerrilla focus, insisting on the leading role of the working class and the urban population (overwhelmingly majority). This did not prevent Palabra Obrera, and later the PRT, from being a vanguard in defence and solidarity with Socialist Cuba and, even more, from promoting a fierce response on the part of activists in factory conflicts. As the workers' movement recovered and in the heat of the CGT's plan of struggle, the current of Palabra Obrera was at the forefront of the new phenomenon of strikes with the occupation of the factory, and later with hostages.

At the same time, they participated in an increasingly strengthened student movement, which mobilised against the Radical government and then continued to do so against Onganía.

It may draw the reader's attention that Moreno refers in his report to Peronism as "our movement". In 1963, the period of entryism into Peronism that began in 1959 and formally ended in 1964 was coming to an end. Being one of the most debated -and criticised tactics of our trajectory, it is worth dwelling on it.

In the heat of the Resistance and the recovery of the taken over unions and CGT, the 62 Peronist Organisations emerged and consolidated in 1956-1957. From this new process, Palabra Obrera, which had begun to promote MAO, discussed and promoted an entryist tactic in Peronism. It was part of a characteristic of the current headed by Moreno: the permanent search for union and political tactics of the most diverse nature to link up with the workers — in this case, Peronists — promote struggles, take advantage of electoral openings or loopholes in bourgeois legality, or promote the unity of workers' sectors of a different political sign.

This is how Ernesto Gonzalez explains it:

“Since 1954 our party had considered the Peronist movement as the expression of the resistance of different social sectors — a part of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie and supported by the vast majority of the working-class — to the subjugation of the country to Yankee imperialism. We had no illusions about this: it was a national movement led by the bourgeoisie. We considered it neither a revolutionary party nor a party of the working-class. The policy of joining the PSRN (Socialist Party of the National Revolution), the action against the gorilla coups and the ‘Liberating Revolution’ and the creation of the MAO, were steps based on this characterisation, aimed at making the workers give themselves a policy and leadership independent of the bourgeoisie.

“Our new tactic, of entryism into Peronism, followed the same general orientation but considering the characteristics that the reorganisation of the workers had taken in the struggle against the ‘Liberating Revolution’.

“The leadership of the POR-Palabra Obrera synthesised the new orientation in a May 1958 work by saying that “it is a process of assimilation of elements alien to Trotskyism -the Peronist militants-, as any process is about being careful but inflexible in our objective: to discipline and capture these elements for the Trotskyist fraction of Peronism. In August 1958 he described the fundamental tasks in this way: ‘(...) to achieve the structuring of a class current and to lead the working-class into independent politics. All this to a) reinforce and advance the revolutionary process, and b) strengthen Trotskyism as a Bolshevik organisation, the only guarantee of the revolution.”

Later on, Gonzalez follows:

“That is, we entered the workers’ organisations that acted within Peronism, especially in the groups formed by the best activists. In this regard, it should be noted that, during its proscription in those years, the Peronist movement did not have a centralised and disciplined structure. The many groupings that claimed to be Peronists, apart from invoking Peron as their maximum leader, in fact, acted according to their internal orientation and discipline. The ‘tactical commands’ and ‘superior’, at most, managed to coordinate, through agreements, the action of several of these currents. Peron’s official representative at the time, John William Cooke, in one way or another made clear in his correspondence the impossibility of imposing discipline on the various currents and organisations. No doubt Peron took advantage of this situation, to manoeuvre by the ‘right or left’, depending on the circumstances, and to some extent encouraged this lack of ‘organic structure’. But the fact is, it is difficult to find a clearer example of “movement”, as something other than an organised party, than the case of Peronism in those years. As part of that movement, the reorganisation of the workers under the ‘Liberating Revolution’ had given rise to the Peronist workers’ groups and the 62, which made and followed their own decisions, and into which Palabra Obrera entered.

“Thus, during the entryism into Peronism, our party had a greater degree of independence than, for example, the English Trotskyists who acted within the British Labour Party. We did not participate in cells or organisms of a party that voted for our orientations. Apart from some formal concessions —to call ourselves ‘Peronist’, to put our newspaper ‘under the discipline of General Peron’, not to openly attack his figure, to sing the (Peronist) March, to ‘take off our jackets’ in the plenary-, the positions, activities and statements of Palabra Obrera were the product of our analysis and decisions. And, as we have pointed out in each case, this implied differentiating ourselves and publicly criticising the currents of Peronism and the directives of Peron himself, often in a frontal way. There

was no programmatic concession, either to class conciliation or to the bourgeois leadership of Peronism.”<sup>2</sup>

Remembering these papers does not mean we deny or hide the fact that mistakes have been made in Palabra Obrera, or that there have been deviations and crises (particularly in 1961–1963), as has been pointed out and discussed throughout our history. It was impossible for them not to happen, to the extent the party acted in the class struggle, subjected to the pressure of the Peronist workers and their bourgeois and bureaucratic union leadership, to which was added the Guevarist foquism engendered after the victory of the Cuban Revolution.

In this sense, the active participation in the resistance to the “Liberating Revolution”, since the end of the 1950s, for the recovery of the taken over workers’ organisations, was leading the party to a unionist deviation. 1962 was the most critical year. In Peru, while Hugo Blanco<sup>3</sup> was being cornered by the Army after the triumphant process of the land seizure by the peasants of La Convencion and Lares, there was a putschist deviation, with the two bank expropriations.<sup>4</sup> In Argentina, there was first a militaristic deviation of several months, and then an opportunistic turn encouraging false expectations towards the bureaucratic leadership that drove the Huerta Grande Programme.<sup>5</sup> And for a period, the definitions and initial orientation of entryism along with the Peronist workers were set aside to promote a mistaken activity of “organic entryism” in the Peronist Youth, which directly endangered the very existence of Palabra Obrera. During that year Moreno was almost all the time in prison, first in Bolivia, and then in Buenos Aires. And the situation became even worse when the other main leader Angel Bengochea, on a trip to Cuba to seek help for Hugo Blanco, was won over by the positions of the foquist Guevarism.

The break of Bengochea in 1963 coincided with the rearmament of Palabra Obrera, which was expressed in the pamphlet we are reissuing. In this whirlwind of phenomena that shook Latin America and Argentina, entryism was an important tactic, which bore great results and which gradually lost its meaning as Peronism reintegrated into the bourgeois regime, even though it continued to be the majority leader of the workers’ movement. Moreno defined the Peronist movement, politically speaking, as “the bosses’ expression of the Argentine people”.

Palabra Obrera began to move towards the liquidation of the entryism experience in 1963 and at the end of 1964, that period was formally closed. This is how Ernesto Gonzalez’ historical work analysed it:

“Entryism was based on two intertwined features. The first was that Peronism, as a unifier of the majority of the working-class, had not been integrated into the semi-colonial regime by the bourgeoisie, despite the disintegrating attempts of its bourgeois and bureaucratic leaderships, after the fall of Peron. Since 1955, the panic that a Peronist

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2 Ernesto Gonzalez (coordinator): *Workers’ and internationalist Trotskyism in Argentina. Volume 2 (1955-59)*, Antídoto, Buenos Aires, pages 278–281. The work “1954, Key year of Peronism”, that analysed the American imperialism offensive on Argentina was published in *The Gorilla Coup of 1955*, CEHUS, 2019 and is available for downloading in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

3 **Hugo Blanco** (1934) is the historic leader of the peasant struggles in Peru. Born in Cuzco, he travelled to La Plata, Province of Buenos Aires, and joined Palabra Obrera. He worked in a factory and, in 1958, he returned to Cuzco, where he led land seizures at late 1950s and early 1960s. Then in 1963, he was arrested and sentenced to death. A strong campaign in Peru and internationally saved his life. In 1971 he was amnestied and went into exile. Later on he became a constituent assembly deputy and a senator. In 1970s, he took distance from the Morenoist organisation and the Fourth International but he remained a militant in the peasant struggles and vindicating Trotskyism. See his books *Land or Death: The Peasant Struggle in Peru* (Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972) and *We the Indians: The indigenous peoples of Peru and the struggle for land* (Resistance Books, 2010).

4 Between the pressure of Guevarism and the inexperience of the young people who formed the FIR (Revolutionary Left Front), a militarist deviation took place in Lima. In December 1961 and April 1962, two bank robberies took place, culminating in the arrest of the perpetrators, who were imprisoned and brutally tortured. See the polemic that Nahuel Moreno held against these deviations in *Peru: two strategies*, available in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

5 In July 1962, the labour movement gathered in the town of Huerta Grande, Province of Cordoba, in a meeting chaired by Amado Olmos, issued a clearly anti-imperialist document. It became known as the Huerta Grande Programme.

electoral victory would open the door to a workers' rise that its leadership could not control prevented its integration. The second aspect was that this proscription, in turn, prevented the strengthening of the typical structure of the bourgeois political parties, with their bodies, discipline, committee leaders, etc. The real mass organs of the Peronist movement were the workers' organisations and not the party apparatus. Thus, it was very peculiar entryism, centred fundamentally on the trade union groups of the workers' movement, politically unified around Peronism, and not on the party organisms — except for the opportunist deviation of 1962. From 1957 to 1964, Palabra Obrera kept complete independence, since during the proscription of the Peronist movement all its wings and tendencies enjoyed total organisational and political freedom. The integration of Peronism into the regime, now possible thanks to six years of class regression and the collapse of the Plan of Struggle, swept away both characteristics. The legalisation of the Justicialist Party meant that Peronism was no longer outside the regime but was institutionalised as a bourgeois electoral party, with its organs and statutes, legal leaders and discipline, to guarantee control over its working-class ranks. All of this was to shore up the Argentinian semi-colonial regime. For Palabra Obrera it was the end of entryism it had practised since it was not going to discipline itself politically to a bourgeois leadership and the possibilities of continuing to declare itself a Peronist, without obeying that discipline, were disappearing from then on.”<sup>6</sup>

Volume 2, which we have already quoted, ends with a “first assessment of Palabra Obrera”, and the evaluation of entryism. It points out that there was a retreat in the workers' movement from January 1959 and that the party fell into unionist deviations, and says

“Does this mean that entryism was wrong? We consider that, on the contrary, observed from a distance, applying that tactic in those circumstances was quite correct. This allowed us to have an insertion in the workers' movement and to establish a dialogue with the workers to a degree that had been unknown to Trotskyism in Argentina until then. It was an experience that served us well for the future. The faults we had in its application do not alter that assessment. It is true that, without our trade unionist deviation, after the defeat in January 1959 and those that followed, we would have been able to resist the new stage in a better situation, with more consolidated cadres, and perhaps have retained a greater quantitative weight. But, qualitatively, what was decisive was the defeat and the retreat of the class.”<sup>7</sup>

We can only add that during this period Palabra Obrera was very active concerning the divided Fourth International. The development of an orthodox current of Trotskyism was promoted in Latin America, whose richest experience was the peasant rebellion led by Hugo Blanco in Peru. At the same time, the crisis of the international meant that there was no support or counterweight from the more experienced parties and leaders of Trotskyism to combat errors and deviations in the application of the various trade union or political tactics. On the contrary, the process of reunification that took place in 1963 was carried out within the framework of capitulation to Castroism and allowed the most opportunistic and revisionist sectors, led by Ernest Mandel, to recompose themselves. Palabra Obrera joined in a year later, with a critical assessment of that reunification.

Regarding Peronism, the early characterisation that it had begun its reintegration into the bourgeois semi-colonial regime was totally correct. This was demonstrated by his expectations regarding the Onganía coup in 1966 (refer to *The Struggle has just Begun* in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org)), and fundamentally by the Great National Agreement with the Radical Balbín and General Lanusse after the Cordobazo, which took place in May 1969, (refer to *After the Cordobazo* in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org))

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6 Gonzalez, op. cit., Volume 3, Book 2, page. 52.

7 Ibid., Volume 2, page 290.

# Argentina, a country in crisis

April 1964

## Introduction

This publication gathers three reports by the author about the latest national affairs. The different dates in each one are crucial to understanding their limits, but the author believed convenient to publish them together because they are united, not only by the topic, the national crisis but also by the analysis and perspective.

The first work is a thesis presented to the Palabra Obrera leadership a few days after the electoral victory of the Union Civica Radical del Pueblo (People's Radical Civic Union – UCRP) in July 1963. This victory had provoked the most mixed reactions: from two opposing poles, the official political and union leadership of Peronism and the different revolutionary groups confronted the government, like if it were a gorilla<sup>1</sup> government as if nothing had happened in the country since 1955 to date. Neo-Peronism, for its part, as well as the Communist Party, had an opposite position, one of critical support for the government.

The author tried with the thesis to specify a revolutionary and at the same time reality-based principled policy: the stage of Arturo Illia is not a carbon-copy of the gorilla governments, it is a new stage and so it must be taken, even if it is a government of the bosses, deadly enemy of the working people.

The second work is based on a report given to a plenum of Palabra Obrera. It had one aim: to point out that in the factories and sections the workers' movement continued to fight against the bosses' offensive and that around this struggle it was possible to reorganise and begin the counter-offensive of the workers' movement.

The third work is based on a report the author gave to the Palabra Obrera leadership during the last weeks, Anibal Moliere,<sup>2</sup> the superb revolutionary journalist, summarised it to publish it as Palabra Obrera editorials. The author has made the changes he thought necessary to bring it into line with his original report.

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1 **Gorilla** is a term from Argentina's domestic politics, historically used to refer in a derogatory or pejorative way to those who gave a coup against Peron. Over the years, the term has been extended to a greater or lesser extent to other countries in Latin America, as synonymous with "reactionary right". [Editor]

2 He refers to Julio Anibal Tesoro (also known as Hernan Felix Cuello). Among other publications he was editor of *Avanzada Socialista* (PST) and *Solidaridad Socialista* (MAS). In 1993 he travelled on party business to Moscow where he was killed by a criminal. [Editor]

He believes, finally, that as it is published it will be much more useful to workers and student activists who are asking themselves the big question of the hour: how to bring Argentinian workers to power.

Nahuel Moreno

First section

# The crisis after the 7 July elections

Thesis on the national situation presented to Palabra Obrera National Bureau  
on 16 July 1963

## I. Result of the elections

The result of the elections must be defined by four fundamental characteristics, which we do not yet know how they will be synthesised.

a) It is a relative tactical defeat of US imperialism and its plan for the total colonisation of the country since the candidates who were openly for continuing with the fabulous concessions made to Yankee big business and the International Monetary Fund did not win but those who put forward a timid bourgeois nationalist programme did.

b) This is a relative strategic victory of the US diplomacy, which seeks to guarantee democratic parliamentary regimes in all Latin American countries, as the best way to institutionalise its colonising plan.

c) It is a victory of the exporting rural bourgeoisie and sectors of the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and also the potential ally of the exporting rural bourgeoisie: European imperialism, especially British imperialism. A contradictory situation is opening up for the workers' movement: it will have to confront the new government as its implacable class enemy but, to the extent, the latter has frictions with US imperialism and the lower sectors of the urban middle-class outline and press for a left-wing policy, it will have at certain moments the possibility of negotiating and making agreements with it.

d) This is a crushing defeat for the political and trade union leaders of the Peronist movement in the political arena, merely in terms of elections.

It is very difficult to specify which characteristic will prevail and therefore to define in its essence the electoral result and the future government. For the time being, we have to be content with pointing out analytically the elements emerging from it.

## II. UCRP perspective on government

The future combination of the above elements will clarify the historic essence of the new government.

The elections and the government emerging from them are the historic sequels to the Liberating Revolution.<sup>1</sup> We pointed out this was a contradictory phenomenon: on the one hand, it reflected the general hatred of the middle class and the oligarchy towards the workers' movement. It meant then the colonisation by Yankee imperialism since the working-class was the only one which could stop it. On the other hand, the Liberating Revolution reflected the honest democratic aspirations of the middle class. We pointed out that, of these two elements, the main and determining factor was the hatred of the workers' movement and the oligarchic character.

Right now, we can say the victory and the government of the UCRP means the development of the other pole of the Liberating Revolution: the democratic aspirations of the middle class. These aspirations do not mean the middle class is a guarantee of a consequent democratic policy since this class is, by definition, contradictory, wretched, mean, historically incapable of developing such a policy in countries like ours that have a relatively important capitalist development.

From this historical and class character emerges the extraordinarily contradictory dynamics of the future government. It will permanently tend to be the democratic government of the whole middle class and national bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the nationalist democratic government of the middle class that relies on the working class on the other.

These two tendencies are already incipiently outlined in the elected formula, with two wings: that of Illia,<sup>2</sup> a democratic bourgeois, and that of Perette,<sup>3</sup> a petty-bourgeois one, with a tendency to rely on the workers' movement to carry out a nationalist policy.

In short: a period of bourgeois freedoms is opening up which the country has not experienced for 30 years.

Our organisation launched before the elections its correct slogan of disregard for the future government, based on two premises: 1) that the elections themselves were a tactical-strategic victory of US imperialism. 2) that the working masses would or could thus demonstrate their repudiation of this plan of US imperialism.

But as a consequence of the failure of the union and political leadership of Peronism, the majority of the masses did not reject the elections.

This modification that reality imposed on our analysis prior to the elections leads us to suspend our line of disregarding the future government. We say suspend and not change because we believe it is fundamental to wait and see what character prevails in the new government to adopt a definitive policy towards it. That policy could be: the intransigent struggle against Yankee imperialism, accepting a united front with the government (for limited actions or for a policy of defence of the country if the government has powerful frictions with Yankee imperialism).

The two policies cannot have in the immediate stage against the new government are: calling to ignore it and to remove it by the armed action of the masses, and calling to support it critically against US imperialism. Precisely the democratic stage that is being inaugurated prevents us from overthrowing it until the workers' movement has exhausted its experience with bourgeois democracy, we cannot even critically support it as long as it is the government of the rural bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, that is, essentially neither working-class nor nationalist.

