



**Nahuel Moreno**

**The Gorilla Coup  
of 1955**

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## The Gorilla Coup of 1955

1954-1956

(Translated from the Spanish edition by Editorial El Socialista, 2012)

**English translation:** Daniel Iglesias

**Cover and interior design:** Daniel Iglesias

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Buenos Aires, 2019

[cehus2014@gmail.com](mailto:cehus2014@gmail.com)



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## Foreword to the 2012 Spanish edition

In the 1940s, Peronism emerged in Argentina. Since then it has endured as one of the main protagonists of the country's political and economic life.

One of the most outstanding features of Peronism in its origins is that being a bourgeois nationalist political movement, it won the massive and fervent support of the working class, transforming itself into the backbone of its union organisation. For decades, the advances and setbacks of the workers have been — and somehow continue to be, although Peronism has long since lost that devotion that was synthesised in “life for Peron” — directly linked to this support to a bourgeois political leadership and a bureaucratic union.

For its part, a tiny revolutionary force also began to develop in those same years. We refer to the current of Trotskyism led by Nahuel Moreno, which was taking its first steps in its bonds with the workers in the industrial heart of the time, Avellaneda, in Greater Buenos Aires. This is how a small organisation was founded in 1944, the *Grupo Obrero Marxista* (Marxist Workers Group, GOM).

To define very briefly the characteristics that identify this current, let's say it was the only sector of Trotskyism that set out to grow alongside the Peronist workers, in their struggles, from their internal commissions and delegates committees, but fighting politically the government the workers supported. Specifically, it did not capitulate to the pressure of Peronist bourgeois nationalism. At the same time, it also fought against the growing bureaucratisation of the unions, demanding trade unionism independent of all bosses' governments and with democratic and assembly methods.

In this work, Ediciones El Socialista reissues two fundamental works to place the historical events that culminated with the fall of Peron's government in 1955, and a third, the 1956 pamphlet in which it responded to the situation and the political and union tasks open with the gorilla<sup>1</sup> victory. These texts by Nahuel Moreno express the theoretical elaboration and the political proposals developed in the direct heat of the participation in the class struggle in the 1950s.

In 1954, *Key Year of Peronism*, the central definition of that time was developed: “No economic, political, or military phenomenon of any Latin American country can be understood if it is not understood that as of 1939 the Yankee colonisation plan became an immediate threat, an urgent problem for all Latin American countries.” After the invasion of Guatemala in 1954 and the fall of the nationalist government of Jacobo Arbenz, the text pointed out, only Argentina had not yet succumbed to the imperialist offensive. This was the fundamental framework for guiding a revolutionary policy in face of the Peronist government and for the workers who followed it.

The US imperialist offensive intensified in 1955, fuelled by growing opposition to the government among the bosses, the active mobilisation of its faithful from the Catholic Church, and the “gorilla” parties — the Radical, Social-democratic and Communist parties.

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1 **Gorilla** is a term from Argentina's domestic politics, historically used to refer in a derogatory or pejorative way 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”.

The work *Who knew how to fight against the "liberating revolution" before September 16, 1955?*, published for the first time in 1957, collected Moreno's texts published in the newspaper *La Verdad* or in leaflets distributed by the Avellaneda militants grouped then in the Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution (PSRN). PSRN was a party led by brothers Enrique and Emilio Dickmann, who had distanced themselves from the Socialist Party for their anti-worker positions and had managed to obtain electoral legality in 1954.

In its pages, the reader can follow step by step the Yankee and gorilla offensive, the comings and goings of the Peronist government, and the alternative proposals put forward by the Trotskyists. The reproduction of some flyers is striking. For example, the one distributed in the very afternoon of 16 June, or the one calling to the general strike for 17 October of that tragic year and that the workers fulfilled massively and spontaneously despite the repression.

Once the defeat of the workers and the proscription of Peronism was finished, Moreno published in 1956 a pamphlet entitled *After Peron, what?*, never reissued since then. In it, he presented a Marxist analysis of the class character of Peronism from its origins, its role in preventing the workers from developing an alternative of political independence, and the reasons for its defeat in the face of the imperialist offensive. But even more importantly, he presented a revolutionary political proposal, which at that time was being developed by the organisation *Palabra Obrera* [Worker's Word].

Over 50 years have gone by. Even today, the Argentine working class has not managed to build a political alternative independent of any bosses' government, particularly of the successive Peronist governments, although they no longer have that solidity of the early times. To advance in this way, and fundamentally in the perspective of achieving an authentic government of the workers and the people and the victory of the socialist revolution, the experience and the elaborations that Nahuel Moreno and his current forged in his long career are an essential tool. This is why the reissue of these works, which are at the same time both, lived history and present and future political struggle.

**The editors**

Buenos Aires, 2012

**Warning for the 2019 edition:**

All notes in this edition are by the editor unless noted otherwise.

## Foreword to the 1974 Spanish edition

EDICIONES PLUMA presents under the title *The gorilla coup of 1955* the third edition of two works of great value to understand Peronism. It does so thinking of the working-class and student youth, of the young activists who did not live through the "Peron era". If the reader is a student or young professional from the middle class, it is likely he heard at home "Peron ruined the country", "Peron was a fascist", etc. A young worker will have heard, on the contrary, "Peron was the greatest thing we had; everything we have is because of him".

Today we observe how the process is reversed in the new generations. The University was, since 1945, a stronghold of the "contra". The student movement was directed by the Argentine University Federation (FUA), controlled by the Communist Party. The student union was the transmission belt of the clerical-bosses-imperialist reaction in the University, until the fall of Peron.

At present, the Peronist groups proliferate in the student movement with the most varied acronyms (FEN, JUP, OUP, Iron Guard, etc.), Peronism wins the elections in the student organisations and is a majority in the mass meetings.

In the workers' movement, the inverse phenomenon takes place (more slowly). Although the working class voted massively for Peron, it did not vote for the Social Pact, or for the Triennial Plan, or for the reform of the Penal Code, or for the laws of Professional Associations and of Dispensability. This is why all the workers' disputes attempt objectively against these pillars of Peron's politics, although some of the currents that lead them to call themselves Peronist. The union bureaucrats (always fishing for Trotskyists and infiltrators, always ready to sabotage any dispute) are the ones who most agitate the Peronist jersey. Of those who the workers' movement recognises as its leaders, some are not Peronist (Paez, Salamanca, Tosco) and others say they are (Jaime) but they organise opposition slates in the union elections and they crash at every step against Peron's policies.

This Peron of the Three-Year Plan that favours foreign capital, is he the same who 25 years ago stopped the penetration of Yankee imperialism? Because the conquest "in depth" of Argentina takes place from the gorilla coup of 1955 when all the rest of Latin America already was a Yankee semi-colony. This Peron of the Social Pact, of the laws of Professional Associations and Dispensability, is he the same who over 25 years ago allowed the establishing of Internal Commissions and the holding of Collective Bargaining Agreements? This Peron of the reform to the Penal Code, is he the same who over 25 years ago sanctioned the article 14B of the Constitution? Where is the key?

To understand these contradictions, there is nothing better than remembering the gorilla coup of 1955 and Peron's policy in that period.

16 September 1955 is one of the darkest dates in the history of the Argentine workers' movement. The gorilla coup that overthrew Peron started a period of misery, repression, and submission of the country to Yankee imperialism. It was a bosses' and imperialist coup, in which the Church played the role of spearhead and propagandist in the civil milieu.

## Was Peron consistently anti-imperialist?

By the mid-1950s almost all of Latin America was a semi-colony of Yankee imperialism. Almost all, because one country resisted: Argentina.

Indeed, taking advantage of the circumstances of an exceptional economic situation and the withdrawal of weakened British imperialism at the end of the war, Peron had resisted the entry of the Yankees. He relied on the only force capable of opposing imperialism: the workers' movement.

The economic situation begins to deteriorate after 1949. But the effects are not immediately noticed. The Korean War, which brought with it the consequent demand for cereals, meat, and raw materials and the increase in the prices of these products in the world market, provides a respite to the economy. This situation lasted until 1952. From then on, with the relentless tightening of the imperialist siege, the deterioration of the economy assumes alarming proportions. It is then that the Peronist government shows its true character; when the bosses demand unity with imperialism and the growing exploitation of the workers' movement in order to maintain their profits.

Facing the dilemma of mobilising the workers' movement or yielding to the pressures of imperialism and the Argentine bosses, Peron chooses the last path. In 1953, the Foreign Investment Law was passed, allowing foreign capital to remit abroad the profits got from the exploitation of Argentine workers, tax exemptions and other advantages. A US\$ 125 million loan granted by the US Eximbank is added to another of US\$ 60 million to build the SOMISA steel plant in San Nicolas. Also, from this time dates the contract with the California Oil Co (multinational oil monopoly belonging to the Rockefeller family), which gives this company 49,000 hectares of Patagonian land for its exclusive exploitation for 40 years.

These economic measures are accompanied by others in the international political arena. We can mention, among many, not having said or done anything against the 1954 gorilla coup in Guatemala when General Castillo Armas, at the service of the United Fruit Company and helped by the CIA, overthrows the nationalist regime of Jacobo Arbenz. Even worse, the Peronist government was one of the first to recognise the new pro-imperialist regime.

This political course does not allow us to accuse Peron of being an agent of Yankee imperialism; but we do have to say that, instead of mobilising the working class against it, he granted it concessions. Why?

## Was Peron really against the bosses?

Yankee imperialism was not the only sector that put pressure on the Peronist government. Although the working class had achieved important economic concessions, the favourable economic situation of the early post-war years had allowed Peron to guarantee, at the same time, that the bosses continued to get great profits.

1952 marks a change also in this field. The industrial machinery was worn out and there were no funds to replace it. The bourgeoisie sought to capitalise and demanded greater exploitation of the workers' movement. But Peron knows his strength lies precisely in the support of the workers and, although he wants to help the bosses, he does not want to lose this support. This is why he looks for Yankee investments. With the inflow of dollars, he plans to satisfy the bosses' demands.

What are the measures that Peron did not take? The Peronist government did not carry out an agrarian reform, which could have destroyed the large estates and increased agricultural production. The property of the livestock oligarchy remained intact. The same happened with the most important sectors of industry. At that time industries emerged, such as light metalwork, which in the hands of bosses are organised according to their profits.

A country is not "capitalised" by bringing dollars (whose investors then take huge profits), to give credits to a private industry that only gives profits to its owners. To "capitalise" the country means to nationalise most of the industry, to make it produce for the benefit of the country. Only one sector can achieve it: the working class. The bosses are interested in producing only for their benefit. (For example, there are eight large "mechanical" factories in the country, all eight produce automobiles, none produce tractors or harvesters although the agricultural machinery is totally obsolete).

## The Congress of Productivity — a synthesis of Peronist politics against the bourgeoisie and imperialism

The Congress of Productivity and Social Welfare, held in March 1955, is a symbol of the time. Let's see, otherwise, its agenda:

1. The importance of the man factor.
2. Respect for workers' gains.
3. The evil of absenteeism.
4. Workers' responsibility.

This agenda does not mention wages, the problem of housing, or the problems of the working people in general. In the country there is a parasitic oligarchy, which makes the land yield much less than it can give; the Congress of Productivity does not talk about expropriating it. Foreign trade is in the hands of the bosses and monopolies, which trade in the same way they produce: for their exclusive benefit. The Congress of Productivity does not call on the government to monopolise foreign trade, so what the country needs is imported and what yields more profit can be exported. The industry is in private hands; the Congress of Productivity does not demand its nationalisation, to make it produce according to the needs of the country. There are giant imperialist monopolies in the country (today they are called multinational companies): Standard Oil, Kaiser Corporation, Mercedes Benz, the meatworks, Bunge & Born, just to mention the largest, Yankee, European and Argentinean ones. These companies exploit thousands of workers and take huge profits abroad, covered by the Foreign Investment Law. The Congress of Productivity does not demand the repeal of this ominous law and the expropriation of those companies be controlled by those who make them produce, the workers,

Argentina is tied to imperialism by colonising pacts, such as the OAS and Rio de Janeiro, which state the country can be attacked at any time or must participate in the assault on a sister country, if and when it suits you the Yankees. The Congress of Productivity does not demand the immediate break from these colonising pacts.

What does the Congress of Productivity talk about? Of the need to produce more and more (workers' responsibility) and not miss work (the evil of absenteeism). Those who work are not the national and imperialist bosses but the workers. To produce more for the country and the working class? No; as we have just seen, riches will continue to flow into the hands of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. What does the worker receive? Nothing he did not have before: "the respect to the workers' gains".

With this panorama, the most important thing (which would only exist without the shortcomings mentioned) could not be missing: a global plan for the Argentine economy that would increase productivity but for the benefit of the entire society, not a group of exploiters. No matter how many times you go round and round, this does not sound much like pro-worker, anti-bosses and anti-imperialist politics.

## Who came out to fight on 16 June?

If there is one thing Peron cannot complain about, it is for lack of coup evidence: the growing pressure of Yankee imperialism on the one hand and of the bosses on the other is joined by the propaganda developed by the Church. This had become the main voice for the reaction; the pulpits were political tribunes. Great demonstrations started from the churches with posters and slogans of "Christ the King" and "Peron die".

Peron's attitude at this time is summarised in a phrase that has gone down in history: "This match I play alone". This speech dates from 14 June. Two days before the coup! What does it mean? The workers' movement must not mobilise. But it did mobilise.

The navy carried out the coup of 16 June. The army, not very sure of its forces, did not participate. This is what prevented the military victory of the coup.

16 June is one of the most heroic days of the Argentine workers' movement. Without counting on a truly revolutionary leadership, the workers took to the streets, in defence of "their" government.

Although neither the government nor the CGT (General Confederation of Labour) called the workers under arms (the conscripts) to join the workers, although they did not attempt to organise or arm the workers, the workers' movement goes out on the streets to rob the armouries, to burn churches, which functioned as political committees of the "contra", to fight the gorillas. It is true the CGT called a stoppage of repudiation of 24 hours but urging everyone to stay in their homes in the name of the "venerated memory of Eva Peron".

It would take a long time to reproduce Peron's speeches. But we can synthesise them like this: for those who massacred the workers in Plaza de Mayo, "a clean slate"; for the army, "the chiefs and officers have been able to fulfil their duty"; for the Church, "they are four crazy priests", "I have said a thousand times I am Catholic"; for the workers "from home to work and from work to home" and "you have to work harder and harder".

The army and part of the bourgeoisie did not come out with everything in this coup. They felt insecure of their own strength, given the massive support Peron received from the workers. But the general rehearsal of 16

June showed them two things. One, that Peron was not willing to mobilise the working class. It is true that in the following months Peron used the threat of creating workers' militias as a weapon of blackmail against the gorilla bosses and imperialism. But everything remained at that — a threat. No concrete action was taken to create them; instead, much was said about the loyalty of the "San Martinian army".

The other fact, the one that terrorised the bourgeoisie and made it gamble everything was the workers' mobilisation. Although no revolutionary leadership with mass influence raised it, the workers could out into the streets, get weapons by any means, and fight. Imperialism and the bourgeoisie learned here that the workers' mobilisation could turn Peron's empty threats into a reality. Terrified by that reality, on 16 September they unleashed all their fury on the Argentine workers' movement.

### "I don't want to shed Argentine blood"

Peron could have expropriated imperialism, the landed oligarchy, and the industrial bourgeoisie. He could have liquidated the bourgeois army and created the popular militias. He had the enthusiastic support of the workers. If there was any doubt about it, on 16 June it was more than conclusive proof to dispel it. If a whole country is paralysed by a general strike, if the workers are armed and have strong and prestigious leadership, there is no force capable of resisting the workers' movement.