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1 **Liberating Revolution** is the name by which the civic-military dictatorship that ruled Argentina after having overthrown Juan Domingo Peron in 1955 is known. [Editor]

2 **Arturo Umberto Illia** (1900–1983) was a doctor and Argentine politician member of the People's Radical Civic Union (UCRP). He was elected President of Argentina in 1963. On June 1966, he was deposed by a military coup and replaced by General Onganía. [Editor]

3 **Carlos Humberto Perette** (1915–1992) was an Argentine People's Radical Civic Union politician and lawyer. He was a provincial legislator, national deputy, senator, and Vice-President to Illia. [Editor]

### III. The country's perspectives

The qualitative leap in the national situation that the new government represents should not make us lose sight of some questions of principle:

1) That the crisis in the structure of the national economy cannot be solved by the future government of the rural bourgeoisie and the urban petty-bourgeoisie. At most, some palliative measures can be adopted which will only postpone and aggravate the urgent need for revolutionary economic measures that will modify the general capitalist and imperialist structure of the country.

2) Whether these palliatives are adopted or not will accelerate the process of class struggle, which will cause the democratic stage of the new government to enter into crisis since the worsening of the social crisis eliminates any possibility of bourgeois democratism.

This democratic stage will accelerate all the economic and social contradictions without dampening them, although, for a time, it will also prevent these contradictions from manifesting themselves as iron contradictions, visibly insurmountable within the bourgeois-democratic framework. It will be a short stage and in a short time, the problem of the conquest of power for the toiling masses and the open struggle to overturn the bourgeois-democratic government in crisis will be raised again.

### IV. Perspectives of the Peronist movement

Formal democracy and legality will inevitably transform Peronism into an opposition, basically bourgeois, electoral party, or even a pro-government ally.

This situation will be transferred to the trade union field, provoking a total discredit and crisis of the Peronist movement, since each sector or social line will be left to its own devices without accepting Peron's Bonapartist discipline.

Peronism, with the legality that will be granted to it, with another social base and in different historical conditions will follow the Yrigoyen-Alvear cycle of radicalism. Its latent crisis as a result of legality will become open, irremediable.

### V. Perspectives of the workers' movement

The contradictory character of the new bourgeois nationalist or democratic, rural bourgeois or urban petty-bourgeois government will be reflected in its policy towards the organised workers' movement: to take away the 1 per cent and the Law of Professional Associations, or to use the same law to control and support it.

Either of the two alternatives or a combination of both will lead to the same results: crisis and weakening of the bureaucratized union leaders.

Parallel or consecutive to this crisis, it is possible that, as a consequence of the economic palliatives and the democratic rights, a rise of the workers' movement will take place, which will manifest itself at first with great defensive struggles. Prior to this rise or together with it — never after — the development and emergence of a new leadership and vanguard of the workers' movement and the petty-bourgeoisie will continue.

All these phenomena combined will give rise to the emergence of a class-struggle and nationalist tendency in the trade union movement.

## Second section

# Only the single party of the Argentinian revolution will overcome the crisis

Based on the oral report to the National Plenum of Palabra Obrera, 24 November 1963

## Introduction

This plenum is held under the impact of three small but truly symbolic events that have taken place in different areas. In the trade union field, the victory of the bureaucracy in the elections of the Meatworkers Union, despite its defeat in all the big meatpacking plants, where a slate even more right-wing than the bureaucracy itself had won: the Escalada slate. If we add to this that in Berisso the opposition slate won, the balance is really discouraging: the anti-bureaucratic slate came last in the big factories.

In the personal sphere, I had a chat with a friend, who is also a friend of General Peron and Che Guevara, a fact worth noting because I consider that through his mouth spoke a whole lot of intellectuals, student and leftist activists, and even magnificent union fighters exhausted by the hard and apparently ineffective anti-bureaucratic struggle. Disappointed by the betrayal of the trade union leaderships and the impossibility of changing them in the short term, he criticised our position of giving importance to the trade union struggle, mainly in the factory, since, according to him, there was nothing to be done in that field. He told me he saw no other solution than to focus on the guerrillas to provide revolutionary leaders to the workers, to raise their enthusiasm and to polarise the working-class around a revolutionary programme and leadership, independent of the trade union and factory framework, which would liquidate the oligarchy and impose the workers' and people's government.<sup>1</sup>

And in the political field, the attendance to this plenum of such a qualified workers' vanguard is quite an event since today there are delegates here from different sectors of the

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1 Nahuel Moreno refers to his personal friend and national leader of Palabra Obrera, **Angel "Basque" Bengochea**. He joined Moreno's group in La Plata in 1947. He worked in several factories and was the great editor of the weekly *Palabra Obrera* during the Peronist resistance. In 1962, he travelled to Cuba with a group of comrades, to make direct contact with the revolution and to ask help from the Cuban leadership for the struggle of Hugo Blanco in Cuzco and was won over to the positions of guerrilla foquism. During the first half of 1963 there was a discussion in Palabra Obrera, and Bengochea moved away to promote a guerrilla plan coordinated by Che from Cuba, linked to Jorge Masetti's attempt to make a focus in Oran, Salta (the EGP — People's Guerrilla Army). Bengochea died, along with four comrades, on 22 July 1964, when there was an explosion in an apartment building on Posadas Street, in the Norte neighbourhood of the city of Buenos Aires. [Editor]

workers' movement that exercise a de facto representation, in their capacity as members of internal commissions and delegates committees<sup>2</sup> of tens and tens of thousands of workers.

Three questions arise then: Why do bureaucratic slates win in the trade union movement? Why do the most revolutionary intellectuals and petty-bourgeois lean towards the guerrilla outcome, ignoring the importance of work on the working-class? Why is our plenum so representative? To find answers to these questions we must consider the situation as a whole, which is none other than the general crisis of the country and the working-class.

Because of its crisis, the workers' movement is falling back, on the defensive in its factory organisations and is abandoning the trade unions, leaving them to the domination of the bureaucratic apparatus. This is the explanation for the victory of Cardoso, Vandor, Riego Ribas & Co, dealers of Rambler cars, in the union elections.

In the periphery of the workers' movement, the revolutionary youth and the tired union activists are outlining a desperate solution: the guerrilla focus, which immediately overcomes the crisis of the proletariat and its leadership. My friend, in his conversation, reflected these sectors, although without knowing it.

But, fortunately, in the tunnels of the working-class (factories, sections) there is a whole molecular process of overcoming this crisis, which is what we have called the ideological revolution. During the retreat, the working-class and its vanguard learn. They exchange defeats for experience and hardening. They advance in their consciousness, although in the reality of their standard of living and work they retreat. Thus, the conditions for overcoming the crisis begin to take place.

The aim of my report will be to analyse in a comprehensive way the dynamics of this overall crisis the country and the workers have been suffering since the fall of Peron. To do so, we have the advantage of having a method: the revolutionary Marxist or Trotskyist method, which demands a study of reality, starting from the premise that the class struggle and a deep revolutionary will to change it are present in it. Our method forces us, on the one hand, to desperately search in reality for the social, objective forces that will allow us to carry out the revolutionary goals we have set ourselves. And, on the other hand, we must carefully analyse whether the conditions for this exist, so we do not set ourselves tasks that are impossible to carry out.

That is why in the study of this reality we always follow certain canons: we study the situation of the country, the character of the government and its bosses' opposition, the situation of the workers' and people's movement, and then we undertake a series of tasks: to stop the exploiters, to overcome the crisis of leadership of the workers' movement to give it a revolutionary leadership and to bring the workers to power.

What follows is an attempt to apply this method to the present reality.

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2 In Argentinian labour legislation since the 1940s enterprise or workplace committees are called **internal commissions**. In enterprises with a large number of workers, the workers elect their delegates and these form the **delegates committee**; then the delegates committee elect a smaller steering committee known as **internal commission**. [Editor]

## Chapter 1

# Decline and crisis of the country

All politicians and commentators on the national reality never get tired of repeating “the country is in crisis”. We believe the same thing, but with a difference: we not only try to clarify the character and stages of this crisis but we also aim to overcome it as revolutionaries.

Our concept or idea of the crisis is much more complex and dynamic than the one of those commentators.

We believe, for example, the relationship between opposing situations of crisis and stabilisation is close, intimate.

Stabilisation is a dominated, controlled crisis, or a stage towards a new crisis.

The latter carries within it the forces that will allow a new stabilisation, by different means or forms: by inertia, decay and stagnation; or overcoming by revolution or agreement, since no society can live in a permanent crisis.

Regarding the crisis, we have to distinguish in which areas it takes place: economic, social and political. The crises in these sectors are closely related, they influence each other but they are not the same. De Gaulle came to power in France as a consequence of a colossal crisis of the empire and the bourgeois-democratic republic, caused by the Algerian war, but without any social or economic crisis. That political crisis was on the verge of initiating an economic and social crisis, a class struggle within France itself, but it did not happen.

Our country, from 1943 to 1955 had a situation of stability that was engendering the crisis of Peronism as a political regime of that stable situation, and later, the stage of total crisis that we lived from its fall.

In fact, from that moment on, the most critical stage in Argentinian history so far this century, comparable and superior to the crises of the 1920s and 1950s of the last century, was opened. It is a total economic, social, political crisis which is reflected in all spheres of national life. The crisis itself, which we insist, is the general characteristic of the period, has its stages, manifestations and spheres. Lonardi's<sup>1</sup> period is not the same as Guido's,<sup>2</sup> nor is the latter

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1 **Eduardo Ernesto Lonardi** (1896–1956) was an Argentine Lieutenant General who headed the *coup d'état* that overthrew Peron on 16 September 1955 imposing the self-titled Liberating Revolution. He and served as de facto president from 23 September to 13 November 1955. The armed forces deposed him and replaced him with hard-liner Pedro Aramburu. [Editor]

2 **Jose Maria Guido** (1910–1975) was an Argentine lawyer and politician, President of Argentina from March 1962 to October 1963, as a result of the *coup d'état* that deposed Arturo Frondizi. [Editor]

the same as Illia's. There are clearly differentiated periods of the crises before the current government. The first, all through 1956, when the tone was set by the political crisis: putsch and Peronist terrorism; military proposals. The workers' movement, once the unions were lost, withdrew on the defensive in its factory organisations. The second period is one of social crisis: the working-class confronts Pedro Eugenio Aramburu<sup>3</sup> and Arturo Frondizi<sup>4</sup> through massive general strikes. It ends with the failure of the January 1959 strike. And the third, which begins in 1959 and ends with Illia coming to government, the crisis is essentially economic-political: the different bourgeois sectors dispute their participation in the national income and power through the coup d'état. This crisis brings us almost to the edge of a civil war.

The class struggle, the social crisis, thus disappears from the surface of the national reality and continues to take place in molecular form in the factories and sections, through thousands of defensive battles by the workers to stop the bosses' plan of rationalisation and unemployment.

When we point out the predominant characteristic in each period, we must not forget that this is a crisis of the whole, as shown by the fact that during the three periods, the ultimate, determining factor is the worsening of the economic crisis, both structural and short-term.

The question we must answer is whether the People's Radical Civic Union government closed the stage of the general crisis in our country, opened with the fall of Peron's government, or whether it is a new manifestation of this crisis.

This government can give the impression that it overcame the crisis, it wants to achieve and is achieving better relations between the different bourgeois sectors, and between the working-class and the bosses. Now, relations, permanent negotiations, mean stabilisation, overcoming the crisis. We hold the current government is the prologue, the prelude, to the most colossal social crisis the country has ever known. Put another way: the plan of the bosses and the middle class to stabilise the country through dialogue, formal democracy, to turn everything over to parliament, to achieve class collaboration, will be transformed into its opposite, into a ruthless class struggle. The government, the bosses and the middle class do not act in a vacuum; their plans are made on an economic and social basis that facilitates or hinders them.

It is precisely the social-economic reality what will prevent the bosses and the People's Radicals from imposing their programme of formal, representative democracy. Only a magnificent economic situation such as the one Peron had in the early years, or the crushing of the workers' movement, provides the pre-requisites for class collaboration to exist in a country, as a premise of representative democracy. The Victoria Ocampos and Jorge Luis Borgeses of politics and journalism who criticise the chieftain spirit and the Latin American *coups d'état*, opposing them to Anglo-Saxon democracy, do not understand that lack of democracy in our countries is always because of the causes previously mentioned: the chronic crisis of our economies. They ignore that Anglo-Saxon democracy is based on centuries of stability and economic development.

The present reality does not, therefore, provide room for a long period of democratic rights. The outlook for fat ladies of both sexes, embarking on the political agenda, is discouraging. For two reasons: the chronic crisis of the national economy will worsen, despite the good harvests and the improvement in foreign trade. And the working-class, far from being defeated, is

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3 **Pedro Eugenio Aramburu** (1903–1970) was an Argentine Army General. He was a major figure behind the military coup self-named Liberating Revolution against Juan Domingo Peron in 1955. He became de facto president of Argentina from 13 November 1955 to 1 May 1958. He was kidnapped by the Peronist guerrilla organisation Montoneros on 29 May 1970 and murdered. [Editor]

4 **Arturo Frondizi** (1908–1995) was an Argentinian lawyer and politician elected President of Argentina between 1 May 1958, and 29 March 1962, for the Intransigent Radical Civic Union (a splinter group from the Radical Civic Union). He repressed great workers' strikes and introduced private and religious education. Under his program of "Developmentalism", he encouraged increased foreign investment. He was overthrown by a military *coup d'état* in 1962. [Editor]

reinforced by a colossal revolutionary rise of its Latin American brothers and sisters, by their learning in these hard years in which they remained on the defensive and by the emergence of a new factory and student vanguard which is beginning to dispute the leadership of the bureaucracy.

Those two processes combined — a chronic crisis of the economy and revolutionary ripening of the working-class and its vanguard — will transform into its opposite the bourgeois-democratic plan of friendly, formal, dialogued arrangement between the classes. In other words, the government's objective of achieving class collaboration, as the basis for sustaining "its" representative, bourgeois democracy, will be transformed into a sharp class struggle, in the development of working-class democracy in one pole and semi-fascist bourgeois repression in the other. Instead of social-economic stability as the only viable presupposition of the bourgeois-democratic republic, we will be faced with the social-economic crisis.

This will force the bosses to redouble their political-economic offensive against the workers, using and, if necessary, abandoning democratic norms. The working-class, which has suffered years of persecution and the loss of important gains, does not consider the current democratic rights as an end in itself, as the government and the bourgeoisie want them to believe, but as a means to recover lost gains. In the current democratic circumstances, the workers' movement has the prospect of facing up to the bosses with greater possibilities. Any union victory, local or national, will change the overall situation and will trigger a new stage of a partial or total offensive of the workers' movement. Democracy will serve not for the classes to get along with each other but for them to perfect their means of struggle, their ideology, their programme, to confront the adversary class. This will also be true for the relations between the different sectors of each class.

Within the Argentinian bourgeoisie, the economic-political struggle of the industrial and the "quota bourgeoisie",<sup>5</sup> the Frigerio<sup>6</sup> supporters, agents of Yankee capital, especially oil, will sharpen, displace the middle class and the rural bourgeoisie from economic management. Even more important than this struggle will be the one carried out by the exploiters for programmatic reasons: they will be divided between those who want to crush the workers' movement by violent methods and those who want to exhaust the democratic experience.

Something very similar will happen within the working-class. The democratic stage will serve to provoke a series of struggles and internal divisions of fundamental importance. The contradictions between the bureaucratic sectors among themselves and all of them with the new factory leaderships of the workers' movement will be increased, as will the learning of the new student and workers' vanguard. If we recall that there is never a situation without a way out for the exploiters, we will understand the crucial importance of this process of development and victory of new revolutionary leadership. In the end, it will depend on this whether or not the exploiters can impose their class collaboration plan.

Summarising, we can say the democratic plans of the government and the bourgeoisie, to castrate the workers' movement, will continue to crash against the chronic crisis of the economy and against the workers themselves who are far from being defeated. In the end, these plans will serve the latter and accelerate the social crisis, the development of the civil war.

## The economic crisis

The chronic crisis is the background that prevents political and social stability and the democratic dialogue between classes and sectors. We should study them to find ways of solving it for the good of the people.

5 The "quota bourgeoisie" is the sector that was enriched by the allocation of import quotas for inputs and raw materials (such as steel) granted by the government, at subsidised prices, and their subsequent resale in the market at much higher prices. [Editor]

6 **Rogelio Frigerio** (1914–2006) was an Argentine economist and politician. Adherent of developmentalism, in 1958 he was Secretary of Socio-Economic Affairs the critical Economics Ministry. [Editor]

Our country lives a situation characterised by the American colonisation and an almost permanent economic crisis that has been hitting it for several years and whose major cause is, precisely, this colonisation suffered not only by our country but by the entire continent.

To know the exploitation degree, we should consider the rise in population and the need for capital in our continent.<sup>7</sup>

To this political and economic domination, this exploitation to the whole of Latin America, add the American chronic crisis of its economy with no chance to ease any of these ailments.

Besides this imperialist<sup>8</sup> exploitation, we undergo other related crisis that we must specify, to develop a political response to the economic crisis and also to any of its manifestations.

a) When the bourgeoisie speaks of crisis, it is referring to its crisis, the crisis of the moment. The bourgeoisie takes away surplus-value (that is, future profit) from the worker, making him work longer than they have given him in values for his and his family upkeep. But this surplus-value is not transformed into profit but when the produced goods are sold on the market.

A large part of the Argentinian bourgeoisie, especially the industrial bourgeoisie, faces the tremendous problem of not being able to realise their surplus-value, i.e., of not being able to sell their products due to the contraction of the domestic market.

But this crisis of the moment has the perspective of a partial and momentary overcoming, especially for the rural bourgeoisie, for 1) the overexploitation to which the bosses have subjected the workers in the last four or five years allows them, in those cases in which they still have a market, to earn more than ever, and 2) the world expansion of the market for agricultural and livestock products, which opens up perspectives of placement for the export production of this line.

b) Our country has decreased its production per capita; at the same time, it has been displaced from the first place it had within the Latin American economies. This is a consequence of the general decline in agricultural and livestock production since the 1930s and in what we technically call infrastructure (electricity, roads, transport).

This crisis, much deeper than the previous one which began in 1930 and has been getting worse all the time, is what we call a crisis of structure and is a consequence of the English colonisation, first, and the Yankee colonisation, later, combined with the political management of the landowners and the bourgeoisie that handed over the country.

c) And the third crisis is the one of the popular economy, which is a product of the combination of the other two and which manifests itself in the form of growing misery, unemployment and overwork for the workers.

We emphasise the two fundamental crises for the revolutionaries must be, the one of the country, which results in no roads, no electricity, with a declining industrial and agricultural-livestock production, and one of the workers, who suffer hunger, misery, unemployment. For the bourgeoisie, especially the industrial one, the fundamental one is the short-term one, of lack of sales.

## Neither the government nor the bosses can solve the crisis in favour of the workers

We repeat it is essential to be clear about the three parallel and combined crises taking place: the short-term crisis, which is affecting industrialists, the crisis of the economic structure of the country and the crisis of the workers.

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<sup>7</sup> According to ECLAC, the US invests a billion dollars annually in our continent and get around 2 billion dollars in interest rates. Thus, Latin America has a permanent deficit of 1 billion dollars in its relationship with the US. **NM**

<sup>8</sup> Of all the foreign currency Argentina got through foreign exchange in 1961, almost 20 per cent is used to pay the foreign company's dividends. Today is even worse. **NM**

The government and the exploiters give importance to the solution of the first crisis: the short-term crisis. The bosses' sector which does not sell, and therefore does not profit, want to overcome "their crisis".

The government echoes this. Unfortunately, the CGT's leadership of the workers' movement proposes the same: to give big loans to the industrialists and to reactivate the domestic market. The official workers' leadership has been transformed into the public relations agency of the big industrial bosses.

The CGT [General Confederation of Labour] leadership considers the fundamental crisis is the crisis of the economy. This is the source of all its errors, which are not coincidental but the product of its close ties with the industrialists and the bourgeois state, which have led it to have this interpretation of the bourgeois crisis. Thus, the solutions it advocates are of no use to the working people. At most, they will allow the industrial bourgeoisie to raise its profits and production for a certain period.

We begin by pointing out the two crises demanding immediate solutions are the crisis of the structure of the country and the crisis of the growing misery of the workers. The two are closely related, or rather: without a solution to the crisis of the structure of the country there will be no solution to the crisis of the workers.

Therefore, we do not put any trust in either the government or the industrialists. We do not believe that loans to industrialists will solve anything, as they use them to enrich themselves further and not to solve some problem of the country and the workers. Nor do we believe in the distribution of credit by the government.

The only way to solve the economic crisis in the country is to change its economic structure with a series of revolutionary measures adjusted to a plan. First of all, a complete plan for the reorganisation of the national economy must be drawn up. The CGT has done none of this, which is the first thing it must do.

The economic problem that arises is very simple: Where do we get the means to substantially increase agricultural and livestock production to its previous levels, to expand and renew roads, electricity, oil exploitation, and to develop heavy and semi-heavy industry? Only total state planning of production and a state monopoly on foreign trade, so the foreign exchange received from sales is used directly by the state to buy what is strictly necessary, can provide the basis for solving the problem.

But these measures alone are not enough, since the country is totally up to the eyes in debt to the great imperialist powers thanks to the governments of Aramburu, Frondizi and Guido. These debts must be ignored immediately. Along with this, nationalise the meatpacking companies and the meat and grain trade, the country's main source of foreign exchange.

Once these measures have been adopted, to guarantee that the country owns all the foreign currency obtained from foreign trade, we must move on to restructure agricultural and livestock production. The best lands must be colonised for agriculture: every farm of over 100 hectares on the littoral<sup>9</sup> must be expropriated at its fiscal value, paid in state bonds that yield 2 per cent and are reimbursable within 20 years. We insist: the best lands on the littoral. These will be distributed in farms smaller than 100 hectares to develop mixed exploitations. The awarding will be free and the settlers will be granted interest-free loans for machinery and house construction. These measures, in a few years, will fabulously increase agricultural production and the rural population.

Along with this, the development of the heavy industry by the state will be addressed, which will allow, along with the new agrarian colonisation, to provide jobs for half of the public servants.

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<sup>9</sup> The Argentine **littoral** is a region formed by the provinces bordering the Parana River: Misiones, Formosa, Chaco, Corrientes, Entre Rios, and Santa Fe. [Editor]

The government, the industrialists and the CGT leadership demagogically propose that an economic and social council made up equally of state officials, workers and bosses will solve the crisis. They will quote us the German and French examples. We categorically assert the German and French miracle is part of a global or Western phenomenon that was that the capitalist economy of the entire world had its most important rise after the war. There was an Argentinian, a Brazilian and also a Bolivian miracle. This stage of capitalist rise took place all over the world. Today, on the contrary, the symptoms are of crisis in all capitalist countries. That weak capitalist countries, like ours, feel it first does not prevent us from pointing out the general trend: the German, French, Japanese or Venezuelan miracles cannot be repeated, even in those countries.

The only solutions are those we recommend. There are and there will be no others. They cannot be carried out by the government of Illia-Balbin,<sup>10</sup> the friends of Duhalde, the great merchant in livestock in Buenos Aires Province, nor by the industrialists. Only the workers in the government can carry them out. In the meantime, only palliatives can be attempted which we do not underestimate but which will solve nothing. That is the iron alternative to overcome the crisis of the structure of the economy: a minimum revolutionary plan is needed that only the working-class in government can carry out.

## The political crisis of the exploiters

Apparently, within national politics we live in the best of all worlds, all political sectors accept, critically or not, the current government. However, this is not the case. The current institutional regime reflects the crisis and bourgeois decadence of the country. This semi-parliamentary political system is one more result of the decadence of the presidential regime that characterised the process of the capitalist rise in the country. Here too, the fall of Peron marks a fundamental milestone in our history. Since the Mitre<sup>11</sup> presidency, Argentinian presidents were constitutional but had more strength than the “Czar of all Russia”, as General Roca<sup>12</sup> said. These powerful presidents acted as arbitrators between all the bourgeois sectors and between them and imperialism, mainly the dominant one, the British, and in sometimes the working people.

Since the fall of Peron, the Argentinian bourgeoisie and US imperialism have desperately sought a constitutional solution in parliamentarianism.

They could not achieve it since the general crisis prevented them from doing so. Illia’s government seems to be the solution so longed for by imperialism and the bourgeoisie. This is how they finally have a democratic and semi-parliamentary regime. A weak president who has to appeal to parliament to rule. But this semi-parliamentary regime shows the general weakness of the bourgeoisie, its crisis and the precariousness of its agreement.

In considering any political or social phenomenon, we must carefully distinguish form from content. A government is not an exception. The content is all the social sectors that control or support the phenomenon; the form is the structure, the organisation the phenomenon adopts.

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10 **Ricardo Balbin** (1904—1981) was an Argentine lawyer and politician, and one of the most important figures of the People’s Radical Civic Union (UCRP), for which he was the presidential nominee four times: in 1951, 1958, and twice in 1973. [Editor]

11 **Bartolome Mitre** (1821–1906) was an Argentine politician, soldier, historian, writer, journalist, and statesman. He was twice president of Argentine Nation between 1862 and 1868 (the first time de facto) and governor of the Province of Buenos Aires between 1860 and 1862. In 1870 he founded the newspaper *La Nacion*, one of the oldest and most important in the country, which is still published. [Editor]

12 **Julio Argentino Roca** (1843–1914) was an Argentine politician, military and statesman, architect of the Conquest of the Desert, the military campaign that razed the original tribes populating Patagonia to take over their lands. He was twice president of Argentina —between 1880 and 1886 and between 1898 and 1904— and the highest representative of the Generation of the Eighties. He directed Argentine politics for more than 30 years through the National Autonomist Party, a party that remained in power for 42 years. [Editor]

Illia's government by its form is formally democratic, bourgeois and parliamentary, and by its content, it reflects the general interests of the bourgeoisie and the middle class, especially the anti-imperialist, i.e., the rural sectors of the bosses and the urban middle class. The government is the product of a precarious united front of the rural bourgeois sectors and the middle class of the cities, afraid of Frondizi's policy of total surrender to imperialism. This anti-integrationist united front was and is reflected in the agreement of the right-wing of the UCRP with provincial neo-Peronism, Alende's<sup>13</sup> followers, traditional conservatism, social democrats its two variations and Christian democracy. Thanks to the parliament, this united front could materialise. Now, if we take into account that the UCRP itself is a federative party, a united front of big chieftains or provincial or regional parties that reflect sectors of the rural bourgeoisie or the urban petty-bourgeoisie, the precariousness of the current government, in such a heterogeneous united front, becomes crystal clear: it is united by hatred for the integrationists, but not by a coherent programme of a dominant bourgeois or political sector.

Precisely this shows the critical character of the situation and the change of the regime, from presidential to semi parliamentary, characterising Illia's government: there is no bourgeois sector or dominant programme.

If parliamentarianism allowed the government to organise its united front against the integrationists, formal, bourgeois democracy serves it in other ways. This is nothing more than the whole of the democratic rights, indispensable to the bourgeoisie and the bosses, who need not only a parliament, a legislative power and a president of the republic elected every two, three and six years respectively but also public freedom, of the press, of assembly, of opinion.

With the control of the press, radio and television by the big companies, the victory of the bosses' parties and leaders is guaranteed. Along with it, the division of power, justice, executive and legislative powers, added to the armed forces, which are structured to defend this situation of misery, prevent any surprises for the bosses.

This democracy is of great use to the bourgeoisie since, on the one hand, it allows the various bourgeois sectors to negotiate permanently and, on the other hand, it diverts the workers with elections and public rights from their daily problems. This formal democracy that Illia's government grants, serves then for two fundamental goals: on the one hand, it achieves a permanent, public dialogue among all the bourgeois sectors that guarantees the unity of these and also the dialogue with the working-class itself, through its opportunist leaderships and, on the other hand, it is a concession given to the same workers' movement to better castrate and divert it.

## The bourgeois opposition to the government

If we take into account that the government of Illia means the displacement of national income towards the rural bourgeoisie and towards trade with Europe and the world, in other words, exporters' interests, we will understand why the pro-Yankee and industrial sectors are its most important opponents. The distorted political expression of this opposition is integrationism. This, using democracy and parliament, is preparing to carry out a sound plan to take over the government.

As a political movement, it reflects the interests of the big American companies that, under Frondizi, made investments that left succulent profits, mainly the oil companies, along with the "quota" sectors that enriched as intermediaries for these big imperialist investors. The industrial bosses are the caboose of this whole movement.

Frontism has had three leaderships and political movements at its service: The Higher Command of our Peronist movement, Frigerio and the frontist UCRI (Intransigent Radical Civic Union). Of these, Frigerism and Frondizism have been transformed into political leaderships

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<sup>13</sup> **Oscar Alende** (1909–1996), was an Argentine doctor and politician, belonging to the Radical Civic Union, Intransigent Radical Civic Union and Intransigent Party, of which he was founder. [Editor]

with no significant social base, as the petty-bourgeoisie and the industrial bourgeois sectors that supported them have moved away from them because of their total surrender to foreign capital.

Our Peronist movement, like Frondizismo and Frigerism, is suffering a total crisis. Only the 62 Organisations,<sup>14</sup> and through their influence the CGT, can serve as a social-political apparatus for the integrationist interests and plan. The industrial bourgeoisie is in a similar situation: it has no political structure to respond to those interests. This is how we find ourselves today with the paradoxical situation that the political vanguard of the integrationist pro-Yankee and industrialist plan is the leadership of the 62 Organisations.

The political plan of frontism to face Illia's government is simple: pressure with the CGT and the possible return of Peron to force the government to form a cabinet of national unity, thus to isolate the rural and pro-European currents of the government, Balbinists and plebeians, Perette.

Based on this programme, the integrationist frontism is preparing to surround Illia. If the latter does not give in to the pressure, it is prepared to force the armed forces to make the same proposal to the government: National Unity Cabinet with a strong campaign by the CGT and Peronism.

The plan of struggle of the CGT leadership,<sup>15</sup> regardless of the reflection of the distressing situation of the workers' movement, is nothing more than a part of this overall integrationist plan. Specifically, the frontism, dislodged from the government and the economic commands of oil and energy, is preparing to recover them through strong pressure on the government. Throughout the year, the struggle between frontism and the government will revolve around these perspectives.

The formal democracy, that allows the government and the bosses to rule, will speed up the government crisis, even within their ranks. The crisis between the different provincial bourgeois and urban petty-bourgeois sectors will manifest itself in the short term, and the dispute and rupture in parliament between the coalition parties that brought Illia into government and later the dispute between the Radicals from Cordoba, Buenos Aires, Mendoza, or Tucuman will be inevitable. Along with this, the lower sectors of the urban middle class will push for a much bolder anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialist plebeian policy, which will rely on the working-class. Illia, as the democratic arbiter between all these sectors, will have to delegate this role to parliament, and the People's Radicalism will be forced to depend increasingly on negotiations with the other parties. This is how Illia's government will fall more and more into inefficiency and become more and more parliamentary and will derive in that game the solution of its problems.

This inefficiency will be a consequence of the iron contradiction: there is no solution to the structural crisis without revolutionary measures applied by a worker's government. The government's inefficiency will infuriate all the social sectors affected by the crisis and in turn will accelerate the crisis of the government itself. The great enigma is what the working-class will do, which will see its rise facilitated by this crisis of paralysis of the semi-presidential, semi-parliamentary regime.

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14 The **62 Peronist Trade Union Organisations** were the organisation of struggle of the Argentine workers' movement against the regime of the "Liberating Revolution", born from the *coup d'état* that overthrew Peron in 1955. Later they transformed themselves into a grouping of the bureaucratic leadership of the Peronist trade unionism. [Editor]

15 We will refer to this especially in another chapter. NM

## Chapter 2

# The crisis of the workers' and popular movement

The workers' movement is suffering a general crisis, apparently without a way out, as reflected in the facts I told at the beginning: the meatworkers elections and the comment by Che's friend. We do not seem to know which way we are going. How can we stop, at this moment, if we wanted it, the rationalisation in the factories? With this leadership it is impossible. We have a CGT that does nothing but discuss and negotiate with the Ministry of Labour and prepares a plan of struggle without consulting the ranks. There is no possibility that after one or two months the rationalisation will no longer be accepted and that a 40 per cent increase in wages will be gained. What can we say about the union leaderships, who are engaged in negotiations and collective agreements? The same. Are there progressive currents emerging in the trade union movement, such as the Green slate in the meatworkers? Do they win? No. They are totally defeated by the extreme right-wing slates, which have no interest in stopping rationalisation.

Politically, the Peronist movement, which is the bosses' expression of the Argentinian people, is a complete mess with the Quadrumvirate,<sup>1</sup> the personal delegate of the Superior Council, the followers of Framini<sup>2</sup> and Vandor.<sup>3</sup> Now we must have a Peuser guide (city maps) to know who is who. Iturbe<sup>4</sup> orders Framini not to hold the Santa Fe rally. Framini disobeys and holds the rally. Framini gathers everyone and tells them Vandor is a traitor. Peron writes to Vandor saying he is the best and the 62 Organisations are extraordinary. Sosa,<sup>5</sup> on behalf of

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1 The **Quadrumvirate** was commission appointed by Perón that had to reorganize the party. Led by Andres Framini, it also included Ilda Pineda de Molina, Julio Antun and Ruben Sosa. [Editor]

2 **Andres Framini** (1914–2001), was an Argentine union leader and politician. In 1962 he was elected governor of the province of Buenos Aires but the result was not recognised by the Government of President Arturo Frondizi, who in turn was overthrown by a military coup a few days later. He was secretary general of the Textile Workers Association (AOT) between 1951-1955 and 1959-1968. On two occasions, 1955 and 1961-1963, he joined the executive leadership of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). [Editor]

3 **Augusto Timoteo Vandor** (1923-1969) was a bureaucrat Secretary General of the Metalworkers Union (UOM). After the military coup that defeated Peron, he promoted within the Peronism a participatory faction willing to agree with the de facto government and proposed a "Peronism without Peron". A month after the Cordobazo, in June 1969, he was executed by a small Peronist armed group, which years later would join Montoneros. [Editor]

4 **Alberto Jose Iturbe** (1913–1981) was an engineer and Justicialist politician. He was Governor of the Province of Jujuy between 1946 and 1952 and Minister of Transport in 1955 in the government of Peron until he was defeated by a coup. [Editor]

5 **Ruben Sosa** (1929-2005), a lawyer from Corrientes province, promoted the Peronist resistance and the defense of political prisoners. Sent by Perón, he interviewed Guevara in Cuba. [Editor]

Villalon<sup>6</sup> whom Peron gives orders to, informs the Peronist Youth Vandor is a traitor and has to be dispatched. Besides, Villalon reveals a letter from Peron confirming this. The situation explodes as Framini, Vandor and everybody tell on somebody else.

The centrist, opportunist, pro-bosses leadership of our Peronist movement, used today as the vanguard of the integrationist frontism is very likely to turn around and, pressured by the “realism” of the union leaderships and the “non-integrationist” sectors of the same movement, to move to an agreement with the new government. In this way, Peron would guarantee direct control and unity of the movement by returning to the country. The government would win a political and union truce and the plebeian sectors of it a future trump card, in the hypothetical case of arriving at the next presidential elections, so the union sectors of Peronism would support his ticket against Balbin’s. The decisive thing will be that this process of appeasement between the government and Peronism will not strength either. The latter will continue from crisis to crisis, without the weak, distant but effective bond of Peron’s leadership solidarity. After the first moment of euphoria that the General’s return to the country will produce, the contradictions of the movement will become clear and will explode in the short term. Besides, Peronism without the organised workers’ movement is nothing but a shadow. This does not mean the Peron myth will not remain for a long time an electoral myth of incalculable weight.