Why did Peron not do any of this? Here lies the key to the victory of the gorilla coup of 1955. These measures would have attacked the bourgeois property regime, the capitalist system. Adopting them would have meant to wrest power from the hands of the bourgeoisie to hand it over to the workers. Peron did not do it and thus revealed the bosses' nature of his government, destined to defend the interests of capitalism.

Peron justified it saying "I didn't want to spill the blood of Argentines". Perhaps he "forgets" Felipe Valiese, the executions of Jose Leon Suarez, of the Resistance, where the blood of thousands of workers was spilled. It would have been more honest on his part to have said: "I don't want to spill the blood of bourgeois Argentines; I don't want the working class to take power."

Nowadays, it causes indignation to hear Peron say the bloody coup of 11 September 1973 that overthrew the Chilean nationalist regime resulted from Allende's haste. Allende, according to Peron, did wrong in expropriating the copper mines in the hands of imperialism, should not have allowed the existence of the Industrial Cordons. If so, how does he explain his own fall in 1955? Did Peron expropriate imperialism? Did he allow the existence of some organism of workers' power? It is clear he didn't. And this did not stop the bosses and imperialism from giving their coup to establish a regime of super-exploitation of the workers' movement and a total sell out of the country to Yankee imperialism.

In the workers' movement and in the student movement, there are currently honest leaders who want to develop the mobilisation in search of greater gains for the working class and the people and who call themselves Peronists. But they cannot hide in their publications, such as *El Descamisado* [The Shirtless] and *Militancia* [Militancy], their astonishment at events such as the massacre of Ezeiza when Peron returned to the country, the sanction of repressive laws in the reform of the Penal Code, or in the face of the Social Pact. Some argue Peron is surrounded by union bureaucrats and corrupt politicians who do not allow him to act. Others begin to question Peron himself. Faced with the semi-fascist police coup that overthrew the governor of Cordoba, Obregon Cano, and the approval of this coup by Peron to decree the intervention to the province, the Cordovan *Peronismo de Base* [Rank-and-file Peronism] observed with stupor that the takeover decree "bears the signature of the Ezeiza murderers, of those who sanctioned the reform of the Penal Code, and also the signature of General Peron... Here it cannot be said Peron is surrounded... Peron is departing from what we voted on 23 September."

These working class and young student comrades need to know Peron's policies before the gorilla coup of 1955. They need to know that the pacts of Peron with the Radicals, the concessions to imperialism, etc., are not great manoeuvres to deceive and disarm the enemy but skilful tactics to save the skin of the bourgeoisie before each rise of the workers' and popular movement.

### How did the left act?

Most of the groups that move particularly in the student movement and the guerrilla groups that exist today had not appeared in the Peron era. The guerrilla groups appear in the middle of the retreat of the workers' movement during the government of Ongania (1966–1969). They reflect the desperation of the petty bourgeoisie in the face of its impoverishment, the result of the sell out to Yankee imperialism and the immobility of the working

class and they go on to individual and terrorist action in search of “shortcuts” to the revolution. The hundreds of small sects that exist in the student movement are the product of the rise began with the Cordobazo (May 1969), scattered by the lack of a strong revolutionary pole in the workers’ movement.

But the reader should know some leftist parties did exist in the Peron era: the Communist Party, Jorge Abelardo Ramos,<sup>1</sup> *Política Obrera* [Workers’ Politics] (or, rather, its predecessor Praxis) and the Trotskyism organised at the time in the Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party (National Revolution), currently *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* [Socialist Workers Party].

As we have judged Peron for his attitude towards the gorilla coup of 1955, we will evaluate the left parties for their role in the clerical-bosses-imperialist offensive.

## The Communist Party

On 22 December 1945, the Communist Party held a national conference to define its electoral policy. The central report was delivered by its general secretary, Victorio Codovilla, and was published later under the title of *Defeating Nazi-Peronism*, title which is, in itself, a whole definition. There we read that, while there may be some difference of form between Peron and the European fascist regimes, “Peron’s politics, tactics, and objectives resemble, like a drop of water to another, those of fascists everywhere in the world.”

The document is not limited to defining Peronism; it also projects a course of action. It calls for the creation of a coalition (the Democratic Union) integrated, always according to Codovilla, by “the most conscientious and combative part of the workers’ movement and the peasantry... The majority of the army, the navy, and part of the police... the democratic sectors of Catholicism... the progressive sectors of industry, commerce, agriculture, livestock, and finance.” Also, although it is not said so explicitly, Yankee imperialism — one of the most important speeches of the founding congress of the Democratic Union was delivered by the US ambassador Spruille Braden.

In short: for, the Communist Party, Peron was a fascist; to face him, the workers’ movement had to be tied to the army, the police, the Church and the bourgeoisie, bankers and oligarchs, and... Yankee imperialism!

This was the consistent policy of the Communist Party during all that time, although towards the end it denounced Yankee imperialism. But they were verbal denunciations: in the University, FUA acted like a transmission belt of the gorillas, in the workers’ movement they called for the creation of “independent trade union organisations”.

All the communist literature of 1954 and 1955 points to the existence of two parallel dangers of the same importance — imperialism and the corporate-fascist government of Peron, an ally of the first. If this were true, we ask the young comrades who may not know history in depth: Why did Yankee imperialism do so much to overthrow Peron? If the Peronist government had “sold out” to imperialism, as *Nuestra Palabra* said, then the Yankees would have erected a monument to Peron, they would not have overthrown him. This attitude of not calling the workers’ movement to unite against Yankee imperialism and the Argentine gorillas as fundamental enemies of the working class is only one aspect of the matter. The other aspect is the policy regarding the Church. The Church, let’s recall, was the civil mainstay of the coup. Communist propaganda does not say a single word denouncing the role of the priests. On the contrary, it was one of the most ardent supporters of the legality of the Christian Democratic Party and the release of the priests imprisoned for their anti-government agitation. It accompanied this with great praises to “the Catholic masses, animated by democratic and progressive sentiments”.

Trying, faced with the bosses-imperialist offensive, to divide the workers’ movement into Peronists and anti-Peronists; putting an equal sign between Peron and Yankee imperialism; not denouncing the Church as promoter of the gorilla coup but rather fighting for its “democratic rights”: this is the goal and concrete policy, evidenced clearly in *Nuestra Palabra* and in the documents of the Communist Party, which allows us to say this party was a conscious ally of the clerical-bosses-imperialist coup.

Bearing this in mind, no communist comrade can be surprised that his party has sent him to vote for Alende and for Sueldo. Let’s recall who these gentlemen were. Oscar Alende was governor of Buenos Aires province under the presidency of Frondizi, to whose Party he belonged. Frondizi, yes, the party of the oil contracts and the Conintes plan and the “free” teaching (read: religious) in the schools, in opposition to secular education. Horacio Sueldo, former leader of the Christian Democratic Party, who formally disagrees with the more pro-Yankee wing of the

<sup>1</sup> **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.

Church (Caggiano) but has never spoken out in favour of a workers' dispute (as have the priests of the Third World, for example). Both Alende and Sueldo were officials of the "executioner";<sup>2</sup> established after the 1955 gorilla coup.

The policy of labelling Peron as a fascist lasted 27 years and eight months. At the end of that period: miracle, Peron became progressive! The Communist Party orders its members, who should be quite confused, to vote for Peron in the elections of 23 September 1973. *Nuestra Palabra* clarifies this is a "programmatic vote" since it aimed to facilitate the realisation of the programmatic guidelines of FREJULI [Justicialist Liberation Front]. Perhaps it forgot that five months earlier it had stated these programmatic guidelines could "be endorsed even by *Nueva Fuerza*".<sup>3</sup>

There are three decades of history, from the alliance with the bosses and the Yankees to overthrow "Nazi-Peronism", to the vote for the "New Force" program. Let the young activists judge them.

## Politica Obrera

To begin with, it is necessary to clarify that *Politica Obrera* [Workers' Policy] claims to be Trotskyist, although it does not belong but explicitly repudiates the world Trotskyist organisation, the Fourth International. This small party is the heir of the intellectual group Praxis, formed in the mid-1950s by Dr Silvio Frondizi. The two future leaders of *Politica Obrera*, Jorge Altamira and Marcelo took part in it a time later.

About other groups, you can talk long and hard about their policy before the gorilla coup; you may or may not agree with what they stated or did. What the Praxis group said and did is summarised in two words: absolutely nothing. Not a word about the possibility of a coup before 16 June; as for 16 September, they did not prepare in the least to face it.

The aforementioned Altamira and Marcelo formed, at the beginning of the 1960s, the party *Política Obrera*. They surpassed their master, Frondizi, in one aspect: they went from pure propaganda to practical action, in factories and neighbourhoods. They inherited a heavy burden from Praxis: its sectarianism and opportunism revealed in all its politics. Here we will deal with their line for Peronism.

If there is a group that endeavoured to face the bosses-imperialist coup, it was the Trotskyists, who were at the moment of the coup grouped in the Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party (National Revolution).

Acting within the PS(RN) allowed the Trotskyists access to legality. In turn, legality allowed them to spread their policy widely and massively: the terrible, immediate danger that lies in wait for the working class is the gorilla-imperialist coup. All workers have a duty to unite against this deadly threat to defeat it. They must rely on their own strength, not on Peron's surrendering policy. This is what *Política Obrera* calls "surrender to Peronism".

Reading this book, where that policy is widely explained and documented, will allow the reader to judge whether it was capitulation or not. What policy did the Praxis group have? We have already said: absolutely none, they did not even say the coup was coming. And that, in plain English, is called capitulation to the bourgeoisie, the Church, and imperialism. Altamira and Marcelo will be able to argue the policy of Praxis was formulated by Silvio Frondizi. Not even this excuse remains because in forming *Política Obrera* they did not make the least self-critical balance of their line against the gorilla coup of 1955. Who capitulated to whom?

In the presidential elections of 1964, Peron, in the framework of his agreements with the radicals, ordered the support of the Illia<sup>4</sup> government. At that time, the 62 Organisations,<sup>5</sup> led by Vandor,<sup>6</sup> refuse to comply. The Trotskyist party *Palabra Obrera*, considering the biggest obstacle the workers' movement had was its discipline to a bosses' movement like Peronism, supported the indiscipline of Vandor as a progressive phenomenon that accelerated the Peronist crisis while warning about the bureaucratic character of Vandor's leadership and the possibility of it

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2 Among workers' activists, the gorilla government was called "the executioners revolution" instead of "liberation revolution" as they called themselves.

3 **Nueva Fuerza** [New Force] was a right-wing and ultra-liberal political party founded by Alvaro Alsogaray in 1972 with the intention of participating in the presidential and legislative elections of March 1973,

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

5 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.

6 **Augusto Timoteo Vandor** (1923-1969) was a bureaucrat General Secretary of the Metal Workers Union (UOM). After the military coup that defeated Peron, he promoted within Peronism a participatory faction willing to agree with the de facto government and proposed a "Peronism without Peron".

linking to another bourgeois sector. At this time, *Política Obrera* showed its sectarian face: unable to understand the positive aspect of Vandor's break, it accused the Trotskyists of "capitulating before the bureaucracy".

In early 1965, *Política Obrera* would show its other side, the opportunist one. In the elections of that year, Peron ordered to vote for the bourgeois candidates of the Peronist extreme right, of the Popular Union. The left, at that time, called for a blank vote to accelerate the Peronist crisis. *Política Obrera* said: "The reasons that lead to postulate a proletarian regrouping on 14 March, against the government and voting for the Popular Union, are based on the need to avoid an electoral dispersal of the class and, eventually, to get a victory, which on the one hand it means, formally, Peronist bourgeois deputies, on the other, it can help to modify the current correlation of forces."

Critically supporting a sector of the bureaucracy that breaks with Peron and raises — albeit momentarily — the political independence of the workers' movement, no way, but no problem supporting the "Peronist bourgeois deputies".

In both cases (critical support to Vandor and blank vote), the Trotskyists had a policy aimed at accelerating the crisis of the Peronist movement and achieving the political independence of the working class. The policy of *Política Obrera* served to strengthen Peronism, slowing its crisis.

Already in more recent times, in the elections of March 1973, *Política Obrera* voted blank, thus becoming confused with some groups of the left (Revolutionary Communist party, PCR and Communist Vanguard, VC) and of the extreme right (Tradition, Family, and Property). A few months later, upon discovering the error of not having presented themselves to elections, they call to vote indistinctly either in blank or for the Trotskyist candidates (PST).

## Abelardo Ramos

This gentleman has deserved in his long career some qualifiers somewhat harsh by the Argentine left: from "police informer", to "intellectual prostitute", and "red courtesan". Following our method, we will look at Mr Ramos under the light of the decisive test which was the Peronist decade and, above all, the gorilla coup of 1955.

Around 1946, Ramos discovers the theory (not his own but he immediately makes it his) that there is a "nationalist industrial bourgeoisie", that this sector is progressive and even revolutionary. This bourgeoisie comes to power with Peron and, from then on, Ramos will give Peron his unconditional support and will follow to the letter all the swings of his politics.

Thus, in his book *Revolución y contrarrevolución en la Argentina* [Revolution and counter-revolution in Argentina], commenting on Peron's negotiations with imperialism and anticipating the explanations given by Frigerio and Alsogaray<sup>7</sup> to justify the sell out, he will say: "... this industry of imperialist capital pays revenues to the Argentine state, proletarianises a part of its population, develops a modern economic activity that rises the standard of life in general and objectively strengthens the country." This about the contracts with Kaiser, with California Oil Co! For the first time in history, a "Marxist" had discovered that imperialist penetration can benefit a country. The important thing is that the industries be there, it does not matter their owners are foreigners and take all the profits. This runs parallel to the policy of Peron, who before June 1955, when the pressure of imperialism and the gorilla bourgeoisie were increasing, sought to make concessions to relieve the pressure. Before the coup of 16 June, Ramos said absolutely nothing, neither about the Church nor about the signs of the coup. The following day (17 June) he wrote in the newspaper *Democracia*: "The army founded by San Martin, tempered in the gaucho wars and organised by Roca and Riccheri, fulfilled its duty until the end..."

Peron said exactly the same! No word about the street fighting waged by the class, no mention of the policies of the government and the CGT that allowed the workers to go unarmed into the street.

Between June and September 1955, Ramos publishes a magazine with the name of *Izquierda* [Left]. This magazine is remarkable because, despite the time in which it came out (its second and last issue appeared on 19 September 1955), it says absolutely nothing of the imminence of the gorilla coup.

In its second issue, the main article bore the title of "The armed militias: a bulwark of the Argentine popular revolution". One may agree or disagree with "popular revolution", but the important thing is the "armed militias". Had he come to the correct line? No; let us recall that Peron had threatened imperialism and the gorilla bosses with the creation of popular militias to blackmail them but he never created them. Ramos simply echoed Peron's schemes.

<sup>7</sup> **Rogelio Frigerio** (1914–2006) was an Argentine economist and politician. Adherent of developmentalism, in 1958 he was Secretary of Socio-Economic Affairs of the critical Economics Ministry. **Alvaro Alsogaray** (1913–2005) was an Argentine politician and businessman. Minister of Economy during 1959-1962, he was one of the principal proponents of economic liberalism in modern Argentina.

Does Peron make contracts with the California Oil Co? Ramos talks about the need to extract oil and how beneficial foreign investments are. Peron praises the attitude of the army before the June coup? Ramos discovers the "San Martinian army". Peron threatens to create militias? Ramos calls to create militias. With this policy of constant capitulation to the national bourgeoisie and Peronism, Ramos could hardly have fought the gorilla coup of 1955. And who was, according to Ramos, responsible for the fall? Not the criminal policy of Peron and the CGT: the "sepyo left". This sepyo left would be responsible for the fall of other "revolutionary" regimes such as Torres in Bolivia and Allende in Chile.