This political and trade union crisis must disappoint us and superficially offers us two alternatives: the most enthusiastic, the most revolutionary, are inclined to seek alternative methods and systems to free us from the grip of the exploiters. Do we not have a simple method, that of the Cuban Revolution, that of the famous three inexorable stages, which begins with a first one, the guerrilla focus? This is how many honest comrades and fighters desperately embark on preparing the first stage, which will lead slowly but surely to the other two and which fundamentally take us away from a path at first sight without perspectives, that of the union struggle and, what is more serious, of the workers’ movement. We will come back to this perspective.

The other alternative is the individual exit: many great fighters go home to solve their personal problems, to cultivate their little orchard or to play bocce or cards at the corner bar.

If we start from the fact the crisis of Peronism is secondary and the fundamental one is the crisis of the working-class, we find that what is happening is a fundamental, progressive process, already foreseen by us, and which has taken place repeatedly in the history of the workers’ and people’s movement. With four examples we will categorically demonstrate this process has been repeated in the course of our workers’ movement history: huge crises of leadership that last four or five years and give the impression everything has been lost. Suddenly, a total change in the situation surprises the uninformed: new leadership and a higher, progressive stage of the workers’ movement emerge, prepared underground during the crisis.

## The first crisis and overcoming it

During the First World War, because of the application of Law 4144, the best activists, the leadership of the Argentinian workers’ movement, which in Buenos Aires were essentially foreign, were deported. The workers’ movement was led by what was called the FORA (Argentinian Regional Workers Federation) of the Fifth Congress, which established in one article that the unions had the obligation to make anarcho-communist propaganda. This caused permanent problems because sometimes Radical workers, even conservatives, who wanted to fight against their boss, were pushed aside. They asked: “Are you an anarchist?” “No”. “Then you are a police agent.” Sometimes, they even kicked them out. They dominated the unions at

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<sup>6</sup> **Hector Orlando Villalon**, a businessman with connections in Cuba, Egypt and Algeria. In the 1960s he was closely related to Peronist-oriented guerrilla organisations that operated in Argentina. For a time, he also held the position of “personal envoy” for Peron. [Editor]

the point of a gun, imposing anarchic communism by force. Law 4144 and anarcho-communist sectarianism caused a retreat and a crisis of leadership in the workers' movement.

But from 1917 onwards, a series of favourable strikes took place and other activists emerged who raised the need for trade unions and a workers' centre that encompassed all workers of whatever tendency. Thus, in a hard struggle against FORA sectarianism, the workers' movement took on an anarchist, revolutionary leadership that proposed: "The important thing is that all the workers are united in a trade union against the bosses."

This new revolutionary union leadership and this new union movement opened a stage that led to the Tragic Week<sup>7</sup> and after it to a new mass organisation of the workers: the new FORA and the big unions by trade, bakers, port workers, brickmakers, cabinet makers, that reached half a million members, and with a newspaper that sold as much as *La Prensa*. This FORA carries out glorious general strikes and keeps the government and the bosses in check. It sunk bosses like the former owner of Tamet, who was the originator of the Tragic Week. Thanks to this organisation, the enormous conquests of the workers' movement are achieved, such as the eight-hour-day, the railway workers' retirement fund, facilitated by the tenuously nationalist democratic bourgeois government of Yrigoyen.<sup>8</sup>

In a few years, the Argentinian workers' movement, crushed, divided, and sectarian by the influence of anarcho-communism, took a fabulous leap that had been prepared from below, through the new union activists who said: "It cannot be a union movement directly controlled by anarcho-communism. Everyone who fights against the boss must be united in one big union organisation, whatever the tendency."

## The second crisis leads to a new stage

But this organisation and mass leadership of the workers' movement, this power, by not having a national policy and not understanding that Yrigoyen was much more progressive, nationalist and democratic than his bourgeois opponents, opposes all political currents equally and indirectly facilitates the fall of Yrigoyen. Uriburu<sup>9</sup> comes and the one suffering the most from this political disaster is FORA. Uriburu imprisons, crushes, sinks and shoots the FORA members and the organised workers' movement. It seems then that everything has been lost, that there is nothing left in the country. There are no strikes or activists; there is terror in the unions, which are a front controlled by the anarchist bureaucracy corrupted or tolerated by the government, as the best anarchist fighters are persecuted without mercy. The Uriburu government itself indirectly supports the FORA bureaucratic sectors that put forward apolitical ideas and unions by the guild. The strengthening of the FORA had created a bureaucracy that lived off the unions' contributions and had become prone to an agreement with the government.

Despite this discouraging panorama, small student and worker cores fought the leadership of the workers' movement against the FORA bureaucracy. The political leadership of this struggle was held by the Communist Party, which at that time, I understand, had 200 militants and held ultra-revolutionary positions. In the construction sector, it had a small group of six or seven comrades, including the father of a female comrade here, a great leader of the plasterers, who came from the bakers' union. Also, who would later become the famous

7 Tragic Week is the name given to the repression and massacre suffered by the Argentine workers' movement, in which hundreds of people were murdered in Buenos Aires, from 7–14 January 1919, under the Radical government of Hipolito Yrigoyen. [Editor]

8 **Hipolito Yrigoyen** (1852-1933), was an Argentine politician, a relevant figure in the Radical Civic Union, twice elected as president of the Argentine Nation. He was the first Argentine president to be democratically elected, through secret and mandatory male suffrage established by the Sáenz Peña Law of 1912. His first term began in 1916, thus opening the historical period known as the first radical presidencies. He was overthrown in 1930 by a coup led by Jose Felix Uriburu. [Editor]

9 **General Jose Felix Uriburu** (1868–1932) headed the military coup defeating Radical President Hipolito Yrigoyen and briefly became de facto President. His dictatorship initiated the "Infamous Decade" of conservative governments. [Editor]

Fioravanti<sup>10</sup> and three Italians. Those few comrades did what they could. In the timber workers union, there were one or two communist militants, among them one who would later become a well-known writer, a great union fighter for 20 or 30 years: Luis V. Sommi.<sup>11</sup> There was also Peter<sup>12</sup> in the meatworks. They were joined by small student groups and the socialist and left youth. All these revolutionary tendencies that confronted the dictatorship, on the one hand, and the FORA bureaucracy in the working-class on the other, knew how to swim against the current since the panorama could not be more desolate: defeats, despondency, and disorganisation everywhere. At first sight, these revolutionary tendencies were crazy because not only were they fighting against the government, the official FORA leadership of the workers' movement and the apathy and disorganisation of the workers but they were also proposing a form of workers' organisation superior to what had existed up to that date: the union by industry. It seemed crazy. The trade union movement was broken. How could one organise and fight by industries, overcoming organisation by trades?

In 1934 a strike took place, the first important one in the country since the victory of the military government, one of the timber workers. The bosses recognise the industry union and give slight wage increases. No one won or lost. And based on this strike, the Timber Workers' Union was created, with its General Secretary, Mateo Fossa.<sup>13</sup> In the construction industry, those four or five enthusiastic young people, who had been fighting since 1930, manage to get a union out of the famous construction strike of 1935, during which they became a power. It lasted eight and a half months and was won. Around this strike something was organised something we know a lot about and that the bosses have still been unable to defeat: the CGT. Because around the Commission for the Support of the Construction Strike, the modern CGT emerged as the headquarters of the unions by industry, which existed as a name but did not have any support.

And the Communist Party grew from a party of 200 members to a party of thousands. It is estimated that in the construction industry alone they recruited thousands of militants and sympathisers. It gets to lead all the industrial unions in the country: textile, construction, meatworks and metalworkers. The workers' movement leapt forward; it achieved a great industrial organisation and a workers' centre, and great wins: wage increases and Law 11,729.

## The third crisis and its overcoming

But the Communist Party, with the left socialists who led the workers' movement, resolved to support Santamarina<sup>14</sup> and create a Democratic Union.<sup>15</sup> No more strikes and good behaviour

10 **Guido Fioravanti** (1901–1964), great union leader of the Communist Party. Secretary General of the National Federation of Construction Workers (FONC), organised and led the great construction strike in 1936. Once the strike was defeated, Fioravanti and other worker activists were subjected to the residence law 4144, and were dispatched to the Fascist Italy of Benito Mussolini. [Editor]

11 **Luis Víctor Sommi** (1906–1983), who used the pseudonyms Galvez, Garema, Moreno, and Alfredo Torres, was a woodcarver, historian, union activist, and communist leader. His works include *The Prebisch Plan and the Argentine destiny* (1956); *Argentine mining and economic independence* (1956); *The crisis of Argentine liberalism* (1957); *Hipolito Yrigoyen His Life and His Time* (1947); *The English monopoly of transport in Buenos Aires* (1940); *The German Capitals in Argentina* (1945) and *The Yankee Capitals in Argentina* (1947). [Editor]

12 **Jose Peter** (18951–1970) was an Argentine trade unionist, member of the Communist Party. Leader and founder of the Federation of Workers of the Meat Industry (FOIC) in 1931 and of the Federation of Food Workers in 1937. He was one of the most important union leaders before the rise of Peronism in 1945. [Editor]

13 **Mateo Fossa** (1896-1973) was an Argentine labour leader. Founder and leader since 1917, he was secretary-general of the Federation of Timber Workers. He joined the Communist Party of Argentina, breaking with it in 1927 and becoming a follower of Trotsky. In the last years of his life he joined the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST). [Editor]

14 **Antonio Santamarina** (1880-1974) was a politician and big businessman, member of a traditional and powerful oligarchic family in the province of Buenos Aires. [Editor]

15 **Democratic Union (UD)** was an electoral alliance made in 1945 between the Radical Civic Union, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Progressive Democratic Party to face the Peron-Quijano formula in the 1946

since we must be satisfied with having the CGT and the industry unions and not raise new struggles and demands. They propose the opposite: the trade union movement should be at the service of Russia's policy of helping Britain and America in the war. To be the fifth-wheel of the very imperialisms that exploited us is the slogan of the Communist Party and the new leaderships of the industrial unions. This is a reflection in our country of the new tactic voted by the Communist International in 1935 to fight against the fascist imperialisms by joining the democratic imperialisms.

The workers' movement, led by the Communist Party, suffers defeat after defeat. Textiles in 1938, metalworkers in 1942. And not only does it suffer great defeats but it becomes bureaucratic. One could not ask for the floor except to support the line given by the leadership. Union oppositions were not allowed: they were totalitarian unions in their structure. To make matters worse, in 1942 the CGT split in two: the communists, who wanted us to go to war at all costs, with CGT 2, and the neutralists, who were at the service of the British railways, mainly the union leaders Domenech and Almarza,<sup>16</sup> with CGT 1.

The picture could not be sadder: defeats of the most important unions, Stalinist totalitarianism of the worst in the most important unions, and collaboration of the communist union leaderships with the main enemies of the country, the big democratic imperialist companies. The workers' movement enters a general apathy and regression.

However, some great militants continued to fight alone against the current, for example in the meatworks. Lucas Domínguez,<sup>17</sup> who had been a friend of Peter, began his fight for the autonomous trade union and was attacked as a Nazi and paid by the companies. In the metalworking industry, there were the Perelman,<sup>18</sup> Trotskyists; they were persecuted, the old man was fired out of the union but as he was strong in the section, they could not make him leave the Catita factory. Lavalle,<sup>19</sup> in textiles, was fired from everywhere, persecuted by the bosses and the Stalinist bureaucracy. Mateo Fossa, Trotsky's friend, in the timber industry. They were only a few fighting against the retreat of the workers' movement and the Stalinist bureaucracy. They were not only confronting the bureaucratic leaderships but they were insisting on the need to mobilise the workers' movement, to democratise it, to prepare general strikes, to use the imperialist war to liberate the country. They made many of these proposals in a sectarian way but they made them. They insisted mainly on the need for permanent assemblies of the workers' movement and to broaden and deepen the trade union organisation, developing the factory organisation. To the servants they seemed to be crazy people who had escaped from the madhouse, they threw themselves at the bosses, the government, the oligarchy, the dominant imperialism and the union bureaucracy when they there were 10 or 20 in the entire country.

Suddenly, as of 4 June, the political and trade union landscape changed completely. Yankee imperialism wanted us to enter the war and manufactured, together with the industrialists

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presidential elections. It was supported and financed by the Rural Society, the Argentine Industrial Union, and the Stock Exchange and by the former United States Ambassador, Spruille Braden. [Editor]

16 **Jose Domenech** was an Argentine union leader with a socialist tendency. In the 1930s and 1940s, he was general secretary of the Union Ferroviaria, the most powerful union in the country at the time. **Camilo Almarza**, also a socialist, was his deputy secretary. When the CGT was divided in 1942, Domenech was elected general secretary of CGT 1, which brought together the unions that sought to maintain the greatest possible autonomy of the political parties. [Editor]

17 **Lucas Domínguez** was the great anarchist labor leader of the Anglo-Ciabasa meat processing plant. In the great meatworkers strike of 1945, the young Nahuel Moreno and his group, the GOM, contacted Domínguez to support the strike and since then he was in close contact with Domínguez and the leadership of the conflict. Domínguez made it easier for the GOM to win over the best activists, and, although he never stopped being an anarchist, he maintained a close relationship with Morenism. At the beginning of the 1970s he visited one of the premises of the PRT-LV, near the Faculty of Philosophy, the COE, and an emotional meeting was held where the young people met and paid tribute to him. In a difficult personal situation, years later he committed suicide. [Editor]

18 **Angel Perelman**, a precursor of Trotskyism, was a co-founder of the metalworkers union (UOM) in 1943. [Editor]

19 **Marcelo Lavalle**, Trotskyist worker in the textile industry. [Editor]

and industrial landowners, its candidate, Patron Costa.<sup>20</sup> The nationalist military opposed it because they were for continuing with neutrality. Then a colonel appeared who called on the workers' movement to support him and who recognised under the wire any union that was not Communist, did not want to enter the war. Lucas Dominguez thought that dealing with the state was wrong, but he went to see the colonel. And Peron made it easy for him to develop the Autonomous Union of Anglo & Ciabasa, the most important in the country. And the Perelmans of Catita also went, and the colonel encouraged them to develop the metallurgical union. He did the same with the textile and railway unions.

Suddenly, these union activists found themselves with a powerful movement, much stronger than the Stalinist one, to carry out the programme they had raised in the previous stage. Once again, this great law of the workers' and people's movement of the entire world had been confirmed: it always moves forward like a pilgrim, two steps forward and one step back, but always advancing. Precisely because they had trust in the workers' movement, they suddenly led a fabulous movement: meat, FOTIA, textiles, metalworkers.

This is how the Argentinian workers' movement reached its highest stage, the Peronist one, with its CGT and all-powerful, massive industrial unions, which achieved great advances in working conditions and wages. The great organisational achievement that distinguishes this stage from the previous one is precisely the development of the factory organisation: the internal commissions and the factory delegates committees, for which a handful of revolutionary union activists, anarchists and Trotskyists had fought, against the Stalinist anti-democratic and totalitarian control. This raises the question of who owns the factories, whether the boss or the internal commissions.

## In the fourth stage, a new leadership saves the previous achievements

From 1951 onwards, the bourgeoisie began a whole plan to take away its conquests from the workers' movement: The Congress of Productivity, a policy of national unity, the rationalisation and suppression of wage increases and the attempt to stop mass unionisation and to take away the rights of the internal commissions and delegates committees.

This policy began successfully because of the total submission and corruption of the union leaderships of our movement to the state apparatus. Espejo,<sup>21</sup> Costas, Presta, Grioli<sup>22</sup> and Salvo, are the highest representatives of this total encroachment of the trade union movement into the bourgeois state.

The crisis of leadership in the workers' movement has led to the emergence of a whole new trade union leadership of which we, back then the left-wing of the PSRN (Socialist Party of the National Revolution), are proud to have organised and been part of. This new trade union leadership was the opposition slates of our own Peronist trade union movement. The best-known leaders in that process today are Framini, Vandor and Alonso.<sup>23</sup>

This new leadership dislodged the bureaucracy, although it is also a bureaucracy but progressive and left-wing regarding others.

This new leadership thwarts the bosses' manoeuvre in the Congress of Productivity, makes the CGT largely independent of the state's political apparatus and outlines an independent policy. The CGT itself leads the resistance to the governments of the "Liberating Revolution", and

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20 **Robustiano Patron Costas** (1878–1965) was a conservative politician and sugar baron who served as governor of Salta in the period 1913-1916. Senator in 1938-1943. [Editor]

21 **Jose Espejo** (1911-1980). A food industry worker, he became one of the main leaders of the Peronist bureaucracy. He headed the CGT from 1947 to 1953. Very close to Evita, he also held political positions. [Editor]

22 **Jose Grioli**, founder of the Textile Workers Association (AOT) in 1945. At the beginning of the 1950s he was displaced from the leadership by the Green Slate of Framini, another Peronist bureaucrat. [Editor]

23 **Jose Alonso** (1917-1970). Bureaucrat of the garments union and leader of the Peronist CGT. He died in an attack by a group related to Montoneros. [Editor]

manages to prevent the new revolutionary vanguard that emerged during the 1956 resistance from leading the workers' movement, thanks to the failure of the 1956 metalworkers strike. Anyway, this new leadership recovers the union movement crushed by the gorillas,<sup>24</sup> and the internal commissions and delegates committees. It saves the great conquests of the previous period from the brutal gorilla offensive. It is not a leadership that has won anything but it barely manages to save part of what had already been won under the Peronist government, although the real merit of that defence fell on the new workers' vanguard, led by us, which bore the full weight of the reaction during 1956.

That same leadership became completely bureaucratic and in doing so caused the workers' movement to retreat on its standard of living and work.

To sum up, we can say the FORA imposed the revolutionary mass trade unions and a confederation that grouped the entire workers' movement. The communist vanguard, the industrial unions and a single confederation: the CGT.

The great Peronist, Trotskyist and revolutionary vanguard achieved something much bigger, which almost no historian mentions and which makes up, however, the most important fact of this century in Argentinian history, which is neither Yrigoyen's presidency nor Peron's: it is the internal commissions and the delegates committees, together with the mass union organisation. The new Peronist, Trotskyist and revolutionary workers' vanguard saved this organisation from the gorilla offensive.

The Argentinian proletariat, so far this century, has made progress in its achievements and organisation. But the fundamental thing we want to point out is that each one of those advances took place after a period of a deep crisis of the workers' movement and its leadership.

And just as we have pointed out throughout its history the causes that have led to a new upswing, we must now seek in the present the elements that make it possible to overcome it.

## Perspectives of the current crisis

Although we have a leadership crisis in the workers' movement, at the grassroots, a whole new leadership is being promoted, a new litter of delegates and combative internal commissions, accustomed to confronting the bosses, who have been on the offensive all these years. This new leadership does no more than reflecting the experiences of the ranks. It has been proven that negotiations are useless, that without factory occupations and a thorough struggle, not even the achievements can be defended.

Immediately after the fall of Peron, a mentality of negotiations, of peaceful strikes, remained in the working-class. But today, the conclusion reached is completely different: without strikes or violent mobilisations, there is no way out of the situation.

But not only this; it already appears as a symptom of that conviction, the product of the experiences of the workers' movement, a new student and left vanguard that poses the problem of power and armed struggle. This new vanguard has not joined the workers' movement but its existence shows the emergence of a new revolutionary leadership ready to sweep away the from the leadership of the workers' movement the corrupt and sold out bureaucracy that has taken us from defeat to defeat.

We are only missing one element to complete the perspectives: to foresee the future of the workers' and popular movement. As the economic crisis and the bosses' offensive will not stop (which means overexploitation and the ever-increasing cost of living) the defensive measures of the working-class will increase until some important victories are achieved that will transform the current defensive stage into an offensive one, which will surpass everything seen so far. Around these conflicts, perhaps commission agreements, solidarity strikes, inter-

<sup>24</sup> **Gorilla** is a term from Argentina's domestic politics, historically used to refer in a derogatory or pejorative way to those who gave a coup against Peron. Over the years, the term has been extended to a greater or lesser extent to other countries in Latin America, as synonymous with "reactionary right". [Editor]

factory meetings, and new plenaries of the 62 Organisations will emerge in the neighbourhoods. The class will say. Neither us nor the activists can impose an organisational form. Who could have expected the 62 Organisations' plenaries would emerge? Nobody. Who could say an Inter union would emerge? Nobody, though we did foresee it. The Inter-union will probably emerge and the plenaries of the 62 will again take place. The process will tell, but it will tell as the first major victories take place. If the bosses begin to overcome their crisis — it is necessary to look to the future — it is then very possible they will give in a little because they have work, which will allow the movement to advance, adopting forms of organisation superior to anything seen before. The workers' movement will pose the problem of power based on its experience and the new organisational forms.

As an aid to this process, important sectors of the union bureaucracy, not to discredit themselves with the workers' ranks, on the one hand, and to serve the integrationist plans of Frigerio, Frondizi, Solano Lima<sup>25</sup> and the leadership of the Peronist movement, on the other, will flirt with the upward course of great struggles of the workers' movement and the new vanguard. The other part of the union bureaucracy, the independents, may do the same, reflecting the policy of the more plebeian wing of the UCRP, even if there is an agreement with Peronism, the CGT as a whole will be in that game.

The government, meanwhile, will be forced for a while to continue giving democratic guarantees and negotiating with the workers' movement.

These two processes, of the sectors of the trade union bureaucracy and the government, will only favour the experience and the rise of the workers. Everything shows the workers, together with their new vanguard, are approaching a new stage. This is none other than the struggle for power.

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25 **Vicente Solano Lima** (1901–1984), was a politician leader and founder of the Popular Conservative Party. [Editor]

## Chapter 3

# Immediate tasks of the activists

Our reports are tools similar to the ones used in factories. They are useful if they help us educate the working-class and its vanguard in dealing with its daily and revolutionary tasks. The report can be useful as we find out the US takes away from our continent a billion dollars, but that information alone is worth nothing. It is the concrete task, the one we perform tomorrow, which must emerge from it. That is why, if the comrades, from the discussion of the report and the exchange of views, do not come out with clarity about what they should do and say in their factory the day after the plenum, the plenum would not have fulfilled its aim.

But this immediate task has to go hand in hand with another, with our great revolutionary task which is to throw out imperialism, capitalism and the oligarchy once and for all and impose the rule of the workers. Because if we do not join them, we are falling into unionism. We can give an excellent line to confront the bosses in the factory, the section, the town but we are not considering the problem of the country and how to bring the workers to power. If the two tasks do not go together, we are committing a crime. What should we do right now? Fight for the immediate problems the workers feel and educate the vanguard elements to prepare for the taking of power.

Let us now go to our essential task, which is to stop immediately the bosses' offensive against the working-class, in every factory and section. To achieve this, we believe it is indispensable to promote combative, fighting, anti-bosses delegates committees, and internal commissions and to use for these same effects the same tool the bosses are using against us: formal democracy.

## Not to lose one more conflict

First, each fellow worker, when discussing with a worker from another factory, must be careful not to apply the same rules to other workers' factory as to his own. Because today, the bosses' offensive has made the objective situation of each factory completely different. And not only that, but differences also exist in the fellow workers' mood. There are places where they want to fight, where they are confident, where they have not been defeated, and other places where the opposite is true. So, we have to remember these two factors: the objective differences existing from factory to factory and the differences in the mood of the workers.

To know where we stand regarding these two factors, the first thing we have to do is ask ourselves two questions: 1) How is the bosses' situation? Or, does the boss have a long-term job? Are his warehouses full? How is the market? And 2) Has the workers' mood changed enough to start the battle? Or what is the same thing: Has the bosses' offensive changed the mood? Or, how can we make it change?

These are the two fundamental questions, and the revolutionary activist who doesn't ask them is a shallow revolutionary like we were in the January and April 1945 Anglo-Ciabasa<sup>1</sup> strike. And it depends on his or her proper answer that we can find the right solutions within the class struggle.

Let's look at some examples answering the first questions, which have to do with the boss' situation.

On my first trip to Rosario, I encouraged the glass workers to go on strike because I knew the boss had signed an agreement with Coca Cola, for which he had fought for years, to provide it with bottles. And he was in a hurry because the month he should deliver them had begun. On the next trip to Rosario, the first thing I asked was: "And the contract with the Coca Cola?" "We didn't get it", they told me. "It seems the boss has discovered our move and deviated it to the other factory." Then, wisely, the comrades decided not to go out on a strike that would have benefited their boss without demand and with full storages.

In the Domec factory, where our comrades led the internal commission and the delegates committee, a large order for stoves was received and they went into production more and more, filling the warehouse. We knew there was a big order and so we were confident. But when we heard from the comrades working on the warehouse that it was getting full, we said "Here's a manoeuvre: the boss must have already filled the production quota and is increasing the stock to start an offensive against the comrades. If so, we are screwed." Indeed, once the warehouse was full, the whole internal commission was fired.

In a meeting with rank-and-file comrades, there was one who knew very little about the workers' movement, he was a craftsman, and he came up with a heroic idea. Faced with the problem of the bosses' overcrowded warehouses, he said: "I offer myself to burn down the warehouse so the problem will end". What I want to point out with this example is that for every problem there can be a solution, even for a full warehouse. And if there was also a demand for this employer, we were assured of victory.

But let's go now to the big problem: how to stop the bosses' offensive? First, we must know how to wait for a change in the mood of the comrades and the reactions of the bosses themselves.

Now, let's see how to answer the questions related to the workers' mood. The fundamental thing is to know how to distinguish between the mood of the vanguard and the mood of the rank and file, not confusing them under any circumstances since the vanguard can be ready for battle and not the workers' rank and file. We must also have great patience to know how to wait for these changes since they will eventually take place because of the bosses' blows. Sometimes we must wait six months, a year or a year and a half. For example, the bosses increasing the speed in the machines can provoke the expected reaction. That will be the moment we were waiting for.

When the change of mood takes place or is about to happen, it's time to prepare for the great battle. Four or five years ago we proposed to wait for the action of the whole of the working-class, that is, the general strike. Not today. We think the opposite. We must study with much skill and care, section by section and factory by factory, how we can stop the bosses' offensive. When the change of mood of the workers starts then, in every section where we are

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<sup>1</sup> The economic publications had given out the news that, because of the end of the war, England would not buy any more meat, and we went on strike just at that moment. **NM**

The **Anglo-Ciabasa** meatworks with 15,000 workers was one of the biggest factories in Argentina. [Editor]

strong, we have to make a special examination on how we should act and where we can hit in full. The struggle will be hard since the boss is fattened up as he has imposed rationalisation, layoffs and starvation wages for four or five years.

In confronting the bosses, we must be clear we are facing three problems, and within the three there is one which is fundamental: the problem of rationalisation. We must face it by patiently insisting to our comrades that we should not accept any kind of rationalisation, but when the time comes, we must not oppose it head-on if the workers, encouraged by the lure of salary increases, will accept it. In this case, we must negotiate and demonstrate in the course of the discussion the bosses' true aims, which is to overexploit us. This way, we can convince the workers their worst enemy at the moment is rationalisation. If this becomes inevitable, we must guard against its immediate consequence, redundancies, by having a clause included in the agreements and by raising the awareness of our rank-and-file comrades so that the bosses cannot fire workers under any circumstances.

Regarding these, once they take place, we must propose: a labour exchange, an even reduction in working hours and that only those workers who want to do so of their own free will be paid compensation. What we must prevent is that the bosses impose their will and divide the workers' front.

Regarding the high cost of living and insufficient wages, we must be very careful to specify when the bosses have work and are eager to sell, to demand increases by mobilising the factory around an official petition, explaining to the comrades the factory special situation.

To achieve these aims, in parallel with the negotiations, we must get ready to fight. Through systematic and bold propaganda, we have to convince the activists and the workers' rank and file that only the hard, firm struggle can bring about minor victories. Recently our slogan of strikes with factory occupation has become popular. Perhaps other initiatives such as those of the craftsman I referred to previously will be imposed. The activists and the ranks will say. The important thing is to know that without bold, revolutionary methods, there is no possibility of victory.

It is necessary to make an exhaustive preparation, as much as possible, if the events do not rush, the education of the vanguard and the rank and file, explaining to them the difficulty of the struggle and the need for the solidarity of the whole workers' movement for that struggle. To achieve these aims nothing better than to make full use of the current formal democracy regarding factory workers and also regarding workers and the population. For the first case, the fundamental one, we must use democracy to call many personnel meetings and to publish bulletins and flyers that educate and explain about the problems and tasks to be carried out. Regarding the people and workers working in the same area, we must bore them with leaflets explaining and popularising the conflict and then appeal to the solidarity of our class and the people.

This propaganda activity, accompanied by small and large actions in the sections and the factories, will enable us to win victories which, however small, will raise the spirit not only of the workers who won but also of the comrades in the union or the area. Thanks to this combined process of struggle and education, fighting and anti-bosses' internal commissions and delegates committees will emerge, which will overcome the leadership crisis in the workers' movement.

## **Let's fight for the internal commissions and delegates committees and not for union leadership**

Today, our crucial problem is not the union elections. It was when the workers' movement was on the offensive when there was a large vanguard as in the metalworker's strike of 1956 or afterwards in the 62 Organisations meetings. At present, there is no prospect that the workers'

movement will be able to break up the bureaucratic apparatus of the trade unions. Anyone who thinks they can do it should go home.

The bureaucratic apparatus dominates the unions, as Cardoso's<sup>2</sup> win in the meatworkers reveals, and only a new rise and important class victories can kick them out. Therefore, our most important activity now is not to get a revolutionary tendency to lead a trade union, since that is not workable, but to give a multitude of small battles, section by section, factory by factory, against the boss of the day, to prevent the bosses' offensive from succeeding and to achieve anti-bosses delegates committees and internal commissions.

The achievement of this goes beyond any union or political partisanship. Whether a good anti-bosses activist is with Vandor, with Framini, with the Cyan slate or with the leadership of ATE (Public Servant Union) in Cordoba is secondary for us. If he is a good activist, a fighter and anti-bosses, he has to go to the internal commission and the delegates committee. We have to concentrate on uniting all the workers in the factories against the boss, and the best activists against the bureaucracy and the bosses. None of this means ignoring the leadership of the unions, whose achievement, now, is a secondary task, subordinated to the main one: to stop the bosses' offensive in every place and to achieve a good factory leadership. This activity will be made easier because the trade union bureaucracy has, for years now, abandoned the attention of the factories, especially as the possibilities of getting or defending gains by their traditional methods — negotiations — have been exhausted. Most factories are now no-man's-land; in a short term, they must be ours.

To better achieve these aims, we must know there are two types of factories: the disorganised, and the organised ones.

### *Disorganised factories*

We should differentiate those totally disorganised from the ones with representatives or internal commissions but without a delegates committee.

When I went to Cordoba, the Dinfia comrades' main fight was against the totally bureaucratic union leaders. Big mistake. In a factory where there is no internal commission or delegates committee, or which is disorganised (internal commission but no delegates committee), or the internal commission is very weak or does not hold meetings, our main enemy is the bosses, who under no circumstances will want the internal commission or delegates committee to be reorganised. We have to be clear: the enemy is neither the union committee nor the internal commission, not even the legal procedures. Our enemy is the boss, and we have to seek even the support of the union or factory bureaucracy, with extreme care, because only when we beat the boss, we can defeat the bureaucracy.

As for the bosses' democracy, it is in this first stage that we have to use it. To call for an assembly where we can, being careful not to do so if the factory has a dictatorial regime with a very strong boss because in that way they find out the comrades who are reorganising and fire them. Then the work will have to be clandestine to the maximum, we will have to go back 20 years. Let's see how a factory was organised years ago.

A union activist would come in; after three or four months in his conversations, he would start looking for the most rebellious comrades, select four or five from his section and organise a barbecue with them. And even if those were only four or five, it was difficult for the boss not to know about it. They would become very friendly, go out together, play pool or have a coffee far away from the factory, start talking, exchanging ideas, and the activist would comment on how they were being exploited and give ideas about what could be done to organise. And those five, once they were recruited, would commit to doing the same with five others.

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<sup>2</sup> **Eleuterio Cardoso** was a bureaucrat who dominated the meatworkers union for decades and held various positions in successive Peronist governments. [Editor]

We can do the same but with other variations. For example, barbecues, but with 20 or 30 workmates, where the conversation revolves around the factory problems. We should form a group that responds to us. And then yes, through these friends, we can pose a conflict in a section of 70 or 80.

This does not mean that at certain moments, if serious problems appear (massive layoffs, rationalisation, etc.) that could provoke a conflict, we do not work at that pace, i.e., looking for an immediate solution to the problem (strike, occupation) that implicitly leads to reorganisation. In other words, it is not a matter of first reorganising and then confronting the bosses but of perfectly combining both tasks.

### **Organised factories**

There are three types of organised factories: with internal commissions and delegates committees paid by the bosses, bureaucratised, dependent on the union bureaucracy, and independent. Let's look at the way we should act in each of them.

When there is an employers' internal commission, we have to be very careful, not becoming part of the internal commission under any circumstances, but participating fully in the delegates committees. We have to be patient, not to make any public opposition, and get the rank and file to raise the issues and wait. When the conditions are ripe, the time for the struggle, which can only be to the bitter end, mercilessly, against the bosses and the internal commission, will have come.

This is how we acted in textiles, where Lopicito (union bureaucrat) was. For years, Lopicito had never called meetings of the internal commission or the delegates committee. When he did so again, it was celebrated. He called a meeting and we ordered our comrades not to speak. Once at the meeting, a communist comrade asked for the floor and he attacked the bureaucrat. When he finished, Lopicito asked for the floor and said, "You see, comrades, how I give democracy and you are attacking me? I didn't hold meetings because no one was coming but now that you are coming, speak up." They kept on fighting. It was a fabulous meeting. Then Lopicito said: "Well, we will continue tomorrow so you can go on criticising me". We said again for our comrades not to speak. Our comrades wanted to kill us for our cowardice. On the second day, they let everyone speak, and on the third Lopicito stood up and said: "Comrades, since it had been three or four years since there were discussions in the internal commission or the delegates committee, we didn't have the opponents very well placed. Thank you very much for having spoken." They were beaten with chains, clubs, and everything, and the opponents were hospitalised. And the next day, because they could not go to the factory, the bosses fired out for being absent from their work.

However, we, who were a lukewarm opposition, became strong in Factory No 2 of Alparbatas and consolidated ourselves in Factory No 3. Later on, the Green slate came. Peron said "The Green slate goes" and it was then that we considered it was time for the great battle. We did, and thanks to us the Green won in Alparbatas and the union. And this because as revolutionaries we knew how to wait for the right moment.

When the internal commission is controlled by the bureaucracy, we also have to be careful, but less so. Here, the internal commission may have deep frictions with the bosses, even to gain prestige. If this happens, we must try to enter the internal commission to put pressure on it together with the delegates committee. But our essential objective is to work in the delegates committee. We should not try to fight the battle from the beginning but we should try to get the sections used to discussing and in that way educate, promote our comrades, and little by little win over the delegates committee.

The third type of factory is an independent one. We must enter almost directly into the internal commission because this is generally where the best fighters are. Since most of them

are small factories, we should try to make contact and in a cordial relationship go to the internal commission, even if reformists are there.

## The fight for the collective agreements

While we attach fundamental importance to reorganisation and factory struggles, this does not mean we ignore the colossal importance the discussion on bargaining agreements can acquire and the possibility of great union struggles they may bring.

We must warn about the danger of rationalisation with its sequel of unemployment because until now the trade union leaderships have been characterised by lending themselves to the game of the bosses and yielding to a rationalisation for meagre increases.