His most recent capitulation: in the March 1973 elections, he based his electoral campaign on the fact that if he succeeded, he would call elections again in 60 days to hand over the power to Peron. In the elections of September of the same year, he dispensed with "calling again"; he directly voted for Peron.

## Trotskyism

Finally, only Trotskyism remains, as persecuted by the gorilla contra as by the Peronist bureaucracy. How does this current characterise Peron? This is what Nahuel Moreno answered in 1954, *Key Year of Peronism*. What policy did the Trotskyists have before the gorilla coup of 1955? The answer is in the most representative articles of the Trotskyist press of the time, written by the same author, and compiled here under the title of *Who Knew How to Fight Against the Liberating Revolution before 16 September 1955?*

**Daniel Zadunaisky**

15 March 1974

# 1954, Key Year of Peronism

The most important events to take into account in the working class struggle against imperialism and capitalism, during the last decade, have been:

1. The process of colonisation of Latin America by Yankee imperialism intensified enormously since the beginning of the Second World War; its course continued with a series of important victories for imperialism and reached its climax with the intervention in Guatemala. This intervention signals an important change, in which Yankee imperialism goes on to colonise practically the entire continent, even with armed intervention.

2. Although British imperialism got as much or more colonising covenants from Peronism than it did during the infamous decade,<sup>1</sup> it is a fact it could not use them and its relationship with the country and with the government changed as a consequence of its weakening and the world crisis. The actual retreat of British imperialism, regardless of the papers signed to date, could not be used by Yankee imperialism to replace it and colonise us. This was because of exceptional historical circumstances: a semi-colonial bourgeois economy not complementary to Yankee imperialism; the determined support of British imperialism; the relative power of this bourgeois economy, a privileged situation as a consequence of the war and the postwar period. The disappearance of some of these exceptional historical circumstances increases the danger of Yankee colonisation.

3. The capitalist development in the country after an intense evolution during the last 20 years, added to the agrarian crisis that took place in this period, has a decisive influence and weight in the current economy of the [Argentine] Republic. This process of industrial development was accompanied, during the decade from 1940 to 1950, by a general enrichment which, as of this last year, transforms into a period of slow worsening of the general situation of the country and of the working class. After more than 10 years in which the government did not appeal to the loans of imperialism, Cereijo,<sup>2</sup> in 1950, materialises the first loan of imperialism in the Peronist era. The law of establishment of capitals is another way to open the door to new direct or indirect loans. The situation of the working class would worsen day by day, although not in a catastrophic way.

4. The privileged situation of the country during the last 10 years and the profound differences of the Argentine economy with the other Latin American countries have done no more than hide the scourges of the national economic structure: backwardness of the industry, large landed property, petty internal market for the lack of Latin American economic and political unity, production to increase capitalist and imperialist profits. These disguised blights begin to manifest and threaten to ruin the country and the workers.

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1 The **Infamous Decade** in Argentina is the name given to the 13 years that began in 1930 with the coup d'état against President Hipolito Yrigoyen by Jose Felix Uriburu. This decade was marked by lack of popular participation, prosecution to the opposition, torture to political prisoners, growing dependence of Argentina from British imperialism, and the growth of corruption.

2 **Ramon Antonio Cereijo** (1913-2003) was an economist, Minister of Finance of the Peron government.

5. During the last 10 years of general enrichment, there was a colossal strengthening and renewal of the classes most linked to the capitalist industrial production. The industrial bourgeoisie, the modern middle class, and the industrial proletariat came to have a new specific weight in the relations between the classes. At present, the working class has an extraordinary specific weight because its increase in absolute figures is much greater than that of the other classes, which, added to its special characteristics, gives it a colossal superiority over all classes of the country. In addition, the specific weight of the capitalist zone par excellence, Greater Buenos Aires, which has more than a quarter [of the working class] of the entire Republic.

6. The recent formation or strengthening of these classes has not given them time to crystallise, neither them nor their more advanced sectors, in political organisations that reflect their interests. But this political crystallisation is inevitable, even if it is opposed by the attempt of a Peronist totalitarian organisation. Peronism wants to stop or control the new political organisations in formation.

7. The exploiters as a whole, mainly the new industrial class, try to overcome the crisis in development with the equivocal slogan of productivity, which for them means greater exploitation of the workers, and through economic agreements with Yankee imperialism.

8. All this change in relations between the classes, the government, and Yankee imperialism was reflected in important political changes. Within the ultra-reactionary nature of its social and political legislation, the government allowed a broader democratic play with the working class and Yankee imperialism, with the aim of strengthening its internal situation in its negotiations.

Thus, on the one hand, it strengthened its relations with Yankee imperialism and, on the other hand, it started a new policy in relation to wages: apparent lack of interest so as not to lose face. In the face of the emergence of a new political force that tries to play the game of complete capitulation to Yankee imperialism—the Church and its party—the government tries to preserve itself with a timid campaign that does not attack either imperialism or the Church at its base.

9. The emergence of Frondizism<sup>3</sup> at the head of Radicalism and the attempts to form a Catholic party show the crisis of Radicalism as an organ of capitulation to Yankee imperialism and as a representative of the exploiters who want that capitulation. Frondizism is no longer useful to those plans and the Church arises to create this political organ.

10. The working class had begun a whole mobilisation; slow, but mobilisation nevertheless, which was cut by the failure and the defeats of the last collective agreements. Despite the defeat, there has been learning by the working class, mainly by its vanguard. They have understood the role of the CGT leadership and the harmful dependence of the unions on the State. Despite the momentary retreat of the working class, the vanguard assimilates the experience and prepares for the new rise, which must begin very soon, in the form of skirmishes against the concrete manifestations of the bosses' offensive. The great experience the vanguard has taken or is taking out is that the struggle for economic improvements becomes a struggle against the state trade union bureaucracy and against the government's repressive measures and of union control.

### Let's stop the Yankee plan to colonise Latin America

Because geographically it is part of the same continent, US imperialism finds itself having to colonise the most developed semi-colonial continent in the world: Latin America (we except Eastern Europe). Latin Americans, in turn, find themselves struggling to achieve full independence and unity against the most powerful imperialism history has known. The two phenomena complement each other: the United States has encountered and will continue to encounter fierce resistance from Latin American countries to its colonisation plans; the struggle of the Latin American countries for their liberation will be one of the most difficult, if not the most difficult. Furthermore, this colonising

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<sup>3</sup> Followers of **Arturo Frondizi** (1908–1995), an Argentinian lawyer and politician who was later on elected President of Argentina. Under his program of “Developmentalism”, he encouraged increased foreign investment.

plan of the United States gives the anti-imperialist struggle an ultra-concrete and simple character: against the Yankee economic, political, and military plans.

The beginning of the last Great War meant a very important change in the inter-imperialist relations and in the Yankee plans for Latin America. The European weakness and the colossal economic weight the United States was acquiring allowed it to accelerate its old plan of total colonisation of our continent. The year 1939 means the beginning of a new stage in Latin America; the stage of the drastic liquidation of the other imperialisms in the exploitation of our continent and the stage of the execution of the Yankee plan of colonisation in it. No economic, political, or military phenomenon of any Latin American country can be understood if it is not understood that as of 1939 the Yankee colonisation plan became an immediate threat, an urgent problem for all Latin American countries. In short, the phenomenon the world has seen clearly after the war, the Yankee plans to control and colonise the world began in 1939 on our continent. This decisive fact was not understood in all its scope by any current of the workers' movement. The world events have accelerated this Yankee tendency to the Latin American colonisation since its failures in the world reinforce its interest to the Latin American colonisation and to entrench themselves in the continent. This is why the struggle and resistance of the Latin American peoples to the American colonisation plans are so important. We are already almost part of the Yankee economic continent and our struggle is as important as that of the Yankee black workers' or peasants' movement.

In fact, this Yankee plan, which was put on the agenda since 1939 because of the circumstances already mentioned, was not denounced, nor understood in all its magnitude and importance for Latin America by any social or political current and, least of all, by the Communist Party, which for years served as a transmission belt of those colonisation plans in the workers' movement. We are no exception: we have not known how to make an exhaustive analysis of that plan and we have not been able to denounce it with all the magnitude and precision that were necessary.

Until the invasion of Guatemala, the Yankee plan had its victories and its defeats, its ups and downs. Although it had progressed, it could not be carried out completely since for its execution the diplomatic norms of the "good neighbour" were observed. The irruption of Castillo Armas in Guatemala is an important leap in the methods of Wall Street. With the dominion over Guatemala, the colonisation plan begins to come to an end. In the last two years, the State Department has managed to control almost all of Latin America; the fall of Vargas,<sup>4</sup> the coup by Batista,<sup>5</sup> Castillo Armas, the taking over of Paz Estenssoro,<sup>6</sup> prove it. Contradictorily, the resistance and clarification of the Latin American mass movement accelerate colossally in relation to Yankee imperialism.

We must understand this relationship of forces, these defeats for the Latin American movement, in order to draw all the necessary conclusions for Latin America and our country, possibly the last stronghold not yet dominated by Yankee imperialism.

### Let us avoid that Yankee imperialism dominate our country

This general trend, based on the colossal power of the US, to immediately transform all Latin America into a colony was clearly reflected in the national economy and politics since 1939. Since then, no political or economic phenomenon can be understood unless it is studied and unless this simple question is raised: what is the tactic of Yankee imperialism, in this emergency, to apply its colonisation plan?

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4 **Getulio Vargas** (1882–1954) was President of Brazil, first as a dictator, from 1930 to 1945, and in a democratically elected term from 1951 until his suicide in 1954. He favoured nationalism, industrialisation, centralisation of the economy, measures which would improve the popular standard of living, and class conciliation. For the latter, Vargas won the nickname "The Father of the Poor".

5 **Fulgencio Batista** (1901–1973) was a military man and Cuban dictator. He was the elected President of Cuba from 1940 to 1944, and the U.S.-backed authoritarian ruler from 1952 to 1959, before being overthrown during the Cuban Revolution.

6 **Víctor Paz Estenssoro** (1907–2001) was a Bolivian lawyer and politician; four times President of Bolivia for the bourgeois *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR – Nationalist Revolutionary Movement).

The crises of the Ortiz<sup>7</sup> government, of Castillo<sup>8</sup> later, and 4 June 1943 are mere episodes in this struggle of Yankee imperialism to colonise our country. Deep economic and social structure reasons, which have nothing to do with any racial characteristics, have conditioned our country not to be totally colonised. The main one of these reasons is that the entire capitalist structure of the country has been based on the production, for the world market, of agricultural products that are competitive of the US production. From this insoluble antagonism arises an organic incompatibility between Yankee imperialism and the national capitalist economy.

To this incompatibility is added the diversification of Argentine foreign trade and capitalist production, which gave the Argentine governments a broad base of manoeuvres. Another important reason is our country has been preponderantly exploited by British imperialism, although not totally. This situation of British semi-colony has lasted approximately until the nationalisation of the railways or until the expiration, by natural death, of the Roca-Runciman Treaty.<sup>9</sup> The nationalisation of the railways shows the setback and general weakness of British imperialism in the world, reflected in particular in Latin America and in our country. Regardless of this, the agreements between British imperialism and the Peronist government, especially the purchase of the railways, subjectively represent a victory of British imperialism, since it weakened according to its momentary plans and convenience and not for an anti-imperialist offensive. Nevertheless, it was still an extraordinary setback. From that moment a period of slight British domination opens; domination that is friendly and social, on a defensive level by the British. Specifically, the senior partner of a firm went bankrupt and the junior partner tried by all means that this bankruptcy was as slight as possible being amenable to the plans of the senior partner. Notwithstanding, bankruptcy was still bankruptcy. This is how British imperialism, through its good relations with Peronism, achieved colonising pacts (mixed exploitation of the railways, an extension of the Roca-Runciman treaty, the signing of the Andes pact, etc.) but was unable, because of its general weakening, to make them comply. The infamous decade, of total submission to the Roca Runciman treaty and to British imperialism, with the nationalisation of the railways, was buried by British exhaustion and not by the anti-imperialist will of the government.

Our tendency was carried away by the unilateral analysis of diplomatic and commercial agreements, without seeing under the water the true relations between imperialism, the country, and the government. It was correct to denounce government capitulations but much more correct would have been to underline the true relations and, what is more important, the changes in inter-imperialist relations and with the country. Even much more favourable, for the country and the bourgeoisie, have been the relations with the other European imperialisms, which have come out of the war practically liquidated. In short, for Latin America, including for our country, the war had a consequence: the only imperialism that remained in a frankly offensive, colonising attitude was Yankee imperialism.

The contradiction for our country is that the war meant objectively — not subjectively — greater independence since British imperialism has not yet been replaced by Yankee imperialism, although this has already achieved two important steps to do so and tends with all its might to achieve it. Peronism is halfway between the weakening of British imperialism and submission to Yankee imperialism. Precisely the weakening of British imperialism explains, ultimately, two decisive facts of Peronism: the need to resort to social demagoguery to get the support of the

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7 **Roberto Marcelino Ortiz** (1886–1942) was an Argentine politician, president of his country between 1938 and 1942. Shortly after he assumed as president, Ortiz became ill with diabetes, a disease that would later leave him completely blind. Because of this event, he delegated his powers to the vice president, Ramon S. Castillo.

8 **Ramon S. Castillo** (1873-1944) was a conservative Argentine lawyer, judge, and politician belonging to the National Democratic Party. In 1938 he became Vice President after the victory of Roberto M. Ortiz. Upon his death in 1942, Castillo assumed the position of President of the Nation. He was overthrown by the military coup known as the Revolution of 1943.

9 The **Roca–Runciman Treaty** was a commercial agreement signed on 1 May 1933 between Argentina and the United Kingdom signed in London by the Vice President of Argentina, Julio Argentino Roca, Jr, and the president of the British Board of Trade, Sir Walter Runciman.

working class and that it has systematically defeated, as a consequence of this support, the internal agents of US imperialism and colonisation.

Until 1944, the government resistance to Yankee imperialism follows the traditional line of relying on British imperialism, European imperialisms, and the bourgeois sectors friendly to them. This traditional anti-Yankee front was weakened day by day: the decay of its spine, British imperialism, and the desertion of fundamental sectors of the big bourgeoisie, financial oligarchy, big industrial bourgeoisie, and grain houses, which go over to the other side, to the pro-Yankee. The anti-Yankee front had to defeat the socialist and communist parties in the service of Yankee imperialism in the workers' movement. This defeat was easy, very easy. Two factors conditioned it: the betrayals of the old parties of the proletariat and the new working class litters not educated in the tradition of those parties. The ease of defeat allowed the subsequent support of the entire working class to the anti-Yankee front, although the working class was added to that front thanks to the demagogy or social concessions the government makes, thanks to the extraordinarily good economic situation of the bourgeoisie.

The support of the working class, en bloc, as a class and throughout the country, allowed Peronism to defeat in the ballot boxes the Democratic Union and subsequently Radicalism as the outpost of Yankee colonisation in the country. These defeats forced Yankee imperialism and the sectors of the bourgeoisie linked to it trying to settle the problem through military coups. The threatening use of the working class, on the one hand, and the strength of the country's economic development, on the other, allowed Peronism to succeed in the coup phase of Yankee imperialism.

The weakening of British imperialism and the latent crisis of the national economy have been forcing the Peronist government to reach, or try to reach, important economic agreements with Yankee imperialism, in its eagerness to save the great capitalist and livestock profits. Imperialism, politically defeated, knows it is, or will be, essential in the economic field and seeks to impose increasingly colonising conditions. All this explains the important capitulations made by the government, which have not been, on the other hand, total surrender. The Rio de Janeiro Treaty and the loan, on the one hand, fall within this relationship; at the same time, the fact the bilateral agreement is not yet signed and the submission is not the total condition, on the other hand, the current contradictory situation.