We must campaign for this because under no circumstances should the slightest variation in the draft agreements be allowed in favour of rationalisation. At the same time, we must fight to include clauses in favour of insurance for unemployed workers, paid for by a fund formed by the employers and the pension funds. It is also possible to insist on the labour exchange to force the unemployed comrade to keep his link with the union, as long as the unemployed themselves control the exchange, otherwise, it becomes a weapon of the bureaucracy itself.

Our activity in this sense must be intense: agitative campaigns on behalf of the delegates committees and internal commissions we influence so they speak out for those measures, and the same goes for us as political factions.

We must also insist on the need for factory, regional or trade union assemblies, mainly the former, because of the lesser control of the national bureaucracy.

As for the slogan of the strike, we must handle it very carefully and not launch it until the union is well prepared, truly ready for a hard fight. Our slogan to avoid a hasty strike, caused by the desperation of some bureaucratic sector in the face of the sabotage of the government and the bosses, must be: Let's prepare the strike of the union and the CGT by appealing to the rank-and-file assemblies.

## Let us support the CGT's plan of struggle by demanding a Grassroots National Congress

The CGT leadership of our movement, under pressure from the current government's refusal to make concessions, the pressure of the integrationist enemies who are agents of the oil companies, and the repudiation of the workers, have outlined an ultra-left course, threatening extreme measures such as the occupation of factories.

The plan of struggle is, for the moment, nothing more than a series of threats whose fundamental aim is to allow the union bureaucracy of our movement to negotiate and to wrest certain concessions from the current government.

However, despite their desperation, they will not organise the struggle or appeal to the grassroots because they fear much more the mobilisation and initiative of the workers than the refusal of the government to make concessions to them.

We, faced with the incapacity of the bureaucracy, raise this slogan: That the CGT leadership call a Grassroots Congress to resolve democratically what to do. The workers' representatives should attend, who will be democratically elected by groups of 500 or 1000 workers. These cannot and should not be union bureaucrats but workers who work in the factories they represent. Grafa, for example, must send four or five delegates who are workers of the establishment, democratically and proportionally elected (if a slate gets 3000 votes and another 1000, they would have three and one delegates each). Only this nationwide Grassroots Congress will build the workers' movement confidence in its leadership.

Parallel to this, and to make a concrete delegates committees, we must get the CGT to mobilise and put pressure on the National Congress to pass a law promoting the programme of the delegates committees, extending it with the unemployment insurance. These two slogans pave the way to an intense mobilisation, and we have to agitate them and try to carry them out.

## The armed struggle and the working-class struggle

We have already pointed out that there are sectors of the leftist movement that, desperate to find an immediate solution to the situation, talk about creating a guerrilla focus. I only know of one intellectual who is considering this, and he does so comfortably sat at his office, as an intellectual alternative. There is no danger he will take action. In any case, he reflects a whole social stratum: the desperate petty-bourgeoisie or the old union activists who are tired of their hard struggle against the union bureaucracy.

I will not talk about the magnificent possibilities of rural guerrilla struggle, as a local, partial expression of the masses' struggles in certain regions of the country, since it is a local problem to be studied locally, but to rural guerrilla struggle with its metaphysics of the three stages and as the backbone of the organisation of the whole struggle of the mass movement. We do not believe in this one or any metaphysics. On the contrary, we argue that the revolutionary struggle in our country, as in all other countries, will have its specific characteristics, totally different from those acquired by such struggle in the countries where the working masses have already seized power.

These characteristics are given by the combination of the following factors: the economic and social structure of the country, the tradition of the working masses movement and their vanguard, the experience and strength of the exploiters, including the middle class, and the reflection in the country itself of the development of the world revolution. In no country can such a combination produce the same result. In our country, for example, the revolution cannot take place like in China, with its 80 per cent peasant population and a huge border with Russia since we have 80 per cent urban population and we are thousands of kilometres away from Russia. Nor can it be like in Cuba, where all the nearby countries, including the United States, gave the go-ahead, as Che himself admitted. Also by the international masonry, the Jesuits, and with the support of the Cuban landowners and the middle class.

This call for reflection in the search for the specific path that the Argentinian revolution will take, this warning against the metaphysics of only one path (that of the three inexorable stages), this demand to respect the language, the methods, the tradition of our working people, who cannot be led to the revolution no matter how heroic they may be, by the magnificent revolutionaries who in unintelligible language tell them: "Hey, kid, don't be a brown-noser", there is not, there must not and there cannot be an attempt to stop the great contribution of the Cuban revolution and its brilliant leaders: the armed struggle as a fundamental, permanent ingredient of the struggles of the Latin American masses, including the Argentinian ones. No! These calls, alerts and demands are for the better use of the armed struggle and one of its many variants: the rural guerrilla.

We believe the rural population, except for the north-west of the country, which means about 2 per cent of the national population, will be the last to reflect the revolutionary process in opposition to the urban population and the working-class, which will be the first. The latter has already shown countless times their capacity for struggle and rapid recovery. It is now a matter of accompanying, leading, pushing and guaranteeing this struggle of the workers' movement and the urban middle class with armed struggle, in this new period that is opening up. Why would we turn our backs on that part of our best national tradition? Do those magnificent revolutionaries who have lost the language of our people and who shed tears of emotion over Venezuelan terrorism ignore that the urban Peronist terrorism of 1956 was infinitely superior to that one? Do they also forget the great anarchist, communist or Peronist strikes accompanied by the armed struggle? Why not repeat them, correct them and increase them? Is it not pitiful to

deny this magnificent revolutionary tradition in the name of a metaphysics tradition, a faithful copy of another revolution?

We believe that in the stage of great workers' struggles that starts in the country, armed support is fundamental, decisive; it is the only thing that will guarantee our fundamental slogan for this stage. Not another conflict lost! It will prepare even more decisive forms of struggle and finally the seizure of power.

## **Bourgeois Democracy and Workers' Democracy**

We have insisted we must know how to transform the formal democracy the bosses are using into its opposite: a workers' true democracy. The bosses' democracy is the right to elect representatives every two or three years, through elections and a whole legal apparatus of propaganda in favour of the oligarchy and the bosses: judges, laws, newspapers, television, radio, etc. Only those who have millions and great connections can run for election. The workers and their tendencies cannot, and if they do, it is with minimal possibilities. But we must know how to use this formal democracy to discuss and educate our class and the delegates committees, imposing the assemblies to change ideas, to make the workers' initiative develop.

That is one way of using it. The other is public propaganda, which is rarely used today. The idea is to start with propaganda before the conflict takes place (bill posters, etc.), showing the injustice of the bosses. Trying to gain support, solidarity, handing in flyers, organising a fundraiser, helping other unions, creating an entire atmosphere of expectation before the conflict. Today the situation has changed. Let's use democracy and public freedoms to the bitter end.

## **Let us demand a Constituent Assembly from the government**

At the beginning of our report, we mentioned that our revolutionary aims are rooted in reality. This reality shows us that Illia's government has achieved certain stability, a certain balance brought about by the alliance of the bosses' various sectors and the middle class around formal democracy as a way to solve their problems. This means that at present there are no objective conditions, i.e., the exhaustion of the bourgeois-democratic experience by the masses, nor a crisis of the regime, as to pose head on to overturn the government.

It is on this basis that we have recognised Illia's government. But we know, and we say so, that it is the formal democratic continuation of the gorilla "Liberating Revolution" but in different conditions, with a working-class confused, bewildered, and disorganised.

Anyhow, just as in the everyday struggle we must oppose workers' democracy to bourgeois democracy, we must do the same with the latter: develop it thoroughly, to its last consequences, to place it a contradiction with the plans of its supporters. That is why we must fight strenuously for the repeal of repressive legislation and insist on the freedom of the press, radio, and television.

But the best way to show the inconsistency of all the bosses' parties, including the party of the current government, is to insist on the highest democratic slogan: An absolute and sovereign Constituent Assembly with the presence of all the leaders and political parties. This slogan is linked to all the others of a national character, mainly those related to the economic crisis. We have already pointed out the nationalisation without compensation of the meatworks, Electric Services of Greater Buenos Aires (SEGBA), the non-payment for nationalised oil companies, the total nationalisation of the foreign trade, and the expropriation of all the lands to split them into 100-hectare farms are urgently needed. Without these measures, there is no solution to the structural crisis.

To democratically solve these problems, and also the political ones, we repeat there is only one way out: the Constituent Assembly.

## Solidarity with the Cuban and Latin American Revolution

Our organisation has tirelessly insisted that the best way to help the Cuban and Latin American revolution is to do it in our own country. This correct statement should not prevent us from carrying out immediate practical tasks in favour of those.

Today, it would seem the danger of armed intervention in Cuba has been averted. This does not prevent us from permanently educating the mass movement and its activists about the vanguard of the Latin American revolution, which is Cuba; about its successes, advances and dangers that loom over it. We have to do the same with the other revolutionary processes, especially Peru and Venezuela. In the case of the latter, we must make it clear that regardless of the possible tactical differences we may have with the FALN (Armed Forces of National Liberation), they are disparities which are not clear for the lack of information, we are a proud part of the same movement as our Venezuelan comrades.

Regarding Peru, we have to insist that, except for the delay in organising a solid revolutionary party and the armed struggle, the political line carried out is a true model of what we want to make clear, mainly the example of how, contrary to the guerrilla thesis, the lands are and continue to be massively occupied in all corners of Peru.

Together with all this, we must propagate our slogan of the Latin American Federation of Socialist Workers' States, as the only way out of our economic permanent crisis, and its tactical variation: Immediate Federation with Cuba.

## Chapter 4

# Towards the Single Party of the Argentinian Revolution

When analysing the situation of the workers' movement, we have pointed out it is going through a transitional stage (which is molecular, uneven, not massive) towards a higher stage in its forms of struggle, organisation and also the emergence of new leadership.

The new leadership manifests itself in the same way: isolated, molecular, uneven, although with special characteristics.

A reflection of this is that the students' vanguard, like the intellectuals' vanguard, is separated from the workers' vanguard. And not only that but within the students' movement itself and the workers' movement, the development experience and organisation vary in each sector of the vanguard.

It is now a matter of seeing by what means this atomised and uneven bridging is transformed into a general, universal one.

All human action, consciously or unconsciously, has two closely linked facets: an aim and a resistance to be overcome to achieve it. The revolutionary struggle is not an exception to this general law of human actions. Regarding our target of overcoming the leadership crisis of the workers' and people's movement and creating a revolutionary leadership, we find that these two facets take place in the following way: the main enemies, because of their influence, are real, the Peronist or anti-Peronist trade union bureaucracy, the official political leaders of our Peronist movement; and potential ones, because of their future possibilities, the Khrushchevist leadership of the Communist Party. Our goal: the formation of revolutionary leaders that will take the workers to victory.

The problem is how we combine these two facets of our activity, knowing that of the two, the most urgent is always the negative one, that of defeating the enemy.

## The union bureaucracy and the Peronist movement leaders

This one, especially the Peronist, is our main enemy and, right now, to save its prestige and mainly to prevent an attack from the government, it is forced to outline a leftist course. But we must not forget for a minute its only aim is to save its privileges, without falling into the stupid sectarianism of ignoring the reality of the struggle plan and the leftist course to raise the consciousness of the mass movement and make it advance in its struggles. In front of the bosses, we have a precarious de facto united front with the bureaucracy, which we must

develop without abandoning it for the moment and combining it with a revolutionary united front of the best union activists against the bureaucracy itself, its privileges and its elimination of workers' democracy.

The premise of this combination of tasks must be: every defeat we inflict to the bosses, even in a united front with the bureaucracy, directly or indirectly weakens the same bureaucracy; every defeat of the bureaucracy by the workers' vanguard, directly or indirectly weakens the bosses.

The struggle against the bosses' leadership of our movement does not go essentially through the struggle inside the political party but through the workers' movement. This does not mean that we abandon a revolutionary united front policy of propaganda type with the political Peronist left. However, we must always remember it is secondary and it cannot overcome the crisis of the bureaucratic leadership of the workers' movement by itself.

## The Argentinian Communist Party

Much more important than the struggle against the political and trade union leadership of our movement is the struggle against the official leadership of the Communist Party, a potential danger of great gravity in overcoming the crisis of leadership since it can attract sectors of the workers' and students' movement vanguard to the path of its sinister reformist policy.

Today, the Argentinian Communist Party reels from crisis to crisis, without overcoming the crisis historically inflicted on it by Peronism 20 years ago. This crisis has been aggravated by the international one. Indeed, it is a petty-bourgeois party because of its composition, with no major links to the workers' movement and whose best revolutionary elements leave to support Castroism or Mao Tse Tung. Lately, their shameful support to Illia revealed it no longer has a concrete policy for the workers' movement and the country. Anyhow, we must know that in some unions or factories they have some strength for the weight of the apparatus itself: in those places, we must insist on a skilful united front policy with its militants. We can only put forward this united front in the trade union field in the fight against bureaucracy.

From there, we can establish a fruitful dialogue which will allow us to clarify all the doubts of the Communist workers regarding their bureaucratized leaders.

## The Peronist left

Regarding the Peronist left, which we claim to be, we must emphasise its amorphous, with tendencies, and shaped as a movement, which acts accordingly.

The Peronist left, except for us, represents the eagerness of the best Peronist militants on the one hand, and the speculation of some displaced political, union or intellectual leaders on the other. The two best-known expressions are Framini and the newspaper *Compañero* [Comrade]. Both makeup, for the time being, symptomatic political-union speculation (Framini) and journalist-political (the newspaper *Compañero*). We say symptomatic in the sense that they reflect a deep malaise of the Peronist ranks and vanguard regarding the opportunist course of their political and union leadership and in this sense, even as mere speculation, they play a progressive role. The organisational weakness of this left is the political reflection of the molecular expression of the workers' vanguard itself and the speculative character of its leadership. Although, as we said, it plays a progressive role, we should not be under any illusions since there is no possibility that it will lose its superstructural character of political speculation. Nor does this mean we will not continue to be potential allies.

## The sects

If the analysis of the Communist Party or the Peronist left requires serious study, the same does not apply to sects. Rather than history or politics, we have to claim the help of another science: geology. Starting with the Vanguard Socialist Party which is in a permanent crisis and has practically disappeared from the national political scene. I still remember when two or three years ago they did not even want to receive us in their Executive Committee: we wanted to warn them that without the structuring of a solid single party of the Argentinian revolution, they would enter a crisis given their petty-bourgeois character. The facts have proved us right.

Later on, we met with the socialist party of Ramos<sup>1</sup> and Spilimbergo,<sup>2</sup> Ramos' literary work Fans Club, as there are with Palito Ortega,<sup>3</sup> with a surprising similarity: Ramos is to history and politics what Palito Ortega is to music. Like all petty-bourgeois or lumpen tendencies, in this case, in a state of putrefaction, it is condemned to disintegration and marasmus as soon as they act politically and stop being Literary Fans Clubs.

Faced with this sepyo attack this Federation of clubs makes on us, we only have to respond with a series of questions, so the student activists who are literary admirers of Ramos can think about them.

It is true that Jorge Abelardo Ramos and his team, despite the theory that Latin America is one country, for six years never wrote a single line to express solidarity, to unconditionally defend the Cuban "province," except for the last issue of *Izquierda Nacional* where they do so indirectly.

It is true this silence contrasts with the desperate praise given to the Peronist government for 10 years, a process infinitely more measly for the revolution of the Latin American "country" than that on the Cuban revolution.

It is true the enthusiasm publicly demonstrated for the army's role in Argentina's past and present reality.

It is true that, in total contrast to us, Ramos and Spilimbergo never posed, before 16 June 1955, that the leadership of Peron and the CGT's bureaucracy were taking us to disaster, and that only armed militias could save us from it.

It is true that, unlike us, Ramos and Spilimbergo never attacked the bureaucratic leadership of the Peronist unions as the cause, together with Peron, of the successive disasters of the workers' movement, during the waves of great general strikes.

It is true that in 1955 Ramos wrote for the official Peronist newspaper *Democracia*, which was in favour of the oil pacts, and publicly praised the Peronist army, placing his full confidence in it, in opposition to *Palabra Obrera*, then *La Verdad*, which asserted this army would be the reactionary weapon to overthrow Peron.

It is true that on 17 October 1955, in response to the public call for a general strike made only by *La Verdad* and Lagomarsino,<sup>4</sup> Ramos gave the pages of *El Lider* to the PSRN leaders to call to scab the strike and denounce us as provocateurs.

1 **Jorge Abelardo Ramos** (1921-1994) was an Argentinian politician, historian, and writer, founder of the political and ideological current called *Izquierda Nacional* (National Left), which vindicated things of Trotsky and fervently endorsed the Peronist government. [Editor]

2 **Jorge Enea Spilimbergo** (1928-2004), was an Argentine politician, writer and thinker. Together with Jorge Abelardo Ramos, he was founder of the political and ideological current known as *Izquierda Nacional* (National Left). [Editor]

3 **Palito Ortega** (b. 1941) is an Argentinian singer and actor. He is an icon of Argentinian popular music and is considered one of the main representatives of the musical style called New Wave that marked the Hispanic-American music in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite his popularity, he was a mediocre singer. [Editor]

4 **Rolando Luis Lagomarsino** (1903-1984) was an Argentine industrialist and politician, of notable participation in Peronism. Secretary of Industry and Commerce in 1946-1947. [Editor]

Finally, how can we explain that our organisation and our organ *Palabra Obrera* has been the most persecuted by the oligarchic-imperialist reaction of Aramburu-Rojas-Frondizi, with 90 per cent of our militants imprisoned and our newspaper sequestered 19 times and that Ramos and Spilimbergo have never been persecuted: on the contrary, Ramos worked at the newspaper *El Lider* which was taken over by the Navy?

The same question rephrased: Why did Ramos and Spilimbergo never appear on the night detention lists of the Federal Coordination and the SIDE (Secretariat of State Intelligence), being as anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialist as they define themselves, as happened to Esteban Rey, Hernandez Arregui, Jose Maria Rosa, Silvio Frondizi, Bengochea, Gonzalez and Pereyra?<sup>5</sup>

Is the oligarchic-police-imperialist reaction so stupid that for so many years it failed to discover its “most colossal enemies”, Ramos and Spilimbergo, and instead ruthlessly persecuted its “Sepoy agents” such as *Palabra Obrera* and its leaders?

We still have other facts, like for example that picturesque father group, Praxis with its sub-groups of sons and its spiritual mother, *Her Doktor Professor* Silvio Frondizi, who has stated that the revolution in permanence in our country starts from the Neighbourhood Progress Association in the tiling of footpaths in the slums and ends in the dictatorship of the proletariat.

*Voz Proletaria*, with its stratospheric proposals but with something that differentiates it from the others: they are petty-bourgeois or lumpen, this one is working-class.

Portantierism<sup>6</sup> is not saved from this characterisation since it has soon shown its face. His leadership, educated in the sinister apparatus of Codovilla,<sup>7</sup> has been incapable of structuring a real revolutionary tendency in the student movement. This incapacity and centrism of the leaders has entered and will continue to enter into contradiction with the ranks of its honest revolutionary tendency, which entered the Communist Party only recently, under the impact of

5 **Esteban Rey** was the editor of *Lucha Obrera*, official organ of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution.

**Juan Jose Hernandez Arregui** (1913–1974) was an Argentine writer, politician, and journalist. He is considered one of the most important intellectuals of the current of the so-called revolutionary Peronism.

**Jose Maria Rosa** (also known as Pepe Rosa), (1906–1991), was an Argentine lawyer, judge, university professor, historian and diplomat. Founder of the magazine *Revista Linea*, he was one of the most representative historians of historical revisionism in that country.

**Silvio Frondizi** (1907–1974) was an Argentine intellectual and lawyer, brother of President Arturo Frondizi and of the philosopher Risieri Frondizi. He founded Praxis y Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR-Praxis), a left-wing revolutionary group, in 1955. He then travelled to Cuba in support of Fidel Castro's revolution, meeting Che Guevara. The Triple A, a right-wing death squad that operated under the Peron government between 1973 and 1976, assassinated him in 1974.

**Angel “Vasco” Bengochea** (b. ? – 1964) was one of the top leaders, along with Moreno, of the Argentine party. Later, after he travelled to Cuba looking for help to Hugo Blanco, who was heading the peasants' struggles in Peru, he was won to Castroism and broke away to launch a guerrilla group. He was killed in July 1964 after an explosion in an apartment in Posadas St, Buenos Aires.

**Ernesto Gonzalez** (1924–2007), Argentinian Trotskyist leader, was recruited by Nahuel Moreno in 1952 to the Grupo Obrero Marxista (Marxist Workers Group). For several decades he was a close collaborator of Nahuel Moreno and national leader of the different organisations they built together.

**Daniel Pereyra** joined the GOM and became proletarian in the Siam metallurgical factory in Avellaneda. When he traveled to Peru in the early 1960s, he led a putschist diversion that carried out two bank robberies. He was a prisoner. When he returned to Argentina in 1967, he joined Santucho's pro-guerrilla faction in the PRT. He accompanied the Mandelist faction of the Unified Secretariat. In the work *Peru, two strategies*, by Moreno (available at [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org)), Miguel Sorans, in his presentation, polemicises against Pereyra's calumnies against Moreno. [Editor]

6 It refers to the followers of **Juan Carlos Portantiero** (1934–2007), an Argentine sociologist. He specialised in the study of the works of Antonio Gramsci. In the 1970s he was part of the magazine *Pasado y Presente*, which held a critical view of Marxism not only about the old communist parties but also about the new revolutionary groups that emerged in the country from the Cordobazo of 1969. He worked as an advisor to Radical president Raul Alfonsín during his government (1983–1989), as part of a consulting team called Grupo Esmeralda. [Editor]

7 **Victorio Codovilla** (1894–1970) was a leader of the Argentine Communist Party and became one of the most important leaders of Argentine and South American communism.

the Cuban Revolution. But those ranks may despair or tend to diletantism if it does not force its leaders to make contact with the mass movement.

## Palabra Obrera

The Federation of Fans Clubs of Ramos' literary work has treated us brutally in a ridiculous historic controversy with us far, from the most obvious facts. This systematic attack is based on a few tactical historic facts, completely distant from each other (alleged defence of the oligarchic newspaper *La Prensa*; ironic and derogative characterisation of the 17 October festivities; negative characterisation, as bureaucratic and pro-government, of the Peronist CGT after 1947; the intimate relationship between British imperialism and Peronism in its beginnings) to reach the conclusion we are a pro-imperialist Sepoy variant. We have carried out an exhaustive self-critical analysis of our past and we have concluded that until 1952 we had a position that was not opportunistic but sectarian towards Peronism. We base this conclusion on the following facts:

First, we were the first leftist organisation in the country (1944) that founded and developed Peronist unions (we started the Meatworkers Federation and the AOT – Textile Workers Union) based on political documents and not on the individual activity of some militants.

Second, we were the only left-wing organisation that confronted arms in hand the Communist Party and the Democratic Union in the streets and the trade unions throughout 1945.

Third, from the beginning, our organisation developed within the Peronist trade union movement as a tendency. We never joined the Communist or the Socialist Parties, nor did we make any kind of entryism into them. We won the Communist or Socialist militants from within the Peronist workers' movement.

Fourth, from 1947 onwards, Peronism became more and more reactionary, imposing a totalitarian practice in the country and, together with the CGT, confronting the workers' movement: railways and sugar factories strikes, violent clashes with the Meatworkers Federation (Ramos' book was sequestered), etc. As a result, our organisation, while remaining deeply involved in the Peronist unions, adopted a much more anti-Peronist and sectarian tone without ever falling into the opposition game but accompanying the struggles of the workers' movement. We violently opposed Peron's position as the first government to show solidarity with South Korea and we supported North Korea; we were also the first organisation to pose we should abandon the Rio de Janeiro and OAS treaties that Peron had signed.

Since 1952 our organisation was the only one with a national character that passed the test of events. In that sense, we challenged the scribes in the pay of the highest bidder, like Ramos, to deny our facts and trajectory. We were the only revolutionary organisation that:

1. Supported and led to triumph the opposing Peronist union slates: Framini in textile workers, Colace Vandor in metalworkers, for the recovery of the workers' movement.

2. We joined the Peronist movement through the Socialist Party of the National Revolution.

3. We were the only organisation that had fought all out before 16 June 1955 against the inevitable reactionary *coup d'état*, asserting that Peron and his army could not stop it and only the workers' militia could.

4. In 1956, we insisted the great task was neither terrorism nor waiting for the black aeroplane<sup>8</sup> bringing Peron back but reorganising and reconquering the unionised workers' movement and we raised the need to build an Inter-union organisation.

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<sup>8</sup> t refers to a popular myth that spoke of Peron returning to Argentina in a **black aeroplane** to lead a political initiative that would allow him to regain the power he had lost after the *coup d'état* of 1955. [Editor]

5. From 1957 to 1958 we denounced the role of the union bureaucracy and we warned that if the general strikes against General Aramburu and later Frondizi did not become insurreccional, the workers' movement would be defeated.

6. We promoted the union of the Peronist left with Castroism and, what is most important, we insisted in the colossal role of Castroism in Latin America when we posed the urgent need for the armed struggle and that Latin American workers should seize power.

7. We were the only left organisation, together with Castroism, that fully participated in the Latin American revolution. Our militants suffered brutal tortures and persecution by imperialism for that.

## The Revolutionary United Front

Our overall policy, faced with our real or potential enemies, is to create a single alternative leadership everywhere and on a national scale. Every worker or student activist in his place of work or study must find a single alternative, a single channel if he has revolutionary aspirations. Every organisation, tendency or activist who wants to fight for the revolution and does not recognise that a united front must be presented to the trade union or political bureaucracy and the reformists is an agent of the latter since the non-existence of such a front puts the revolutionaries in deep doubt about what revolutionary tendency they should speak out for.

Precisely, this doubt is a weapon of the counter-revolutionary and opportunist leaders that they exploit to their utmost, pointing out the anarchy, disorganisation, division of the revolutionary tendencies.

Our organisation warns that everything unites us and nothing separates us to confront the treacherous leaderships. Those who do not understand it that way, serve those leaders.

On the contrary, whoever understands that our differences are tactical and that we must and can unite to oppose this revolutionary united front to the bureaucracy serves the revolution since it leaves no alternative to the revolutionary militant than to fight in a single tendency as the only viable tool to liquidate the traitorous leaderships.

This united front will be formed with the new revolutionary tendencies that have emerged from the current crisis of the sects, the Peronist left and the Communist Party, caused by the irruption of the new revolutionary workers' and students' vanguard, and will be the first step for the structuring of the Single Party of the Argentinian Revolution. To speed up its formation, we must strive to achieve revolutionary united fronts in all fields of activity of the workers' and student's movement.

In this respect, we should not confuse the emergence of the new vanguard with the sects, although it is precisely through them that the new vanguard can make its first experiences in the student movement. We must do the same in the union field: to join the vanguard that emerges, respecting its prejudices or language and taking on immediate tasks of the united front, factory or union bulletins, etc., that will allow us a revolutionary organisation for common revolutionary activities.

## The United Front and the workers' vanguard

The axis of all the activity to structure the revolutionary united front goes through the organisation of the workers' movement's new vanguard. To avoid clashing with it, we must be aware it expresses itself through different political and union jerseys; we know that what characterises the situation is its crisis and leadership.

To achieve the vanguard's organisation, we must start from the immediate problems it faces: the internal organisation in the factory to resist the boss, the union agreement and the CGT plan of struggle. These tasks go together but they are not the same.

What interests us here is the struggle against bureaucracy or reformist tendencies because we have already studied the struggle against the boss. To differentiate ourselves from the bureaucracy we can organise the vanguard around the need of an inter-factory in the area, with its informative bulletin. This can be one or several unions, depending on the circumstances. An inter factory that proposes a bulletin and accepts our proposal of consultation to the rank and file allows structuring a solid revolutionary tendency around precisely this task.

On a smaller scale in a factory, the mere fact of developing or starting its internal organisation linked also to an information bulletin and a defence of grassroots' democracy so that the workers are consulted on everything will be a reason for the polarisation of a revolutionary tendency.

We must begin to execute this. That is, to gather the working-class vanguard around this proposal.

We must be conscious that in these first phases the main thing is not the finished programme of these unitary meetings but the beginning of the vanguard's organisation and centralisation around positions that are potentially anti-bureaucratic: need of organising and consulting the class. This proposal alone has all the anti-bureaucratic gunpowder in it since organising and consulting the class means the leaders are not trusted. Even if mistrust of the union leaders did not emerge clearly in the first meetings — we will argue that our immediate enemy is the boss, not the leaders — in any case, the struggle against the bureaucracy will be the logical conclusion of this primary organisation of the vanguard.

## The students' movement

There is a reason for this chapter to deal with the student's movement. Since this sector has no social autonomy it is not a class that can solve any problem in our country on its own. On the contrary, it reflects the whole of society. Hence, it is important only as a factor that helps to structure the revolutionary party.

The students' movement during the past year made a great leap forward in the formation of a solid revolutionary tendency. At the Rosario Congress, this tendency reached 50 votes against 20 for Stalinism and 60 for centrism but it could not structure itself solidly. This was for several reasons: our weakness as its natural leaders, immaturity in the cadres and mainly an objective reason: lack of bond with the workers' movement and the new vanguard because of the latter's weakness.

The axis of the activity to organise a solid revolutionary united front goes through the proposal of the need to organise the revolutionary tendency and link ourselves to the workers' movement. The organic centrists will be against this ironclad organisation, although they may accept the "idea" of the bond with the class.

We must insist that our activity in the students' movement revolves around two axes, which are linked but require different tactics from us. A tight organisation of the revolutionary tendency will demand from us a specific activity on the students' movement, based on its problems. This activity will force us to demarcate ourselves and fight with determination, starting from the mentality and needs of the student body and its vanguard, to the right-wing and opportunist currents, mainly to centrism and Stalinism. This task is the main one, and upon it, we will structure the revolutionary tendency. Everything said about the revolutionary united front applies here.

The other fundamental task, the one of linking with the workers' movement and its vanguard, is subordinated to the structuring of the revolutionary tendency. Put another way, it is more important to organise the revolutionary tendency and the revolutionary united front from what the students and their vanguard want and fee, than the link with the workers' movement.

But at the beat of achieving this fundamental aim, we must go on raising it, with its facts and experiences. In this field, three tendencies will be outlined: one of indifference, intellectualism, dilettantism and student-centred. Another one, of the sectors permeable to opportunism or frankly opportunist, which will link themselves to the workers' movement through the leading bureaucracy, taking the working-class as a unit without contradictions, an error that the formal method taught in the universities allows it spreading amid the vanguard cores, mainly if the union bureaucracy lends itself to the game. And finally, those who are linked to the struggles of the class and its vanguard. These will be the future conscious revolutionaries, the future cadres of the Argentinian revolution. However, we must be very patient in all this combination of tasks so as not to abort structuring the revolutionary tendency by hastening the link with the workers' movement, or the latter to save a student revolutionary united front, which perhaps has ceased to be so in the great workers' struggles.

## Use of the elections

We don't know the dynamics of future struggles of the working-class. We believe and hope they will take on an enormous scale this year. Perhaps not. If the process is much slower than we aspire to, we must take into account that early next year there will be national elections. They can be an opportunity for the creation of a revolutionary united front. This could unite on a national scale through a common electoral action all the tendencies, personalities and revolutionary workers' activists for the elections.

To the super-revolutionaries who shout "how can we unite for a reformist activity like elections!" we will only tell them a few truths. The first one is that revolutionaries who don't know how to use the regime's propaganda apparatus are idiots, and one of them is precisely the elections. The second, that we must use all the elements that reality provides to achieve the revolutionary united front.

The absence of great working-class struggles or the fact these great struggles are taking place forces us to study what possibilities we have of fighting against the regime, the union bureaucracy and opportunism in the same elections.

However, running for election does not mean running to win votes but to popularise the Argentinian revolution programme with no concealment; it means to propagandise the unity with Socialist Cuba and the imperative need for the workers' revolution.

That is, the elections can give us the possibility of common action with all the revolutionary tendencies in facing our enemies. If this were the case, it would be criminal not to use it. And also, in the case of a great revolutionary rise of the mass movement, it would be criminal not to boycott them.

## From the United Front to the United Revolutionary Party

In a provincial city, a comrade from another revolutionary organisation said she agreed with the Single Party but did not know what steps to take to achieve it. Let's try to clarify it. There are different ways or theories about how to build such a party. Some argue it should be done with the leadership of revolutionary organisations with no consultation with the ranks; others argue that it should be done only with the ranks of those organisations. We believe the correct way is the combination of these two: with the leadership and with the participation of the ranks.

The first thing to do be done is to look for minimum revolutionary tasks on a national, regional, trade union or factory level. Based on these tasks or programme, we must put forward a parity committee of leaders from the organisations invited to the united front. We should not make a fuss of the numbers nor ignore the recognised leaders. There must be great honesty in this, based on parity between the organisations.

These parity committees must be accompanied by massive participation of the militant ranks in the organisms of the united front. Any mistake at this regard may be fatal. We should ignore neither the leaders nor the ranks in the common activity.

In this common work of the united front between the ranks, the conditions for proposing the united party will be created.

Therefore, we appeal to all organisations that consider themselves revolutionary to structure these united front committees on a regional or national scale, with no sectarianism. Let us begin by setting an example in the students' movement, the only place where these tendencies have any strength.

Let us denounce relentlessly those organisations willing to maintain their sects and refuse to build such committees. Anyhow, we are not optimistic about these organisations unless the student activists impose the proposal.

We centre our perspective on the workers' and students' vanguard and on the local, molecular, united fronts that will emerge in the faculties and factories. From there, the grassroots organisations and the militants of the united front will emerge who, together with us, will structure the great revolutionary party that will lead the next, inevitable, Argentinian workers' revolution.

Third section

## Editorials from Palabra Obrera

### The CGT struggle plan, the trigger for a new social crisis

(Palabra Obrera N° 357, 10 March 1964)

The CGT struggle plan is the trigger to a new social crisis which is shaking the country with an unprecedented intensity. The dead and injured, the attacks and the re-emergence of different strike forces are the most dramatic aspects of a situation that, unexpectedly, escaped the control of the political and union leaders and is turning more explosive.

#### The mechanism of a bomb

Now that the subject of explosives is in fashion, we would be allowed to remind you the detonator is a mechanism that acts at a precise time blowing up the gunpowder in the bomb. Well, the gunpowder was scattered in the national environment; i.e., the elements of the crisis have been dragging on for a long time, and the plan of struggle has acted on them by unleashing the new social crisis to which we refer. Suddenly, the characters on the front pages seem to have gone crazy; different armed groups are launching themselves against each other and against targets — human or material — that are sometimes inexplicable. The government, which until now was cautious and parsimonious to the point of idiocy, suddenly makes frantic and contradictory statements: a minister announces the legality for Peronism and a deputy minister affirms that Peronism will “never” achieve it; the CGT leaders, who until now acted in a united bloc, begin to contradict each other and, while the Peronist leaders continue to confront the government, the “independents”, through March,<sup>1</sup> praise and support it, and all this happens at a time when the implementation of the struggle plan seems to be negotiated and postponed. Despite the failure of the workers’ mobilisation, the effects of the plan have been categorical and have disturbed the climate of peace that the government breathed only a few weeks earlier. We could point out other examples of what some will call sudden madness

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<sup>1</sup> **Armando March** was Secretary General of the General Confederation of Commerce Employees. He was a socialist who later approached Radicalism. In 1969, he was convicted of embezzling up to USD\$ 30 million from his union’s accounts over the course of the decade. [Editor]

on the leaders' part and we consider these to be manifestations of a new social crisis. We could mention the contradiction of the Communist activists who have been suddenly led into the violence arena while continuing to apply the line of supporting the government or the division that has emerged within the political leadership of the Peronist movement. But, right now, the most urgent thing is to explain this blood-thirsty "madness" that afflicts the country and its men.