The Peronist wins indirectly produced a deep crisis in Radicalism. Frondizism, as a new political current that reflects the modern urban middle class, does not provide the same usefulness to Yankee imperialism as [Radical] Unionism. In agreement with the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie, it tries to use the Church to form a large Popular Party that will serve to structure a new Democratic Union, colonising, for the 1958 elections or to accompany, if necessary, the future coup d'états.

The political defeat of Yankee imperialism within the country forced it to change its tactics with the government and with the country. But it did not change its strategy. With either good or bad diplomatic relations, the plan is the same: it totally overpowers us or imposes, if possible, a Castillo Armas. Today, the almost complete Yankee victory in Latin America contrasts with its situation in Argentina.

Imperialism tries to solve this contradiction in favour of its plans, trying to use the critical Argentine economic situation in order to force the government to reach a colonising agreement.

### **Let us unite with other currents to denounce and stop the plans of colonisation of Latin America and our country**

It is our obligation to systematically denounce the plans and advances of Yankee imperialism. Moreover, we must emphasise any independent attitude of the Latin American governments and any hesitation or claudication of them, i.e., the denunciation of the Yankee plans of Latin American colonisation must be a permanent factor of our activity.

Our first denunciations should be about visits by diplomats and secret negotiations. The workers must know what are the proposals and the negotiations carried out with the sinister Yankee imperialism. No secret negotiations!

This campaign against the Yankee colonisation plan must be broad, very broad, without sectarianism: agreements to carry out common acts where these plans are denounced, technical agreements with those timidly resisting these plans, etc. All this must be done in a bold way, without limitations. Everything that is coincidence, in this regard, must be developed without any sectarianism. Let the whole world know the most consistent fighters against the Yankee plan to colonise Latin America are us; that regardless of the antagonism that separates us from all Latin American governments and bourgeois or petty bourgeois currents, and of our intransigent class criticism of them, we stand for the unity and independence of our countries against Yankee colonisation.

At the scale of the United States, we must develop everything that unites the workers and anti-imperialist currents. Our criticism must be to develop this unity and not to hinder it. The diplomatic agreements of Santiago de Chile are positive in their formulation. Our criticism is not to its formulation but to its application by the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy. That the Commission in charge of applying the Santiago Accords be formed by democratically elected representatives of the Chilean and Argentine working class!

In other words, our strategic goal at this stage is to achieve a broad anti-imperialist Congress of Latin American workers to discuss the economic plan for all of Latin America, to paralyse the crisis and prevent the growing misery, to adopt a program of struggle against landowners and the national exploiters and, above all, against the Yankee plan of Latin American colonisation. If the immediate danger is not to understand the need for a bold union against the plans of Yankee imperialism in Latin America and in each of our countries, the opposite danger is to capitulate, to make concessions to the bourgeois tendencies that resist, that have frictions or that openly oppose the Yankee colonisation plans. This aspect of the anti-imperialist struggle, like all the minor ones, cannot deviate us from our historical goal: to liquidate exploitation in any of its forms or manifestations, with us at the head as representatives of the working class.

Just as we are for the defence of the country, of all its inhabitants, against the Yankee colonisation plan, we are also for the unconditional defence of the farmer or peasant against the offensive of the landowner. With the goal of defending the peasant, we are willing to unite with whomever, journalists, small-town merchants, Radical politicians, government officials or technicians. But what we will never accept is that to fight against the landowner together with other currents or personalities we must abandon our intransigent struggle against exploitation in all its forms, and mainly, the exploitation that our class, the working class, suffers from the own farmer. No conciliation in this regard. Whoever is willing to march together with us for a common goal — the struggle against the Yankee plan — must know we will never abandon, for a moment, our relentless struggle against the exploitation of the working class by the national exploiters.

In this way, we will strengthen the working class and, ultimately, the struggle against imperialism and the landlords since the working class is the only one capable of truly solving the problems of the other working classes. If we abandon the struggle of the workers or labourers against their *estanciero*<sup>10</sup> or industrialist, it is possible we will gain the timid sympathy of the latter or of a sector of them towards unity with us to go against the colonising plan but we will inevitably lose the trust of the worker or the labourer who verifies that, in the name of the fight against imperialism, his boss rides a Cadillac and he must die of hunger.

We are willing to join the *estanciero* or the industrialist against the colonising plan of imperialism and we will even arrive, in exceptional circumstances, to delimited agreements. But let everyone know, both the *estanciero* and the labourer, we are the party that reflects the historical and

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<sup>10</sup> *Estancias* are large landholdings spread over extensive areas, often 10,000 ha or more. In the Argentinian grasslands, the pampas, *estancias* have historically been estates used to raise livestock (cattle or sheep). *Estanciero* is the owner of the *estancia*.

immediate interests of the labourers and, in this sense, we encourage and educate the labourers so they fight economically and politically against their boss as its natural enemy since he enriches at the expense of the workers' misery. This does not prevent that in a circumstantial fight or clash between the imperialist plans and the *estanciero* or industrial, we may reach a limited agreement with our enemy (the bosses) to fight the enemy of the country (imperialism).

We must and we can use the same tactic it in relation to Latin American governments, among them the Peronist. This has not yet been transformed into a Castillo Armas-like government. It offers, on the other hand, serious resistance to being totally controlled by the Yankees, despite the capitulations. We are willing to reach an agreement with the government to explain to the workers why the bilateral agreement with the US is not signed and why it should not be signed. Today, we lukewarmly agree with the government and its organisations it is necessary to fight against the military coup and the plans of the Church.

But we should not confuse these agreements with Peronist politics, which is diametrically opposed to ours. While Peronism respects and encourages capitalist profits, for us, there is no salvation and organisation of the national economy if capitalist and imperialist profits are not fully attacked. While Peronism believes that through government officials it can and should settle the disputes between capital and labour, as also carry out the economic plans, we believe that only the working class through its democratically elected representatives should rule the country to truly solve the economic problems for the benefit of workers and the nation. Our position, not for simple, ceases to be correct: no trust in the government bureaucracy or the national capitalists, although we agree with them at some point of the program and at some point in time; only the working class can rule us to really stop the Yankee plans for colonisation and to overcome the national economy for the benefit of the workers.

### The social and political importance of the proletariat is decisive

The influence of modern capitalist development in the country has encompassed an almost total scope. Not because the industrial proletariat is a majority but because of the influence and development of capitalist industry in the country. All the classes linked to industrial capitalist production — industrial bourgeoisie, new middle class, and the industrial proletariat — have gained an enormous weight in their relations with the other classes. But this growth and greater importance have gained colossal dimensions in the industrial proletariat. It has become the decisive class, fundamental for its number and its weight in the country. The middle class, in its ancient and modern forms, plays a role of great importance but secondary, in the same way as the agrarian revolution does. This change, of fundamental importance, in the relations between the classes in the country, is linked to the fundamental importance of the industrial urban area: Greater Buenos Aires. With its five million inhabitants, which means a little over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all the country inhabitants, this colossal urban industrial concentration directly shows the importance, the decisive weight of capitalist production and the proletariat in the general relations of the country. At the same time, it shows also its backwardness because it remains an important petty-bourgeois concentration.

Peronism is nothing more than a confirmation and indirect demonstration of this fact. Within modern Argentina, only two governments had a broad popular base: Radicalism and Peronism. Radicalism rested fundamentally on the people, on the poorer middle class of cities and towns. Peronism, on the other hand, achieved the support as a class of the modern industrial proletariat. This is a historical event, which shows the relative weight of the proletariat in the whole country has become decisive.

But this support of the workers to Peronism has taken place in historical conditions completely favourable for Peronism and the bourgeoisie, of general enrichment. Important sectors of the proletariat have become petty-bourgeois in their standard of living or have improved it substantially. Because of this and its relatively recent social formation, the industrial proletariat, like the new middle class and even the new bourgeois sectors, have not yet socially stratified and have not settled politically.

The classes, class sectors, and the vanguard of those sectors, especially the most important — the working class — have not adopted their political organisation. In recent years, the political life of the country has turned around the Yankee colonising offensive, the *contras*, or the defence of the country as it was (bourgeois and of *estancias*) and of Peronism. The general enrichment and the recent formation or strengthening of the modern classes have caused the lack of political delimitation of the different classes. The general impoverishment, by emphasising all economic and social contradictions, puts on the agenda the sedimentation and political action of each class and its vanguard. The proletariat, which has already voted as a class for Peronism, that is, for who reflects and defends an Argentina bourgeois and of *estancias*, will seek its own political and union representation, surpassing Peronism as an alien representation. The formation of the Workers' Party is the most important historical task.

### Only the government of the Argentine working class will avoid the danger of crisis looming over the country and the workers

From the capitalist point of view, Argentina is the most developed country in Latin America, although Independence brought the distribution of the land, the emergence of the large landed property. It did not inherit from the colonial period semi-feudal relations of importance.

The agrarian and industrial revolutions, which began at the end of the last century and which are complementary and parallel until the First World War, in a certain sense, had the hindrance of the great landed property until the great crisis. As a result, a massive settlement, a colossal colonisation of independent farmers has not been achieved but rather a relatively small and sporadic one. This is why an extraordinary internal market did not emerge which would have allowed the subsequent development of a very powerful industry. Despite this, agricultural colonisation in Argentina was the most important in Latin America and created the most powerful internal market in the entire south of our continent. This is why agricultural colonisation is accompanied by the emergence of modern industry, both for foreign and domestic trade.

The First World War interrupts this process of general capitalist development, upward and parallel, agrarian and industrial revolution, development of the world and domestic trade, to enter deep contradictions.

Until the great crisis of 1929, there is a relative development of agrarian colonisation and important technological development of industrial production. Beginning in 1929, Argentine agrarian production entered a deep crisis in opposition to the industry that developed in an extensive form protected by the semi-protectionist policy of conservative governments. This industrial development has the limit of a restricted internal market, impoverished by the agrarian crisis. That is, industrial development is no longer parallel to the development of colonisation and agrarian production but its opposite. This will be, from then on, one of the basic contradictions of the capitalist structure of the nation. Industrial development is no longer based on the internal market of small producers (farmers, market growers, etc.) but on their crisis and their subsequent proletarianisation. The purchasing power of the domestic market increases by incorporating these proletarian layers but it creates the conditions for a violent crisis of overproduction as we have never seen, given that the new layers incorporated into industrial production have been removed from the countryside, not replaced by new litters of small producers, i.e., independent buyers. The importation of machinery and foreign capital allowed the bourgeoisie to develop industrial production without resorting to the mass use of unemployed agrarian workers. The infamous decade is the decade of unemployment and misery, of industrial development and the agrarian crisis; it is the decade of the country's general impoverishment, despite industrial development.

This process of general decline of agrarian production and industrial development continues at the beginning of the Second World War but with an important change: the massive use of rural workers, without jobs because of the agrarian crisis.

There is also a relative enrichment because of two facts. On the one hand, the total lack of foreign competition and, on the other, that during the war and in the years immediately following almost no part of the national income was used to renew and surpass the technical level of the productive apparatus. In other words, this general enrichment was, in a certain sense, accelerated wear of the machines and the inherited techniques and a mortgage on the future. The industrial development is carried out using a greater amount of labour and not through the overcoming of the technique and the incorporation of new machinery.

The postwar period, with the colossal prices of agricultural products, allowed the renovation of the light industry equipment needed, with urgency, but the technique of the production and transport apparatus of the country was not substantially renewed. By the year 1949, this situation began to make a crisis. The Korean War allowed postponing this crisis by raising the prices of raw materials although the crisis was not overcome and it continued to drag, which creates increasingly serious problems for the country and the workers.

The attempts to overcome it by making a new agrarian colonisation have failed. In the same way as those attempts made to achieve “humanitarian” investments of Yankee imperialism since the latter will make these investments with the aim of colonising us completely. In these conditions, the bourgeoisie and the government see the solution in a policy of austerity of the working class, of greater exploitation of it and of development of marginal or unproductive branches of production, such as oil, blast furnaces, etc. A stage of general impoverishment has opened that will be characterised by the use of important parts of the national income in the acquisition of the machines and the technology the production apparatus needs and in developing very expensive industries to save foreign currency, such as blast furnaces or oil. This serious situation, this economic pincer, will be inexorable under the current capitalist regime.

We alert the working class. Although the crisis has not yet manifested itself with intensity and, on the contrary, exceptional circumstances such as relatively intense capitalist development and the important diversification of foreign trade have prevented the full manifestation of this organic crisis, the working class has to ask itself: Why has the standard of living systematically lowered for two or three years? Why has there been a tendency for a decisive economic agreement with Yankee imperialism for four years? Simply because the bosses and the government know of the serious contradictions that plague the national economy.

Yankee imperialism tries to use these contradictions to wrest colonising pacts from the country and the government. The bosses try to overcome these contradictions by “capitalising”, a term that, in plain English, means to get greater profits by super-exploiting the workers. The government aims to reach an agreement with the Yankees but avoiding capitulating completely to the colonising pacts and helping the “capitalisation” plan of the bourgeoisie and trying to save social peace and the support of the working class.

Our party, which reflects the historical interests of the proletariat and the country, disagrees and opposes all the aforementioned solutions since they leave standing imperialist exploitation, the landlord’s income, the profits of the *estancia* owners and industrialists, which leave standing the economic and political division of Latin America. We believe these are precisely the reasons for the crisis that is dragging the country and the violent crisis that will inevitably happen. The good harvests and prices in the world market have only delayed the crisis but the real reasons for them are those we have mentioned. In our country, all the structure and economic policy are directed to guarantee the capitalist and imperialist profits and the income of the landlords. Hence, there is no Latin American union because the same happens in all other Latin American countries: the landlords, capitalists and imperialist companies defend their “market” from the competition of other capitalists. For having guaranteed, for years, the increasing profits of the imperialist livestock and industrial companies, the national industry is not equipped.

That is why only substantive solutions will overcome or avoid the underlying crisis which has not yet surfaced but which workers already feel. These substantive solutions are:

- Plan the national economy taking into account mainly the other Latin American countries and the growing increase in real wages of the workers.
- Radically eliminate agricultural rent, whether paid to the landowner or the State. The current or future farmer must be the owner, paying nothing for the land he works. This will allow a massive amplification of agrarian colonisation and immigration and an unsuspected expansion of the internal market.
- The systematic increase in the real salary of all workers. This increase will be carried out thanks to a progressive brutal tax that will fall solely and exclusively on the profits of capitalist and *estancia* owners.
- Ultra-democratic workers' control of large companies, to avoid "tricks".
- Congress to draw up plans for Latin American economic cooperation and stop the offensive of Yankee imperialism, of all the workers' organisations of the continent.
- Immediate nationalisation of large foreign companies and large financial consortiums. CADE [Argentine Electrical Company] and the meatworks must belong to the country and since they are already paid they must not be paid for.
- Rupture of the Rio de Janeiro treaty and all pacts tying us to Yankee imperialism.

Only one class heading the government is capable of applying these measures: the working class supported by all workers.

The working class does not believe in this, nor does it believe there are serious contradictions in the national economy. It is our duty to insist now, systematically, that the working class must rule the country to save itself and save the nation.

As nowadays there is no truly representative organisation of the working class that has remote possibilities of taking power, our campaign in this sense must have a propagandistic rather than an agitative character.