## Picturesque explanations

There is no lack of interested scholars who rehearse colourful explanations of the social panorama, or those who attempt to point out an aspect of the truth as a way of hiding it.

Thus, for example, the integrationist platform that is *Primera Plana* magazine devotes approximately five pages of one of its issues to show the government is to blame for three reasons: a personal imbecility of Doctor Illia who has his head in the clouds, an "old-fashioned style" of government caused by historical-political reasons peculiar to the UCRP that do not allow him to foresee events and, finally, the economic line of this "centrist" party incapable of facing on its own the continuation of the "beneficial" "developmental" policies of Frondizi, i.e., the one that allowed the enrichment of the representatives of integration.

Another opposite explanation, but no less picturesque, is the one of the government itself and the official party, which point to the inherited evils, the incomprehension of the union leaders and, in the special case of Perette, also the opposing action of integration and monopolies as the causes of the unrest.

And finally, there is a third explanation, which is the simplest and most hilarious: the sacred cause would be "communist conspiracy".

## Substantive reasons

First, we believe that the current crisis has its precedent in the chronic crisis dragging the country since 1930 with a deficit economy aggravated by imperialist exploitation and by the scandalous integrationist shady deals. This crisis, which has economic roots, was projected to all national levels and caused the deep division of the bosses' sectors that faced each other in the dispute at the time of distribution: united to starve the people but enemies to the point of violence to distribute among them the sweat of others.

When the bosses' problems seem to end in disaster (after the fall of Frondizi), they found a solution: elections and a parliament with proportional representation to achieve a government that would democratically fix the friction between the bosses' sectors. With this solution nobody won directly but, as everybody lost a little, the feeling of harmony could be maintained for a while. The victory of the UCRP took to the government a single sector of the bosses, the rural export sector, although with the support of important sectors of the urban middle class.

The problem began when the government insinuated some movements in defence of the interests of the rural bourgeoisie and the middle class that had supported it, which joined the recovery of the climate of formal democracy that stoked the flame of the workers' movement, which began to look for ways to change its situation as a victim of the crisis. The displacement of "integration" interrupted the systematic shady deals of a powerful sector of the bosses through which the interests of the American monopolies move. And finally, the institutional reorientation brought to light some excesses committed by imperialism in its plundering of the country. Shortly after the government was installed, the "Furies"<sup>2</sup> of the monopolies and "integration" were laid upon it, besides the growing popular pressure exacerbated by the

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<sup>2</sup> **Furies**, in classical mythology were minor female divinities, the daughters of Gaia who punished crimes at the instigation of the victims. [Editor]

cost of living and unemployment, and the mistrust of the rest of the bosses who work for the domestic market.

At this key moment, the plan of struggle was announced, which, as we say, acted as the trigger for the new social crisis, essentially different from the previous one.

## The plan of struggle

The integration, the monopolies, the industrialists and the CGT leadership formed a front of opposition to the government intending to take it over. The policy of this front was to rely on the fair claims of the people and workers to checkmate Illia. The struggle plan of the CGT was the advance party that all the opposition supported.

A single example shows that the CGT leaders acted in the name of both the workers and the bosses (and in the end, favouring the bosses and their policies) when they launched the plan: the CGT's programme emphasises the need for credit to be given to the industrialists, although the latter has shown a thousand times that they use these credits to "rationalise", i.e., to lay off more workers. Besides, all the organisations that bring together the industrialists and the journalistic bodies of integration and the monopolies warmly supported the CGT's programme.

## The shambles begin

But immediately after the "climate" for the plan of struggle was built, the unrest began. The government set out to divide the CGT leaders by agreeing with the "independents" to grant wage improvements through a ministerial binding decision and without a struggle (the case of the Commerce Employees Union), to negotiate with the industrialists to grant certain credits and to adopt completely ineffective measures against inflation. On the other hand, the industrialists' front with the CGT relaxes given the possibility of occupying the factories, true "sanctuaries" that workers must not dare "desecrate". Thus, we arrive at a situation in which the leadership of the "62" insists on continuing with the plan, while the "independents" want to stop it.

## The new social crisis

The result has been that the development of the plan has changed the entire scheme of the forces that launched or oppose it: it has sharply divided the union leaders; it has divided — even more — the different bosses' sectors, the government and the front that supports it.

This crisis is essentially different from the previous ones, which concerned the struggle between the same bosses' sectors for the distribution of profit because now those bosses' sectors and the union leaders are fighting over how to crush, neutralise, divert or use the course of the workers' mobilisation that the struggle plan has started. Before it was a struggle among them and now a stage is opening for them to be divided against us.

But not only does the new crisis now affects us more but it is much deeper, as shown by the incipient climate of civil war caused by the emergence of different clash gangs that respond, in a distorted way, to the different forces in struggle.

## The end of picturesque explanations

If we look at the recent social crisis from this angle, we will see the deliberate lie of the picturesque explanations of the crisis mentioned above.

With what right does "integration", which caused the hunger and unemployment of the workers, plundered the air, the surface and the subsoil of the homeland, pretend to use

nothing less than the workers — through the leaders of the “defeat command” — to make us believe they are good and Illia is to blame for everything? With what right does the bosses’ government of Illia intend to wash its hands of the matter when it is incapable of taking any fundamental measures against the evils it has inherited?

## The authentic workers’ leaders

Meanwhile, the authentic leaders of the workers’ movement, who excel in the factories in their daily struggle against the bosses, continue the underground task of organisation. Neither the “independents” nor the “defeat commandos” have appealed to them.

The former, concerned with stopping the struggle by trusting the government to grant gains to selected unions but without even raising the need to extend those improvements to others. The latter launched into a plan of struggle as part of an integrationist plan that has already failed electorally, when they wanted to vote for Solano Lima, and now want to impose him from the plain.

This is how the banner of the plan of struggle, which those in charge of doing it could not lead, must pass into the hands of the indefatigable activists in factory meetings, sectional plenaries and general assemblies and, finally, in the most democratic meeting that workers can have: a Grassroots Congress of the CGT. The Rosario branch of the Light & Power union has been an example when deciding the Grassroots Congress.

The comrades should discuss the programme of the plan and the methods to implement it. It is an urgent need that the ranks of the workers’ movement deliberate and set together their objectives at this time when the struggle plan — regardless of whether or not it is applied at the end of the month — has inaugurated a process of national crisis that only the workers can solve.

For the Argentinian workers, it is more certain than ever that “the crisis of humanity is the crisis of its revolutionary leadership”. Hence the importance of debating at the grassroots level the steps of a plan of struggle that we all enthusiastically support but that we have no guarantee of how to make it succeed and not be used by our enemies against us.

The moment vindicates the independent combativeness of the workers’ movement, which will develop through ever deeper and perhaps bloody struggles, as the only solution to this new social crisis — perhaps the last — of our country.

## Let’s use the truce, to prepare for the fight

(Palabra Obrera N° 358, 24 March 1964)

Nobody breathed on 12 March, when the Central Committee of the CGT agreed on a truce with the government, granting it 30 days to find a solution to a list of demands that included the most heartfelt popular aspirations.

Nobody breathed and, in the first place, the government, seemingly the winner in the process of secret and semi-secret negotiations, where they got the “air” of a month-time frame granted by the union leaders. Because now, all the sectors have their eyes fixed on the measures the government will take against price rises and unemployment, measures that have seem so naïve and barren.

Neither could the CGT leaders breathe, for those pro-integrationist and pro-government sectors the plan of struggle is like grasping at a straw.

Because it must be said that, in the eyes of the grassroots, the 30-day deadline applies to both the government and the workers' leaders, from whom the organisational measures for the struggle are expected. And in this sense too, the days pass inexorably without the GGT adopting them.

As we can see, the "truce", far from clearing the air, has simply deposited a tenuous layer of oil on the surface, under which the currents become more turbulent day by day in the face of a government that is powerless faced with the total crisis of the country. The union leaders, sieged by their deadlines, are powerless to organise the struggle and, at the same time, the national crisis, which has worsened, makes it more urgent to fulfil the workers' plan of struggle, the only hope for the country after the failure of the various bosses' governments.

## The deferral serves us well

But we have to analyse specifically the new time limit the granted to the bosses, independently of any historical consideration. We should leave aside the fact that negotiation and truce is the permanent method of our union leaders, and see if now the 30-day deadline (that presumably can be extended) is good for us.

We believe the truce is highly beneficial for us greatly because it gives us time to organise.

In this period of delay, the government will end up showing its total or partial impotence and the seriousness of the crisis will push carrying out the plan of struggle, even if the leaders "on the top" do not want them.

In other words, the struggle is concerted. It has been postponed and this benefits us because the stadium will be fuller, the enemy tends to weaken and, while waiting, we can prepare ourselves better, filling all the gaps and deformations that the coach (the union leadership) has caused in our fitness and our style and methods of fighting. It is so beneficial for us that if the fight had taken place on the appointed date, we might have lost. With it, we inevitably would have been out of the ring for a long time.

But while we get ready, we should not forget that from our struggle against the government, which in general represents the bosses' interests, some sectors of the bosses hope to take advantage and seek to recover weakened influences, in the case of integration, the monopolies and industrialists; privileged sectors of the Frondizi regime or those sectors which do not agree with the method with which the government that represents them is preparing for the fight. This is the case of sectors of the government that are clamouring for the use of truncheons against workers and are supported by partisan and military factions.

All the bosses' sectors and the government itself will use the truce to favour their positions.

This overall situation where the workers and popular grassroots are searching for their organisation and leaders and the country is divided into different sides in the face of the struggle — with no fixed date but still felt in the air — is what defines the current moment: what we have called the beginning of the social crisis caused by the plan of struggle.

## The politics of "good" Illia

Since Illia's government of the bosses cannot provide any fundamental solutions, it remains to be seen what type of palliative it will resolve through Parliament and within the measures demanded by the CGT.

The palliatives, i.e., the partial improvements that can be voted by the Parliament, are quite important because they will directly influence the spirit of the masses. A massive increase, for example, would invigorate militant morale.

In any case, 10 days of the truce have gone and the government does not show a trend towards the immediate adoption of palliatives. On the contrary, while the "topics" for discussion

the CGT demanded are being turned over to Congress, these topics will possibly be swallowed up by the legalistic and parliamentary machinery, which will delay and distort the measures.

This is the importance of exerting pressure through mobilisations and rallies before the Parliament, demanding that it take a decision.

The government's policy of delaying is clear; it tries to neutralise popular pressure by incorporating union leaders into "phantom commissions" to "study issues" such as the minimum wage. Behind the "democratic" feeling of these commissions of bosses and union leaders, there is the trap of delay, the brake.

When everyone — from the bosses to the workers — is waiting for concrete measures to be taken, the government once again shows its inability to take them. We have already explained on other occasions that this government is completely handcuffed — because of its social sector — to adopt the great solutions. Illia's last speech in Pergamino confirmed this once again. It had been announced the president would make fundamental economic and social announcements there. However, he limited himself to recommending "patience" and asking that "we should be good". Through the cracked voice of the old doctor — even without him knowing — spoke the entire Argentinian bosses who had led us into the crisis, turned it on the workers, was incapable of providing solutions and, in the face of complaints, recommended goodly or bloodily good behaviour to the masses.

## Integration disintegrates

Almost at the same time with the popular demands on the government are the "extremists" of the bosses, the industrialists linked to the domestic market, the integration, and the oil and electricity monopolies.

This bosses' bazaar of confused economic interests that ruled directly with Frondizi and Guido became opponents of Illia's government because they lost part of their positions in control of the country.

This opposition led them to promote, in common agreement with the union leaders, the plan of struggle, which they would use to blackmail the government, take over some ministries, and even evict it from power through a coup if conditions arose.

But the social crisis unleashed by the plan of struggle breaks down the bosses' front. First, by opposing the possible occupation of factories. Then, by fragmenting between those who want to force the crisis as a desperate alternative to taking back control and those who have warned the plan of struggle may get out of hand. The division of the integrationist leadership of Peronism, of the "62 Organisations", of Frondizism and the different tones of the journalistic organs of integration — *Que*, *Clarín*, *Primera Plana* — shows this.

These different sectors that outlined an integrationist policy have also begun to split at the beat of the new social crisis but they will try to continue using the workers' movement.

## The heroes of the industrial recovery

The magazine *Que* of Frigerio, on behalf of the divided industrialists, demands from the government a plan of "industrial reactivation" that will "automatically" solve the problem of unemployment. The magazine criticises the CGT leadership for not including the slogan "credit for industrialists", which was originally part of the plan, among the specific points to be discussed in Parliament during the 30-day truce.

Also, the same magazine considers truce positive. After all, it postpones the occupation of factories, a measure they oppose because it pits the "allies", industrialists against the workers.

These two positions show how they intend to use the workers' movement for their ends. Before, they agreed with the plan of struggle one hundred per cent. Now, not so much, because

it does not raise their slogan: the famous loans that only add fuel to the fire of unemployment since the bosses use them for rationalisation causing more unemployment.

The problem of the loans is the problem of their use, of their control.

Their free administration can never be left in the hands of the industrialists of hunger, poverty and unemployment!

## The theoreticians of terror

With the first outbreaks of the social crisis unleashed by the plan of struggle, a climate of terrorism and civil war began in the country, with armed groups, attacks, assassinations, and guerrillas.

The characteristic is that each social and political sector provided itself with its clash gang, confirming the seriousness of the crisis. The right and the left, the bureaucracy, the sectors of the radicalised middle class and the civilian commandos insinuate this.

If this kind of terrorism, isolated from the actual struggle of the masses, can be perfectly well understood as a desperate reaction by sectors of the bosses and bureaucrats, it gives the impression of having little to do with the workers' movement and its activists. Isn't that so?

Those sectors that organise themselves for armed struggle are reflecting a phenomenon: the social crisis in the country has begun, the struggle of the working people against the exploiters. This crisis is only in its first stages and the outbreaks of armed violence appear to be detached from reality. This is how different leftist intellectuals thought the Tacuara<sup>3</sup> of Collins<sup>4</sup> and the defence groups of the Communist Party that are confronting each other in Rosario have something to do with the national reality. However, these groups represent much more than they appear. The Tacuara group is the armed branch of the integrationist union bureaucracy, although the latter has been afraid of the damage the support given might bring. The Communist Party's clash groups mean for the bureaucracy the possibility of losing the union leadership with their cars, summer holidays and lovers. This meaning is independent of the sinister role of government collaborator of the Communist Party led by Codovilla.

And this is how the vanguard and the working-class, whose task is the general reorganisation and preparing the plan of struggle as an immediate and historical task, indirectly understands that it is necessary to prepare to confront, with all means available, the armed enemy that attacks via the civilian commands and Tacuara.

## From the small to the big struggle

Throughout this article, we have been raising what we believe are essential tasks to be accomplished immediately: organisation during the truce, preparation for the struggle, mobilisation to demand that Parliament fulfil the government's promises. In short, a whole task to lay the foundations that will allow us to go strong to the open struggle to impose the demands the bosses took from us. But the question arises: who and how to organise the workers' movement for the struggle? Because it is evident at this point the union leadership is not "there" for these tasks, wrapped up in its political speculations with sectors of the bosses. The leadership can be pushed and pressured but always to a certain extent. It can enunciate the plan of struggle, it can call for a rally on day "A", it can do tasks from the top, but all of us activists know that at some point the leadership will slacken off. The last example is obvious: two days before the deadline for the fulfilment of the plan of struggle, they had prepared

3 The **Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara** (MNT) was a fascist far-right Argentine political organisation which acted between 1957 and 1966 and in the years 1961-1965 as neo-Nazis. Later, they were part of Perón's "special formations". [Editor]

4 **Patricio Collins** was a doctor specialising in allergic diseases and the maximum leader of Tacuara from 1964. [Editor]

nothing. Under these conditions, its implementation would have been an adventure of perhaps disastrous consequences for the workers, repeating what happened on other occasions, when union leaders wasted the workers' combativeness in actions leading to disaster (remember the loss of wages in demoralising "small strikes", the poor application of the method of factory occupation and the failure of all the general strikes).

Thus, the above question remains unanswered: who and how is in charge of the workers' movement reorganisation and preparing for the plan of struggle?

We believe the question, apparently so difficult, has a straight answer. In the last stage, factory by factory, the workers waged a multitude of small- and medium-sized battles defending stability, demanding payment of wages or other elementary demands.

The union leadership was not involved in this process of struggle. It only took part in some negotiations and many activists can point to several they "surrendered".

This means that throughout the last stage, the workers' movement at factory level gave itself authentic leaders, who have replaced those who only show up in the elections.

While the union bureaucracy abandons the elementary tasks and it outright defects (Loholaberry<sup>5</sup> has just pointed out the convenience of discussing collective agreements by the factory and not by the union, acknowledging the inability of their leadership), new leadership is forged from below, in an underground process that will emerge when the first overall actions begin.

Well, then. This new vanguard, still dispersed, has the task of preparing the plan of struggle, just as it has prepared the factory battles with genuine success.

It is a matter of bringing together the vanguard activists dispersed in inter-factory meetings, in trade union branches and, finally, the whole workers' movement. *Palabra Obrera* is in this task, raising the discussion of the plan of struggle in activists' meetings and unifying the action with the most useful slogan of this stage of reorganisation: Grassroots Congress of the CGT, attended by freely elected comrades not belonging to the union apparatus, not hired. This Grassroots Congress, which can be achieved at regional and national levels, as it has been achieved on a smaller scale in some unions, is the best guarantee for the discussion and implementation of the plan of struggle.

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5 **Juan Carlos Loholaberry** was a bureaucrat of the Textile Workers Association (AOT) and a member of the leadership of the 62 Organizations. [Editor]