We cannot seriously believe the CGT can take power because it is part of the power (and not precisely because it takes part in it but because it is controlled by the government). In short, there is no possibility the CGT take the government in its entirety. Therefore, although we can insist that CGT representatives go to ministries or take all the government for the sole and exclusive benefit of the working class, we must be aware this is impossible because of the nature of the CGT and, consequently, it is necessary to add to the tactical slogans the description of the true democracy and independence of the workers' movement that would make this slogan feasible. We will not propose economic ministry of the CGT in isolation but democratically elected in a Congress, after a broad discussion among all the tendencies of the workers' movement to know what economic program the working class will apply, through its representatives, in the economic management of the country.

In any case, with this report, our tendency opens a dialogue of historical character with our class and with each worker. To solve the crisis, basic measures are needed and only the working class in power will adopt them.

### Let's stop the offensive of the General Economic Confederation (CGE) against the workers

The bosses, now firmly organised in the CGE, face the latent crisis of the Argentine economy with a simple plan: to exploit the working class as much as possible. Not because the bosses are against the technification of production but because by following the goals of capitalist production — getting profits, benefits — the bosses try to get them by all means and the easiest and most expedient is, precisely, to increase exploitation. This is the way the CGE faces the technification of production.

The Peronist government has made and makes the greatest efforts to control and, as far as possible, curb this bosses' offensive in order to guarantee the social peace so necessary for the

bosses themselves. At the same time, it defends the purchasing power of the market. But these attempts to channel the capitalist offensive against the working class to avoid a violent reaction from it prevents neither the CGE offensive nor that the government itself approve, officialise, the most important measures of that offensive. By government orders, the CGT does the same.

The CGE aims to achieve legislation that directly benefits it. Currently, it requests the foreign currency from foreign trade be granted to it, in order to be the one which distributes it among the companies. This request means asking that all the foreign trade of the country be controlled by the industrial bourgeoisie. The CGE dares to request this because it has already made very important advances.

During the past two years, the bosses have achieved victory after victory. The most important of these has been the last bargaining agreements, with the important price increases they gave rise to. Indeed, over the past years, the government allowed important increases that made life more expensive and decreased the real wage of the worker. The last bargaining agreements raised the problem: the working class will pay the wage increases itself, ultimately harming itself, decreasing its real wage. CGE advocated this policy and the government, tempering the claims of CGE, ultimately gave the solution the CGE requested: increase wages but increasing prices much more.

But not only was there a capitalist offensive in relation to real wages, .i.e., with the high cost of living but also within the factory in the pace of work, in the medical service, as well as the inhuman treatment given to the workers inside the factory. In all these aspects, the bosses have made advances and the workers have retreated.

In other words, the important advances Peronism has granted to the workers have begun to be lost during the last years. The person who does not acknowledge that under Peronism the working class improved extraordinarily in their standard of living, or even small gentrification in their level of life and mentality, does not understand anything of the national reality. But those who, at the same time, do not understand we are living a moment in which the bosses, with the lukewarm authorisation of the government, is snatching these gains one after another, although that process has just begun, understand nothing of what is happening. We must patiently show to the workers, especially to the Peronists workers, that there is a colossal capitalist offensive against the standard of living and working conditions of the working class, an offensive which hides under the ambiguous slogan of productivity.

We are in favour of increasing productivity for the sole and exclusive benefit of the working class and the country, and not for the sole and exclusive benefit of the big imperialist and capitalist companies. Therefore, we are for productivity controlled and directed by the working class, as the only guarantee this productivity will not be used to increase capitalist profits. We deny CGE the right to sit on an equal footing with the workers' representatives in any Congress whatsoever. The 50 million annual earnings of the Di Tella family are not as good for us as the 6,000 workers of their company. For us, the well-being and control of the 6,000 Di Tella workers matter; Di Tella's profits do not matter at all to us.

Thus, we believe it is so urgent to discuss the economic situation and the problem of productivity and that the workers' movement as a whole, with the CGT at the head, discuss the bosses' offensive.

But, whether or not a democratic Congress of the workers' movement is held to discuss the economic problems facing the country and the **bosses' offensive**, it is necessary that now, in each section, in each factory, and in each union, **we face the bosses' offensive all together, leaders and workers ranks**, Peronists and anti-Peronists. The main enemy, in each union or factory, is the bosses and not our co-workers.

Today, the bosses have started an entire campaign in favour of piecework. It is our duty to oppose it and patiently explain to our co-workers and delegates what this monstrosity means and how it is part of the bosses' offensive. Our militants fight in the first row against the CGE offensive.

## The Peronist government and movement at a crossroads

Ten years after the coup d'état on 4 June [1943], we can make a synthesis of the new period inaugurated in the government's character.

The terrible Yankee pressure on the government and the country triggered the coup of 4 June. The 4 June coup is the response of the anti-Yankee sectors of the country and the army as a whole to the serious split of the Argentine oligarchy in pro-Yankee and anti-Yankee. The political condition of 4 June was, unarguably, the crisis of Justo's Concordance.<sup>11</sup>

The government of General Justo<sup>12</sup> meant nothing other than the domination of the country by the oligarchy, i.e., by the wealthy sectors of the bourgeoisie intimately united to the great financial oligarchy, in turn, intimately linked to British imperialism. Yankee imperialism was the one which took the longest to recover from the crisis and, as a result, could not have a frankly offensive attitude in relation to the Latin American countries given the magnitude of the crisis in their own country. The US accepted the British predominance and it accommodated to it. As from the 1939 war, Yankee imperialism began to apply rigorously its plan to colonise Latin America and Argentina. The situation could not be more favourable: Europe was bleeding and losing, day by day, its economic influence, while the United States, thanks to the war, could finally overcome the great crisis of 1929.

The oligarchy's own ranks reflected this change in inter-imperialist relations. Important sectors of the oligarchy wanted to predominate over the others through a total agreement with Yankee imperialism. The Bemberg bank oriented itself in this direction, as did the large grain consortiums, which, with the European market in jeopardy, saw in their close collaboration with the Yankees the only possibility of taking over the Latin American grain market. The same thing happened to the industrial bourgeoisie; they saw the US as the imperialism that could provide the capital needed to develop its industry. The landowners linked to industry thought the same thing.

For the livestock bourgeoisie, fundamentally of Buenos Aires province, this Yankee penetration was almost fatal, as it was for British or German imperialism.

The 4 June coup prevents the power from falling into the hands of the sectors of the oligarchy who are completely subordinated to Yankee imperialism. The coup arises to prevent the old dominant sectors of the economic and political structure of the country from being swept away, cornered, by the Yankee offensive on the country and to prevent the agreement of Yankee imperialism with other sectors of the oligarchy. The coup is to prevent SOFINA,<sup>13</sup> the meatworks, railways, and livestock production from ceasing to be the foundation of the bourgeois structure of the country. They defend this archaic structure from Yankee colonisation. Hence, the permanent contradiction that will give rise to the peculiar dynamics of the regime that arises on 4 June 1943. It is reactionary to the extent it defends the old structure of the country, it is progressive to the extent it defends the country and the government from Yankee colonisation. This phenomenon is already known by Marxism. The regime of Chiang Kai-shek militarily had a similar situation with the Japanese: it defended the country as it was, feudal and semi-colonial, from Japanese colonisation. A special historical situation has had as a result that the process of Yankee colonisation in Latin America was not manifested militarily but politically and economically; however, the process has existed and exists. The regimes of 4 June have been characterised by having defended the country, with the old structure, from that colonisation.

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11 The **Concordance** was a political alliance in Argentina. Three Presidents belonging to the Concordance (Agustin P. Justo, Roberto Ortiz, and Ramon Castillo) were in power from 1931 to 1943, a period known in Argentina as the "Infamous Decade".

12 **Agustin Pedro Justo** (1876–1943) was a military officer, diplomat, and politician. President of Argentina from 20 February 1932 to 20 February 1938.

13 **SOFINA** (Société Financière de Transports et d'Entreprises Industrielles), Belgian holding company, headquartered in Brussels, and at the time the largest shareholder in the electrical utility company and the tramway network in Buenos Aires and Rosario.

The progressive weakness of British imperialism and the colossal power Yankee imperialism had been taking — the same happened between the cattle and industrial bourgeoisie (close friend of the Yankees) —, the German defeat and the complete European decadence forced the 4 June regime to lean on the working class as support of the government against the Yankee offensive and the bourgeoisie linked to it. The government's policy towards the working class deserves a separate chapter since it is, in the final analysis, what characterises the Peronist government against all previous governments.

The division of the oligarchy into pro- and anti-Yankee had been reflected in the union bureaucracy itself and in the workers' organisations, in the division of the CGT prior to Peronism in two organisations: one, apolitical, which played into the hands of the Castillo government and another, pro-Yankee in extreme, formed by the bureaucracy that responded to the House of the People and the CP. In this, as in so many other things, the government of 4 June continued the policy of Castillo's government but in a much more forceful way. It liquidated the pro-Yankee CGT and fully supported the anti-Yankee CGT. At the same time, it tended to drastically control the workers' movement, making it part of the state. This caused deep clashes with the old trade union bureaucracy that had founded the anti-Yankee CGT and which, for that reason, broke with the Farrell<sup>14</sup> government and with Colonel Peron.

Peron could easily sweep away the pro-Yankee CGT and greatly develop the CGT and unions that did not sympathise with the Yankees or did not depend on them, because of special historical circumstances:

1) The colossal increase in national income, the profits of all the producing classes of the country and the development of capitalist production, which allowed Peronism to make important concessions to the working class.

2) The emergence of a new proletariat from the countryside, and small gentrification of the educated proletariat in the worst reformist traditions of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party.

Here, too, Peronism plays a highly contradictory dynamic. To defend itself against Yankee imperialism and its agents in the country, given the weakness of the anti-Yankee imperialist and bourgeois sectors, it is essential to rely on the working class; but, since it defends the existing bourgeois structure, it needs to totally control the working class. Relying on the totalitarian apparatus, Peronism develops the union organisation in all corners and guilds of the country, raises them, and speaks to many workers, for the first time, of union and class organisation. But, at the same time, it stitise; it inaugurates a rigid state control of the union movement, creates a fabulous, rich and privileged bureaucratic caste intimately linked to the State.

The superb economic situation prevented the clash of Peronism with its shackled and handcuffed ally — the working class. There was a paradox that a henchman was placed by the side of the Argentine working class, so nothing is done without official authorisation. But, the same henchman granted economic gain after economic gain. Since 1952, this situation has changed radically with the change in the economic situation. The change has not been catastrophic, it has not been a brutal one, but it exists, and every day will be more noticeable. The defence of the bourgeois structure of the country forces the bosses and the government to carry out an offensive against the working class to super-exploit it and to reach an agreement with Yankee imperialism. Specifically, they need to re-equip the country's production apparatus in conditions of low price in the world market of the basic products of the country: cereals and beef. In these conditions, if the re-equipment does not come out of the profits, it has to come out of the workers' exploitation.

3) The Peronist government, that thanks to the support of the working class defeated Yankee imperialism in the elections and later in the military coups, finds the needs of the bourgeois production it defends force it to an agreement with the giant, which it has defeated politically within

<sup>14</sup> **Edelmiro Julian Farrell** (1887–1980) was an Argentine general. He was the de facto president of Argentina between 1944 and 1946 during the so-called Revolution of 43. Farrell had a great influence on later Argentine history by introducing his subordinate Juan Peron into government and paving the way for Peron's subsequent political career.

the country: Yankee imperialism. But agreement does not mean surrender, and imperialism tends to it, inevitably. Hence, Peronism, as a bourgeois front that resisted Yankee colonisation with a workers' base, at the same time that as a Bonapartist regime nationalised the country, has entered a crisis.

It cannot continue to count on the enthusiastic support of the working class because it allows the offensive against it; on the contrary, the class will distance itself from Peronism. It cannot count on Yankee imperialism to limit its claims; on the contrary, these will increase. The government and its movement will find themselves facing the Yankee offensive without the enthusiastic backing, initially, and the opposition later, of the working class, for the CGE plans of greater exploitation and misery allowed by Peronism.

Our tendency should encourage, highlight, and tend to a technical agreement with the government in all its resistance to the Yankee colonisation plans. But we must not forget we are the party that defends the interests of the working class and, consequently, our task of defending the country from Yankee colonisation is accompanied, indisputably united, with the independent class movement of the working class. And let's not forget we trust neither the Peronist methods nor the Peronist policy of defence of the current structure of the country. Therefore, when we agree technically or politically with the government, we must know how to highlight that this coincidence is completely partial and not a general policy. That is, as, since the first day, we continue fighting against the lack of democratic freedoms and against the stasised unions but, above all, we will continue to attack irreconcilably the old structure — of the *estancias*, meatworks, and bourgeois — of the country whose fierce defence is the *raison d'être* of Peronism.

### The crisis of Radicalism forces Yankee imperialism and the bourgeoisie to organise the new Catholic party

Alvearist<sup>15</sup> Radicalism along with Reppeto's<sup>16</sup> socialism became the best political agents of the Yankee plans of colonisation of the country. Closed the way of the polls by the government of the Concordance that responded to the oligarchy and the colonising Roca-Ruciman treaty, Alvearism focused on the increasingly closer collaboration with Yankee imperialism. Its old connection with the financial oligarchy, the big cereal houses, and the big industrial bourgeoisie, led Alvearism, together with all these sectors, to favour the Colossus of the North. The popular current against the conservatives in power, against fraud, at the end completely progressive, for being channelled by Alvearism responded in the last instance to the Yankee plans of colonisation of Latin America and the country. Once Alvear disappeared, this contradiction would emerge clearly with the Democratic Union of 1946. The Radicals, Socialists, and Communists were intimately linked to Braden. They led old sectors of the working class and of the middle class against Peronism, under the slogan of political freedom, but they served, ultimately, the Yankee plan to colonise the country.

The victory of Peronism begins the crisis of Radicalism, as of all pro-Yankee sectors. Immediately after the victory, the Movement of Intransigence and Renewal emerges in an organised manner, which soon reaches the leadership of the Party.

This new current since its inception gives rise to two wings: the one grouped around the Province of Buenos Aires and the Federal Capital and the one that responds to Sabattini<sup>17</sup> and the interior of the country.

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15 For **Marcelo Torcuato de Alvear** (1868–1942), better known as Marcelo T. de Alvear, who was an Argentine politician and President of Argentina from 1922 to 1928. As a politician, he became the leader of the anti-personalistic faction of the Radical Civic Union (UCR), co-founded by Yrigoyen, opposed to some of president Yrigoyen's policies. In contrast to Yrigoyen's popular style, Alvear belonged to the self-appointed "aristocracy" of Buenos Aires and never tried to hide it.

16 **Nicolas Repetto** (1871–1965) was one of the main leaders of the Argentine Socialist Party.

17 **Amadeo Sabattini** (1892–1960) was an Argentine politician member of the Radical Civic Union (UCR). He served as Governor of Cordoba from 1936 to 1940.

Fronzidism is formed by the new leading cadres and its support base is in the big cities. Lebensohn in Junín, Balbin in Eva Peron, Larralde in Avellaneda, and Frondizi in the Federal Capital. The new layers of the middle class, professionals, employees, technicians, the student body, form the Frondizist Intransigence. It is an incipient manifestation, but manifestation nevertheless, of the important change that took place in the country in the last 20 years and was reflected in the structure of the middle class and, indirectly, in the Radical Party.

Sabbatism was confined among the “old” Yrigoyenists or the old leaders of the parish. Ultimately, it reflected the old sectors of the rural bourgeoisie that resisted the domination of the party and the government by Yankee imperialism or the financial oligarchy. In the cities, Sabattinism was more noticeable, same as Yrigoyenism, in the declassed or poorer sectors of the petty bourgeoisie or in some sectors of the working class. Sabattinism, like Yrigoyenism or Pueyrredonism, could not carry out a policy determined by its link with the large or middle agrarian bourgeoisie and was characterised by the personalist, chieftain-like, character of its organisation and its politics.

The last few years have shown us a violent struggle of tendencies within Radicalism. The Unionists have endeavoured to reconquer the party, so it serves the big bourgeoisie and Yankee imperialism. Frondizism and the Sabattinism have disputed the leadership of Intransigence and, therefore, of the party. Frondizism has won as a consequence of the greater weight of capitalist relations at present.

In a sense, this current is progressive although it suffers all the contradictions of the petty bourgeoisie, being incapable of an independent policy. It votes against Peronism, for its petty-bourgeois hatred to the working class, which it looks at with envy for its new political and social weight. Frondizism has looked at the struggles of the petty bourgeoisie against Yankee imperialism in Latin America with sympathy but, at the same time, it does not dare to go against the Church because of its influence among the working class.

The contradictions that gnaw at Radicalism and at the Frondizist leadership have eliminated Radicalism as a useful political tool of the bourgeoisie and Yankee imperialism. The bourgeoisie has today a strong economic organisation which we must relentlessly denounce for its reactionary economic plans: the CGE. But it lacks a popular political organisation. Yankee imperialism is in the same situation.

The Catholic Church has become the organisation of this new political current the bourgeoisie and imperialism need. Until recently, the Catholic Church has been anti-Yankee in Latin America and in the world. Intimately linked to backward, rural bourgeois sectors, the Church watched with horror the Yankee financial penetration in the industry that undid the objective bases of its domination. Hence, the Church’s contacts with Radicalism and Peronism and its connection with the large *estancia* and estate owners who, in turn, were the great friends of the Church and the natural enemies of the Yankees and the unbridled industrial development.

Since the end of the last Great War, the Church has understood the need for a general crusade against the revolution in the world and has placed itself unconditionally at the service of the head of the modern Holy Alliance: Yankee imperialism. The Church is, in the world, in the front row next to the United States and its plans for world domination.

This is how the Yankee industrial and financial barons have adapted to the medieval Catholic liturgy, and the latter to the “horrors” of Protestant industrial development, both in Argentina and in the world.

This change in the politics of the Church and Yankee imperialism was clearly reflected in Europe. The great Catholic parties of France, Italy, and Germany are at the service of the big bourgeoisie but, mainly, at the unconditional service of the ultra-reactionary Yankee plans. These parties, in an effort to get a popular foundation for the Yankee plans, are capable of sacrificing important interests of their bourgeoisie but they always serve the interests and ultra-reactionary plans of the US. The Church subordinates everything, with its self-preservation instinct developed

over centuries, to the defeat of the revolution in the world and, therefore, to the execution of the Yankee plans.

In Brazil, they have organised in São Paulo a tremendous popular movement around Janio Quadros,<sup>18</sup> who has displaced, in a few years, the traditional politicians of that State. Regardless of the social demagoguery of Quadros, there is no doubt this movement serves the Yankee colonisation plans of Brazil.

In our republic, the attempt to create an important catholic party responds to the combined policy of Yankee imperialism and the bourgeoisie for giving itself a popular party. This party will rely on broad social demagoguery within the petty bourgeoisie and the working class to better serve Yankee imperialism and the bourgeoisie. That is, the formation of this new party is a terrible danger for the Argentine proletariat and, as such, we need to fight it and denounce it before the working class, without falling into the game of Peronist politics limited to partial, but secondary measures, against the Church. Without fighting squarely against the bourgeoisie and imperialism, it is useless to fight the Church which rests, at this moment, on that economic and social base: Yankee imperialism and the national bourgeoisie.

Without ceasing to support the governmental measures that go against the Church, we will propose the true substantive measures that go against it, which are the ones that also go against CGE and Yankee imperialism.

### The last agreements close one experience and open another

Since 1952, as we have said, a whole new period was opened in the learning of the Argentine proletariat: the period of Peronism and staid unions. This learning was based on the change in the economic situation of the country. The relative unemployment of 1952 produced the first manifestation of this learning and of the improvement of the working class in its activity. The guild that started this mobilisation and this learning was the textile; precisely the guild which suffered the most from unemployment. As a result, in December 1952, the union repudiated the Blue slate and voted for a new experience, the Green slate. The lack of organisation of the Green slate, product of the lack of experience and combativeness of the best union activists, produced its immediate bureaucratisation, without serious resistance by the activists.

The rubber guild, after a magnificent strike, achieved an independent and powerful leadership, which made, keeping certain Peronist forms, an authentic class politics. To some extent, the same happened with the tobacco guild.

The metalworkers' guild, in Avellaneda and Capital, was oriented towards the formation of a new class leadership: new litters of militant delegates and good internal commissions emerged. This phenomenon was general and the bureaucracy was forced to take it into account. In railways, activists of the failed strike were voted for middle management positions.

All this happened until the negotiations of the collective agreements. That is, the working class was looking for a way out of the economic problem in different ways in each factory and each union, but the important thing was that it was looking for it. The union vanguard made colossal learning.

The atomisation and the Peronism of the working class on the one hand, and the pro-bosses politics of the government and the CGT, on the other hand, characterised these movements and ultimately led this entire rise to failure. All these movements were carried out under a strong Peronist hue, generally directed by the communists who, understanding the role of the government, could play the role of union leaders. The inevitable link between the trade union and the political aspect caused by the totalitarian character of the government took on, for the political and union backwardness of the worker mentality, a curious combination: the movements were Peronist for their public expressions and in their trade unionist character but they were political for the nature of their leaderships and the dynamics of the trade union movement which was causing them

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<sup>18</sup> **Jânio Quadros** (1917–1992) was Governor of Sao Paulo in 1953-1955 and later President of in 1961.

to collide with the government. This contradiction was the product, we insist once again, of the confusion of the Peronist proletariat itself.

This curious combination, this backwardness of the proletariat and the vanguard brought about the victory of the government and the bosses during the last collective agreements and the dreadful metallurgical adventure.

The metallurgical defeat was accompanied by the tobacco defeat and the brutal takeover of the rubber union and, shortly after, by the defeat of the two most progressive slates of Alparbatas.

These defeats have meant: the defeat of the working class in the renewal of the collective agreements, the closing of the stage opened in 1952, and the initiation of a new stage we will try to specify.

The molecular process, the learning of the working class and, fundamentally, of its vanguard, the union activists has been extraordinary. Regarding this, we must distinguish the activists who have assimilated the defeats from those who, frightened, have defected from the struggle. Tamet is the best example. Its best activist during the rise does not want to know anything but another, from a population abroad, writes to continue the union struggle. The one who keeps on, the one who assimilated the defeat is already qualitatively an activist of his class infinitely superior to the one he was before the defeat. He knows much better the capitalist offensive and the procedures of the bureaucracy. He knows how to fight one and the other. This activist is worth today much more than two or three activists without experience. In this sense, union activists who have not abandoned the struggle have learned enormously about the government, the CGT, the bosses' association and the bureaucracy. On the other hand, in the different factories and sections, the working class is learning there is a terrible bosses' offensive. This learning is not even but it is general. And the working class sees or will see itself forced to defend itself and the experiences of the Green slate, metalworkers and tobacco strikes, etc., are or will be very useful.

The bureaucracy itself is compelled, in order not to discredit itself completely, to reject some of the bosses' pretences in the factories, the least important ones, although it supports the general policy of the government and the bosses. We must understand this phenomenon in order to develop the united and trusting action of the working class. To develop the unity and action of the working class, if possible, from the small skirmishes against the bosses' offensive that arise every day and, sometimes, the bureaucracy itself leads. At the same time, we must know, as the last movements demonstrated exhaustively, the CGT leadership is useless for any actions of any importance against the bosses and for developing when the conditions are favourable the new forms of organisation created by the working class itself.

The working class atomisation manifests itself in two obvious facts: 1) it reacts in different forms against the capitalist offensive in each factory or section, with no coordination; 2) union activists assimilate the experience but with no connection between them, without forming any tendency.

The defeat of the collective agreements caused a retreat reflected in the fact the outlines for the formation of union class tendencies have failed, they were frustrated. Both the working class and the vanguard continue to suffer the bosses' offensive and defend themselves in isolation. The vanguard assimilates these struggles, which leads to a higher plane the understanding of the working class and the vanguard for the new emergence of class currents. For a time, we will have to settle for partial battles, including some important ones, until a class current emerges in some important union. However, the pressure is exerted on the formation of this class tendency in the most important unions. It is quite possible the textile union election, in distorted form, give origin to the class current, repeating the Green slate experience on a much higher plane. The same will happen in the other unions and guilds.

To overcome the atomisation, new forms of organisation are required for the working class that overcome the CGT's discipline, when conditions lend themselves to it. This does not happen at the present moment. Of course, we must aim to create union oppositions, as well as to organise the class tendency in the union field.

## Labour Party or immediate class political organisation of union activists

The Argentine working class does not have a party that organises it. In the same way, it does not have a workers' and peasants' government. Achieving them is a great historical task but we must be aware these are not tasks that can be achieved at this stage. CGT is incapable, because of its structure, of becoming independent from the Peronist government and its state apparatus to make an independent party, such as taking power in opposition to Peronism. Mechanical assimilation of the Socialist Workers Party's slogan of Labour Party cannot be done in our country. The reason is simple — unions and union federations in the US are not subject to the state but the CGT is. From this arise a fact and a combination of tasks: in the United States, the Labour Party must be formed to take power with it. The slogan Labour Party is immediate, agitative, is on the agenda; to carry it out the fulfilment of any other general task does not stand in the way. Among us, it is not like that, the independence of the unions from the State is in the way to achieve a Labour Party. But to achieve this, we need first the independent trade union and political organisation of union activists. Therefore, the two urgent, immediate, agitative tasks are the forming of union oppositions and the political organisation of the workers' vanguard.

The slogan Labour Party, like the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government, takes on a propagandistic character. This propagandistic and agitative combination of slogans does not mean, that in certain historical circumstances — a severe economic crisis and a violent revolutionary crisis —, they do not combine immediately and agitatively because of the historical process. Between the raising of the different slogans, it is unnecessary there be huge lapses of time. But the importance of the slogan reflects the relationship of the working class with the bourgeoisie, imperialism, and the government at a certain stage and today it is necessary to fight for the union activists to have their political organisation.

## The Communist Party cannot be the party of union activists

If we accept there is a decisive element in the understanding of the Latin American and Argentine reality, which is the Yankee colonising offensive, we have to recognise the Communist Party has been, during an important period of the last 15 years, at the service of this colonisation attempt.

The socialists of Repetto and, fundamentally, the communists were the workers' agency of the Democratic Union. Instead of defending a consistent class line and of fighting for the freedom of our nation from British and Yankee imperialism, in the name of freedom, Stalinist communism played the game of the Yankee imperialism offensive in the country. Codovilla<sup>19</sup> and the Communist Party proposed, during 1945 and 1946, the signing of the inter-American treaties that tied us to the car of Yankee imperialism. The Democratic Union had a foreign policy program that meant nothing more than the smooth and plain delivery to Wall Street.

The cold war and the victory of Peronism changed the policy of the Argentine Communist Party. Yankee imperialism, the great friend of Russia, became its most important enemy. As a result, the Argentine Communist Party radically changed its line in the country.

*“The main enemy is Yankee imperialism and Peronism has many good, positive sides, mainly because it resists the Yankees.”*

In this stage, which opens in the year 1947 approximately, the Communist Party gives to the CGT the unions still not covered by themselves. Just as the previous stage was one of capitulation to the Yankee imperialism's offensive, as of this change they serve the reactionary plans of the government with no criticism or resistance.

As the pressure of Peronism became very strong, the bureaucracy that controlled the Communist Party aspired to keep it independent and, at the same time, control the Argentine

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<sup>19</sup> **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.

workers' movement. The tendency to subordination to Peronism clashed with the needs of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Peronism, within the workers' movement, appears to the leadership of the Communist Party as its most important enemy. If Peronism were to disappear, Stalinism is likely to control (finally!) the Argentine workers' movement to put pressure on the Argentine bourgeoisie and imperialism. The Communist Party without controlling the workers' movement is nothing; controlling it, it can get and achieve concessions. This is one of the most powerful reasons the Communist Party fell back into the most complete opposition after its flirtation with Peronism.

Besides, their position of National Unity leads the Communist Party and its leadership to look for political allies and the only thing they find is the Radical party as the only important force capable of forming the great front they advocate. This is how they fall victim to their own theoretical errors.

After expelling the Real tendency, which capitulated to Peronism, the Communist Party has openly oriented towards pure opposition. In fact, they struggle to organise a great front against Peronism, a front that has no program and cannot have it because it would be formed by the worst elements of the bourgeoisie and the Church. The Communist Party has actually defended the Church, in its friction with the government, by claiming the right of Catholics to build their movement and their party without clarifying to what forces in the world the priests in the country respond.

In doing so, the Communist Party has committed a betrayal against the interests of the workers since the Church is the spearhead of the world and national reaction.

Furthermore, the Communist Party contradicts itself between its definition of Peronism and the politics it has before it. While it recognises Peronism carries out a contradictory policy which is not of total submission to Yankee imperialism and that it enjoys the support of the working class and that, moreover, imperialism tries to colonise the government and the country, its policy towards the government is as if this had already submitted to Yankee imperialism, trying to unite all the forces against Peronism, including the Church.

We believe we must unite urgently all those who oppose the Yankee offensive against the country. Even join with the government and Peronism when it collides in some way with the imperialist plans while still criticising Peronist bourgeois politics as radically opposed to ours. But not only must we unite with those who oppose the Yankee offensive against the country, but also we must unite the workers against the capitalist offensive; fundamentally, we have to join the Peronist workers. But we can never join them if we despise, mistreat, insult, and ignore the colossal gains Peronism granted to the working class. We have a policy radically different from the Peronist one but we cannot ignore the conquests it granted to the working class since this is the reason for the support it enjoys in the proletariat.

The unity of all workers is fundamental for us and the understanding and unity with our Peronists co-workers is decisive. Our slogan is: Let's defend from the bosses' offensive the gains Peronism granted the workers! For the Communist Party the fundamental slogan is another: Let us join all the contras, not all the workers, against the Peronist government!

### **Let's build the great party of the workers' vanguard forming now a legal left-centrist party**

Different political and social forms try to overcome the atomisation and apoliticism of the workers' movement. Peronism is the historical stage in which the political organisations of the proletariat in the country are lost. This stage that opens up is of the political organisation of the working class and its vanguard. This process will be long and difficult but it has already begun to happen. We must understand it and integrate fully into it.

Without losing the fundamental contact with the class struggle, with the factories and the trade unions, we must and can use the progressive currents of the student body to strengthen the current of integration and formation of the party of the workers' vanguard. The same happens with legality, it can and should help incredibly to touch and organise politically the workers' vanguard.

We are extremely weak to use legality in all its possibilities, even to win it by our single effort; but, at the same time, we are the only ones who can establish a nexus, by our structure and program, between the legal party and the workers' vanguard. From this contradiction arises the need, for us, to use legality to the fullest, to link ourselves, to that end, with currents we conceptualize as left-centrists to gain legality in common. The unity with the centrist groups, to achieve together the legality through a single party, is completely progressive.

This legality, this unity, and this party will be based on its work in the working class, fundamentally in us. We will be his spine.

This explains why, at the present moment, we are the pole of attraction to the student left groups and the workers' vanguard.

The **Socialist Party of the National Revolution (PSRN)** is nothing more than a stage in the formation of the left-centrist party, our main political-organisational goal at the present moment. In this sense, we should look for a solution. The Socialist Party of the National Revolution must become a left-centrist current in the short term, or we must look for another agreement or union to set up that organisation.

This legal left-centrist political organisation is progressive mainly because of its legality and its national character. We know, consciously, this organisation is the opposite of a proletarian Bolshevik one and that our tendency, through it and fighting against the petty-bourgeois tendencies, aims to build a Bolshevik and non-centrist organisation.

Specifically, we need to form, through agreements with centrists and progressive groups, a legal left-centrist party to allow us to better reach the workers' vanguard. The experience of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution must be liquidated in a short time: either it serves for that purpose or it does not work and then we leave.

# Who knew how to fight against the “liberating revolution” before 16 September 1955?

## Foreword to the first edition

When this booklet goes out, 720 days will have elapsed, two years!, since the fall of the first Argentine government the working class considered its government. It is time to find out what the different currents aspiring to be the revolutionary leadership of our working class did to combat the bosses-clerical-imperialist assault. It is obvious this is not purely historical curiosity because these currents continue to exist; they continue pretending to be the vanguard of the working class and aspire to become their revolutionary leadership. But for the workers to know who has the right to claim this title and those who are no more than impostors, it is essential to bring to light how each tendency acted before 16 September 1955.

Two fundamental currents disputed before 16 September, with each other and with the Peronist bureaucracy, the leadership of the Argentine working class. One (expressed in the different journalistic publications and two books published between 1946 and 1955 by Rodolfo Puiggrós,<sup>1</sup> Jorge Abelardo Ramos, many aliases, Eduardo Astesano,<sup>2</sup> Enrique Rivera,<sup>3</sup> aka Peñaloza, and others who revolved around them) argued the Peronist government was doing a National Revolution and the working class had to support it through the strategy of the National Front, i.e., through collaboration between the workers and the bosses who supported Peronism. According to this current, the working class had to support Peronism until Peron had made — after a whole historical stage — the industrialisation of the country. Only then, only after this, the working class could think of ruling the country.

The other current, Trotskyist, revolutionary socialist, was expressed by the newspaper *Frente Proletario* and from 1954 until the strangling revolution by the newspaper *La Verdad*, organ of the Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution (PSRN). This current held that Peronism was a bosses' government, relatively anti-Yankee, that relied on the working class. The “National Revolution” that was spoken of — Trotskyism said — exists only in words because neither economic independence (that is, the elimination of imperialist influence in the Argentine economy) nor the industrialisation of the country, nor political sovereignty (i.e., to eliminate the commitments and pacts that bind us to Washington and Wall Street) can be achieved without the working class taking power in their hands and liquidating the native bosses, who are partners and agents of imperialism.

Faced with the threat of a coup d'état against Peronism, the strategy of the Trotskyist current, revolutionary socialist, was not of the “National Front”, i.e., to support the Peronist government and to collaborate with the bosses and Peronist agents of the bosses as the army, but the revolutionary Marxist tactics of the United Anti-Imperialist Front. In other words, to fight together with Peronism against the coup d'états but placing no trust in the politics of the Peronist leadership and constantly explaining to the working class that only them, armed, trusting in their own forces, acting independently of the Presidency of the Nation and the Ministry of War, only them, could crush the

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1 **Rodolfo Jose Puiggrós** (1906–1980) was an Argentinian writer, historian, journalist, and politician. His works included numerous books and articles on Argentinian and Latin American history and history of philosophy.

2 **Eduardo B. Astesano** (1913-1991), an Argentine politician and historian affiliated to the communist party.

3 **Enrique Rivera** was an Argentine Trotskyist placed in the currents opposed to World War II. Was part of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution.

bosses-imperialist intent and defend the gains achieved with Peron. But, the socialist revolutionaries, the Trotskyists pointed out, the only way to definitively crush the oligarchy and imperialism is for the working class to take power because a government like the Peronist, who ruled with one foot supported by the workers and the other foot on the bosses and the generals, in the long run, would capitulate to the oligarchy and imperialism, leaving the working class unarmed before its enemies.

The main concern of the Apostles of the National Front was not to oppose the Peronist government and to convince the working class every step of the Peronist leadership was correct from the point of view of the struggle against the oligarchy and imperialism and should be supported by the working class. Did the Peronist government say you had to trust the army? Perfect, repeated Puiggros, Ramos & Co. This is the correct tactic to prevent the coup d'état. Did the government say in the factories it was necessary to work harder and not to bother the bosses? Totally correct, said Puiggros, Ramos & Co. This is the way of not breaking the national front and of getting the industrialists to support Peron. And so it goes on. On the contrary, the Trotskyists, while continuing to fight together with the Peronists against the coup d'état, endeavoured to show the working class the policy of the Peronist leadership led fatally to defeat, to the loss of all their gains, and to the disaster of Peronism itself. Because the Peronist leadership based their policy on collaborating and conciliating with the bosses, with the oligarchy, with imperialism, with the army; in threatening them with speeches but leaving their real power intact and this power would be used to crush the working class and Peronism under the oligarchic-imperialist dictatorship. Let us add that, for alerting the working class in this way to the errors of the Peronist leadership, the Trotskyist socialist revolutionaries received from Messrs Ramos & Co the kind accusations of "divisionist", "agents of imperialism", "extremists", "sectarians", etcetera. Ramos & Co, they were the realists; the shrewd theorists and politicians of the Peronist "National Revolution". We will see how each one behaved in the decisive moment; because the value of a political line, as knowing how to swim, is proven in the action.

The "putsch" of 16 June 1955 was part of the struggle unleashed in 1954 between the Peronist government and the Catholic Church. From the first moment, the Trotskyist socialist revolutionary militants clearly stated what the real meaning of that struggle was and its position in it. And from the first moment, they foresaw the "putsch" and warned the working class against it. As early as November 1954 *La Verdad* said: "*The creation of a social-Catholic party responds to the Yankee plans for the colonisation of the country.*"<sup>4</sup> And later, until the day before the "putsch", they continued insisting on this position and explaining the inescapable dilemma: either Peronism arms the working class or the army and navy break the neck of the working class and Peronism.

## The sects

Throughout this booklet, we will see what was the attitude towards the coup d'état on 16 September of the different political sectors of the country and the workers' movement. Through this retrospective analysis, we will show how orthodox Trotskyists accurately anticipated events and outlined a correct line to face them. Let's see now what the attitude was of the sects that act around the leftist and workers' movement.

The lack of a mass revolutionary party in Argentina has facilitated the existence of revolutionary or pseudo-revolutionary sects that swarm on the periphery of the left movement. The way in which the theoretical work was developed in Argentina during Peronism, in a clandestine and isolated way, made possible the existence of the sects, whose positions were not publicly submitted to confrontation.

*Grupo Cuarta Internacional* (Fourth International Group, GCI, now *Partido Obrero Revolucionario Trotskista* [Revolutionary Workers' Party], POR-T, led by Jorge Posadas), which publishes *Voz Proletaria*, [Proletarian Voice] is the most important sect, whose gospel is the Transitional Program of the Fourth International and respect for the international leaders. Because of its "internationalism", GCI, today POR-T, could continue to exist, although its most important theoretical task was always to translate the publications of the International that arrived from abroad.

Then come minor sects like the one led by Professor Silvio Frondizi — the Praxis group —, which after September 1955 edits the organ *Revolución* [Revolution], and the Revolutionary Workers' Union (UOR), led by Oscar, dissolved and reorganised over 17 times, which took out, intermittently, the newspaper *El Militante* [The Militant].

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4 *La Verdad*, Avellaneda, 10 November 1954. MP

All these sects, which are grouped around a great priest (the Frenchman Michel Pablo), have had a uniform position against the 16 June and the coup d'état that was approaching. Neither GCI-PORT, nor the Praxis group, nor the UOR **said a single word before 16 June on the possibility of a coup d'état and on the way to prevent it and also did absolutely nothing nor prepared their people for 16 September.**

And this is how today they propose we have to work on the Communist Party because that is the vanguard of the workers' movement. They are very revolutionary and their solutions are very revolutionary. This is how, faced with any problem — reorganisation of the trade union movement, tripartite government in the universities, legality for the Peronist party — they have a magical solution: “workers' and peasants' government”. And thus, as revolutionary as they are, they arrive at positions matching with the reaction. Such is the case of legality for the Peronist party. They are against fighting for it because it is a bourgeois party. They defend, like Stalinism, the legality of their own party; the bourgeoisie should defend the legality of Peronism since it is a bourgeois party. Impossible to be more schematic. Despite their “revolutionism” at all costs and their cliché, “workers' and peasants' government”, they do not understand the main bourgeois-democratic task in the country is legality for the majority party, which is a slogan that equals to universal suffrage and only the workers can win it because it is from the “ABC” of Marxism that in the epoch of imperialism the bourgeoisie abandons its own tasks and it must be the proletariat who must accomplish them. Their sectarianism takes them to abandon the slogans that will mobilise the working class, to limit themselves to their tiny task of councillors of the Communist Party, as is clear from the issues of *Voz Proletaria*.

Fortunately, the intense class struggle that has existed for two years has reduced these sects to their minimum expression. Their influence compared to that of orthodox Trotskyism is decreasing and the workers, by the thousands, are guided by our slogans and act on them.

Despite this, we are forced to write these lines about GCI because of the importance this sect has. This is an international sect led by Pablo, who, waving the name of Trotskyism and calling themselves Trotskyists, divided the International in 1952, saying the Transitional Program of the Fourth International had been overcome and Trotskyism had to be dissolved in Stalinism, that this one would go more and more towards the left, transforming itself little by little into a revolutionary party. This shameful capitulation to Stalinism has led them to positions increasingly absurd and out of reality. And this is how Posadas, maximum leader of Pabloism in Latin America, made very serious mistakes in Bolivia by critically supporting Paz Estenssoro, or in Chile by dissolving the party in the Popular Socialist Party, or here in Argentina acting as advisors of Stalinism and they did not warn against the coup of 16 September and today they refuse to fight for the legality of the Peronist party.

Nahuel Moreno wrote the documents published in this book for various publications of Trotskyist revolutionary socialism, grouped in the Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution. This was the political current that most lucidly and consequently noticed the driving forces of the anti-Peronist conspiracy. And it was also the only political current that, fighting side by side with Peronism against the rising tide of the clerical-bosses-imperialist coup, knew how to preserve its independence against the Peronist government and denounce to the working class the tremendous disaster the disastrous policy of the Peronist leadership was leading to. This, the best men of the working class and of workers' Peronism do not ignore it or forget it.

This position has had a logical consequence, subsequently, in these two years of struggle. The UOR dissolved, the Praxis group continues with its propagandistic proposals, and the Posadist GCI has remained firm in its line of capitulation against Stalinism.

At the end of this work, the calendar marks 20 August. It's been 17 years since a Moscow agent murdered Leon Trotsky. In Argentina of 1957 the best tribute to the memory of the great revolutionary leader is in the words that recently (on the occasion of the Workers' Congress organised in May by the Institute of Workers' Culture) we heard of a Peronist worker leader referring to the tendency that edited *La Verdad*: “*I wish to state publicly that I, a Peronist leader, would have liked to have the clarity and courage with which the Trotskyist comrades pointed out the errors of Peronism while fighting the Liberating Revolution.*”

Orthodox Trotskyism has been the only organisation that foresaw the coup d'états of 16 June and 16 September and fought accordingly to confront them, preparing its militants for action. Subsequently, it was the only organisation that made intense efforts to reorganise the trade union movement and made an effort not to boycott the union elections. It was the only organisation that dropped 100,000 flyers in Capital and Greater Buenos Aires calling for a strike on 17 October 1955. Workers' activists and all revolutionaries must recognise orthodox Trotskyism as the only revolutionary organisation in the country and they must demand from any sect that tries to

influence them proof they had the same positions we had in face of facts of such great transcendence. The workers will turn their backs on the sects since these have nothing to do with the working class and will be grouped around orthodox Trotskyism.

**Milciades Peña**

30 August 1957

## 1. The Catholic Church at the service of the coup d'état by Yankee imperialism

(*La Verdad*, 3 December 1954)

### Only the working class mobilisation will stop the coup d'état and the colonisation of the country

The speech by the President of the Nation before the governors marked the opening of a campaign against the clergy that the press and the official organisms have echoed widely. In his speech, Peron said it was only about 15 or 20 priests who were plotting against the government together with certain well-known political sectors. Apparently, by applying the law to them everything was solved. But the violent and widespread journalistic campaign, which is not waged against certain priests but against the whole Catholic Church, shows the problem is much more serious than what Peron himself stated.

The great importance of the problem lies in the fact that behind all the activity of the Catholics and the contra sectors that act in concert, there is the hand of Yankee imperialism. And this is said neither by Peron nor by the pro-government press nor by Peronist organisations.

In the speech delivered in Plaza de Mayo on 17 October, Peron warned against what he called the “ambushed”. At that time, he was defending the party organisms that support him. The speech to the governors is shown as a continuation and at the same time a differentiation from that one. It is a continuation in the sense the speech of Plaza de Mayo is a prologue to the second, differentiation because the government points out in the speech to the governors a turn to the left.

In the last issue of *La Verdad*, we said Yankee imperialism needs to have in our country a political force as coherent and popular as possible to facilitate its attempts of economic and political colonisation. The bankruptcy of the Radical Unionists and Repetto's socialists, agents of Wall Street, has prompted imperialism to fill with a Catholic party the vacuum they leave.

The negotiations of the Argentine government with the Yankees are long and difficult, reaching no agreement yet. In this situation, imperialism attempts to get through conspiracy what it does not get through negotiations. Not that the Peronist government does not want to reach an agreement with Yankee imperialism. However, the conditions imposed by US capitalism are very onerous and the Argentine government tries to make the agreement mean as little political commitment and economic subjection as possible.

Amid this state of affairs, imperialism promotes and encourages all those who are willing to create an internal situation that facilitates the surrender without hesitation of Peron. This is the true essence of the Catholic problem, and neither Peron nor the official press says a single word of this.

We do not agree, as we have said on another occasion, with the policy the government takes in its dealings with the Yankees because they do these in secret. The latest government attitudes insist on denying the workers a conscious role in the talks with imperialism. With his speech, Peron wants to tell the Yankees he has the threads well held and they will not be able to overthrow him with a coup

d'état. The turn to the left is then a speculation to stop the attack in full by the Yankees and keep the negotiations on a ground that may be more advantageous to him.

The Peronist government does not denounce the true instigator and supporter of the coup, Yankee imperialism, nor does it call the working class to play a fighting role against imperialism.

### A bloc without principles

The attitude of the Catholics matches with the last university strike and the activity of the contra sectors. The Communist Party, that calls itself anti-imperialist and expresses itself against the coup d'état, lends its active collaboration to all those who want to create a climate of discrediting the government, whether they be priests, oligarchs, pro-imperialists, or whatever they may be. In the last university strike, the most select of the pro-Yankee youth, the best of the rosary rattling youth, and Stalinism joined ranks in an unprincipled bloc. The Communist Party turns its back on the working class and enters schemes with the most reactionary sectors, playing, whether it wants it or not, the game of Yankee imperialism which is the first interested in creating confusion to see its penetration facilitated.

We denounce and will denounce these sectors violently and tirelessly as enemies of the country and of the working class.

We, socialists, argue with Marx that religion is the opium of the people. Priests of all religions make up a parasitic, unproductive caste that serves the exploiting class by trying to instil in the minds of people the principle of subjection and conformism.

The Peronist government has protected the Catholic Church to the maximum, opening for it the doors to education by implanting religion in schools. Moreover, the Argentine Constitution provides for the support of the Catholic Church by the State.

In the interdict of the government with the Catholics, the role that religion must fulfil is not in dispute. The interdict obeys to Catholicism being in open agreement with Yankee imperialism and trying to force the hand of Peronism to facilitate the delivery of the country to the colonialists of Washington.

We insist once again, we say the Argentine government also needs and seeks the agreement but it still has a wide margin of manoeuvre to get out of the negotiations with the greatest possible domination of the internal situation of the country.

### The speech of the 25th

The rally held on 25 [November 1954] at Luna Park stadium was a demonstration of the strength by the government in the face of the threat of the coup d'état. Even though all the speeches were directed against the clergy and Catholic organisations, the government wanted indirectly to show imperialism it is the owner of the situation and all the negotiations should be carried out taking into account this relationship of forces.

At the same time, Peron's speech, measured in all words and of an explanatory and non-agitative tone, is the best indication the government is not interested in mobilising the masses beyond the formal rallies it can control. However, only the broad mobilisation of the working class will strengthen the country in the face of the colonising attempts by Yankee imperialism.

A broad mobilisation of the working class means the posing of demands such as stopping the bosses' offensive, expropriating the imperialist companies, giving participation in the government to the working class, and so on.

The Peronist government, which is embarked on a policy of class collaboration and is increasingly leaning to the bosses' side, is not willing to give in to any of the demands the working class could make. Therefore, a broad mobilisation of the masses would weaken the government's position. This is the fundamental reason the government prefers to carry out negotiations with imperialism on its own and not to promote the working class mobilisation.

The politics of the Peronist government is Peronist and ours is socialist, i.e., they are different, and often antagonistic. For example, we do not agree with the government's attempts at an agreement

with Yankee imperialism because the working class is not consulted or given direct participation in it. The working class is the only one capable of defending the interests of the country to its ultimate consequences in all economic and political negotiations.

But it is not true that Peron has already surrendered to the Yankees. Peron seeks agreement with them but it becomes difficult, it does not materialise. The position of the government and the official press and pro-government organisations in the face of the threat of a coup d'état clearly states the possibilities of an agreement are difficult and that Peron wants to prevent the Yankees from forcing the negotiations.

We, as an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist party, want to clarify our position on this problem, however not an expository position but one affirmative and of struggle.

Despite all our disagreements with the Peronist government, despite our criticisms, we want to state publicly that, as long as the government does not surrender to Yankee imperialism, given the danger of a coup promoted by Wall Street, we offer the government an agreement of a well-defined technical character, public and without political commitments in order to stop all attempts by imperialism to colonise the country and super-exploit our working class.

It is in this sense we agree at this moment with the government that the greatest danger for the country and the working class is the organisation of a new Democratic Union, at the political service of imperialism and national capitalism, which is structured around the Catholic Church. Against this danger, we propose a broad mobilisation of the working class and the people, above all of the Peronist organisations, but excluding no political or union organisation that thinks like us — and Peronism at this moment — that the urgent problems are the coup d'état and the political mobilisation of the working class. The organisations that take part in this mobilisation will have complete freedom to make all the criticisms they deem convenient or necessary to make to the other organisations; the struggle will be in common against the Church, its political organisation and its current influence.

## 2. The Communist Party hides the goals of the Church's plan

(*La Verdad*, 19 May 1955)

### Who prepares the coup d'état that they announce?

After many months of ignoring in their press and in their action the Church's manoeuvres aiming to create the Party and the propitious climate for the coup d'état, the Communist Party in issue 261 of *Nuestra Palabra* states: "We oppose, also with force, to those who seek the solution through the channels of the coup d'état." But, unfortunately for this Party and for those workers who still trust it, this "discovery", however, will not prevent them — who speak against Yankee imperialism every day — from being in the first row of the student riots, silencing the street hassles promoted by Catholics, and continuing without saying it is the Church that seeks the coup d'état for the total submission to Yankee imperialism.

The government fights "the bad priests" but does not denounce Yankee imperialism is the one pulling the threads of the action by the Church. The Communist Party says "with the coup d'état the surrender of the country to Yankee imperialism would be accelerated" but it does not say it is the Church that prepares the coup. Both insist on keeping the working class away from the reach of the plan of the Church and its meaning. They are unconsciously working for their win.

### The consequences of a false political characterisation

The Stalinist working class comrades have to make an effort and understand the capitulating policy their Party has led and leads in the face of the Church is based on the false political characterisation they do of the Peronist government. The Communist Party defines the Peron government as "Corporate Fascist" and says "it has sold out to the Yankees".

We do not want to convince anyone that the Peron government is a workers' government. On the contrary, we are the first to say the current government has a reactionary character and serves the capitalists. But this is not enough. Yrigoyen's Radical government was also a government of the

bourgeoisie, but Uriburu's<sup>1</sup> coup, also being so, subjected even more the destiny of the country to the capitalists and imperialism. In short, neither Yrigoyen with his "democratic" characteristics nor Peron with his attempts of a total organisation is the government that yesterday or today imperialism need.

The Peron government is making increasingly greater concessions to Yankee imperialism but even so, he is not the Castillo Armas they need for their Latin American colonisation plans.

The Communist Party characterises the Peron regime as "the government of monopolies" (*Nuestra Palabra*, issue 245) and to put a final example, quite ridiculous in itself, it said in a leaflet the US State Department planned the prison for Osvaldo Pugliese.<sup>2</sup> This characterisation, which appears as ultra-revolutionary, is, on the contrary, completely false and fatal for its own members because it politically disarms them to face reality. If the Peron government is totally sold out, why does the Communist Party say now that Yankee imperialism encourages the coup d'état?

But there is more. The Communist Party says: "Just as we have opposed and we strongly oppose the Fascist Corporate State, we also strongly oppose those who seek the solution through the path of the coup d'état" (*Nuestra Palabra*, No 261). In other words, Stalinism not only does not tell its members who will give the coup but also assigns the same importance, as an immediate danger, to Peron's government and to the coup d'état. This is the meaning of "we also strongly oppose" to one and the other. This position is totally false. The main enemy in 1930 was not Yrigoyen but the Uriburu's coup. In 1955, the main enemy is the pro-Yankee military coup, which, as they themselves say, "would accelerate the country's surrender to imperialism". We, with this criterion, do not draw the conclusion the working class should have supported Yrigoyen or should currently support Peron. From there, we draw a much simpler conclusion: the Peronist government, being a great enemy of the workers, is not at this moment the fundamental danger. The fundamental enemy of the workers is Yankee imperialism and the coup it prepares. This is what the Stalinist leadership does not understand or does not want to understand.

### "National Democratic Front" and capitulation before the Church

Besides putting in the same bag the danger of the coup d'état and the characteristics of the current government, the Communist Party uses a false political characterisation; the capitulation to the Church, to the Radicals, and to all the contras is intimately linked to the fundamental point of the Stalinist program, i.e., to the National Democratic Front. One could even accept the characterisation they make of the government without believing that in order to fight it a "Holy Alliance" must be made with the most reactionary sectors, without asking that the long-dead "Democratic Union" be reborn. The Communist Party does none of this.

Once they characterised the government of Peron as the "government of monopolies", it is then a matter of creating the great "Democratic Front" to turn it around. Instead of fighting Peron with a workers' policy, to form that front, to incorporate all the "democrats" into it, it is necessary to talk with the "thousands of Catholics who love peace and democracy" and throw kisses and flowers at the Radicals.

The Communist Party says: "there are also democratic people who add mindlessly to the idea of the coup d'état because they have no confidence in the working class" (*Nuestra Palabra*, No. 261). But... where do these "democratic" people who want the coup d'état belong...? Is it not the Catholics who, together with all the contras, are promoting trouble, who have such inclinations...? Is it not the Church that heads the movement for the coup d'état?

This simple question, that any worker can easily answer, the Communist Party answers it with a lot of evasiveness, trying to hide their capitulation to the Church.

In the same issue of their newspaper, the Stalinists say they do not ignore "that in the ruling circles of the Church there are right-wing and reactionary sectors". All right, but are they the ones looking for the coup? Yes or no? The Communist Party does not answer this question, but it is so enthusiastic trying to gather "democrats" for its "great Front", that in order not to miss any of them and to further confuse

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1 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.

2 **Osvaldo Pugliese** (1905–1995) was an Argentine tango master. His communist sympathies earned him the hostility of the Peronist government.

its militants, it later says: “But it would be a grave mistake to confuse those reactionary leaders with the Catholic masses, who are animated by democratic and progressive sentiments.” A better demonstration of where the line of the “great Front” leads to, impossible.

We pose to the Stalinist comrades to ask themselves the following questions: If the Peron government has already sold out to the Yankees, why are they seeking the coup? Who encourages the Catholics, if not Yankee imperialism, to continue creating the propitious climate for the coup d'état? Who, if not the Catholics, are the spearhead of the coup?

We believe these questions can help, better than a hundred slogans of “Fronts”, to the workers discovering their enemies, breaking with their false leaders, and joining the great task of forming the great Workers Party that the workers and the country need.

### 3. A single workers' front to stop imperialism, the priests, and the capitalists

(*La Verdad*, Avellaneda, 6 June 1955)

All the forces of the Argentine working class must put themselves in tension to face the coup d'état the Church prepares on behalf of Yankee imperialism, with the active approval of the capitalists, especially the industrialists, who see the solution to their problems in the super-exploitation of the working class and a total surrender to the United States, to their loans and capital investments. We believe the working class must be alert to undo any military or clerical putsch because at present this is their main danger. We insist and will insist even more on this because we believe the working class is not prepared for it, that it is not aware of the existence of this dangerous Holy Alliance of imperialism, the priests, and the capitalists and of what they propose. Let's see why.

The worker active in the parties that are primarily anti-Peronists (Radicals, Stalinists, etc.), i.e., the worker who believes Argentina must be divided into Peronists and anti-Peronists, thinks the mess with the Catholics is because of an ingenious measure of the government, to distract the attention of the working population. While the most reactionary figures of his Party are set in motion under the baton of the Church, which polarises the middle class and the most anti-working class bourgeois sectors of the country, this worker hopes for an end of what he considers “a farce”. He is honestly convinced his interests are not at stake in this dispute and, although he no longer looks with sympathy at the lukewarm measures the government took against the Church, he draws the conclusion “they should manage on their own”. His attitude cannot be direr. With his indifference or passivity, he is allowing the most reactionary forces to raise their heads in the country so they can revive the Democratic Union with their rallies and demonstrations, now in the person of rosary rattlers and all kind of worshipers of Yankee “democracy”. He is allowing the worst: that the government, with its lukewarm measures and with police action, be the one opposing the clerical reaction. He is preventing or not taking part in the working class mobilisation, which is the only guarantee to disrupt the plans of the “Holy Alliance”.

To these workers, we say: your attitude cannot be one of indifference or expectation. Your interests are at stake. For a long time, Yankee imperialism have been trying, here and everywhere, to implement docile governments that support their plans to crush the workers' movement in the world, to recover those countries that have escaped their control and to dominate all to meet their needs for larger markets and new sources of investment for their capital.

To the Peronist government, which you consider the fundamental danger, we must fight it — we always insist it is not a workers' government — but knowing at that the moment it can be supplanted by a worse one.

We say to the anti-Peronist workers: understand the split in the country is not between Peronists and anti-Peronists but between exploiters (nationals, foreigners, Peronists, or contras) and the exploited, i.e., the workers.

The Peronist worker is in a similar situation. He believes the government is a giant that when it wants to thwart coups, put on the spot the unruly, be they priests or others, it has only to move a finger and it's over. For him, the government is all-powerful and increasingly he thinks with the police and the army it can do everything. He trusts the government, its politics, its apparatus and although he would

support it in an emergency situation, he believes the government does not need him for much. On the other hand, he thinks... Who are the priests to endanger our gains?

That Yankee imperialism is behind the priests? No, it cannot be because otherwise, the government would have denounced it! That the capitalists are also involved in the mess? No way, they have just met amicably with our leaders in the Congress of Productivity!

The Peronist comrade is totally confused. As the Peronist press has never reported the truth, as they did not report that in the Congress of Productivity, for example, the bosses wanted to get rid of internal commissions and collective agreements, he believes that everything is fine. He does not believe much in what the newspaper *La Prensa* constantly says that the bosses are finally good but he also does not believe things are to worry about. He does not get to see the importance of the constant increases in prices allowed by the government. He does not believe the capitalists are not satisfied with them, that they want more increases and even sweep away the government, which, by not losing its popular support, regulates the price increases. He does not see that the offensive the capitalists carry out every day against the standard of living and the gains of the workers must be answered with the formation of a great Workers Party so that the weakening of Peronism does not strengthen the clerical reaction.

He does not understand the reasons that caused the Peronist press not to disclose the attitude of the capitalists in the Congress of Productivity is the same reasons that now move it not to denounce Yankee imperialism as the one pulling the threads in the "Holy Alliance". The press did not denounce the capitalists because, in the end, they are with them; in what they differ is in the pace at which they will remove the gains from the workers. He finds himself in the same situation regarding Yankee imperialism. The government knows that with its policy of saving the profits of the exploiters and of solving the problems of the country with a capitalist and non-working-class policy, it needs and will need more and more from the imperialist capitalists. That's why it does not denounce them because it wants to reach an agreement with it; an agreement which does not mean a direct break with the workers. Yankee imperialism feels increasingly strong in the face of each concession the government is making (oil, capital investments law, etc.) and how the capitalists are oriented to the coup d'état.

Both, the Peronist and the anti-Peronist worker, must be convinced only his mobilisation is, then, the guarantee of victory against the coup prepared by imperialism, priests, and capitalists. They must be convinced that neither the government nor the army nor the police can be guardians of their interests once they are put into play. They must take into account the experience of Guatemala where the Army finally sided with the mercenary troops commanded by the US State Department.

A single workers' front to stop imperialism, the priests, and the capitalists! Let's prepare now to reject a new Castillo Armas!

#### **4. Workers' mobilisation – the only answer against the clerical-bosses-imperialist coup d'état**

(*La Verdad*, Avellaneda, 10 June 1955)

The demonstrations carried out by Catholics on 25 May, at the exit of the churches throughout the country, was a new demonstration of pro-Yankee reaction forces. They tried to repeat the mobilisation of 6 May when they attacked several transport workers in the centre of the city as if they had wanted to display in advance their true intentions toward the working class.

In this offensive that the Catholics have opened, and that has already gone from leaflets and aggressive publications to actual aggression, the entire pro-imperialist "contra" and even the Communist Party have been hooked. Thus CP places itself at the service of Yankee imperialism.

In our country, without scorning the concessions granted by the Peronist government, imperialism tries to supplant it by another government responding to the letter to its aspirations to colonise the country, one that has no regard for the working class, one that will snatch its gains, and one that liquidates the internal commissions. A government that signs the bilateral pacts, that provides military bases to imperialism, and contributes with all its men and its economy to any war imperialism fights in any part of the world.

This government cannot be other than the government of the Church and the most reactionary elements of the country. And they cannot reach power except through the coup d'état.

The worst reaction aims all its steps at creating the propitious climate for the coup. The working class must meditate on this fact and consider the fate of the country and its own are linked to the result of the coup d'état.

Faced with the Catholic offensive, the government has so far been content to mobilise the police and put the priests and zealots it detains at the disposal of the judges. Even this, it has done it with little conviction since at the Catholic demonstration on 6 May the police cars removed the policemen from the street corners, letting the Catholics get even more of a plain field.

The government does not ignore its own fate is in play in these moments. Nor does it ignore the only way to crush the Catholic mobilisation is with the mobilisation of the working class. However, the government is content with the communiqués of support that unions and other organisations grant it and whose words we read daily, while it addresses the working class urging it to remain in the utmost passivity, giving it the slogan "from home to work and from work to home".

### **The coup d'état will be the worst of the evils**

We believe it necessary to insist once again that the danger of a coup d'état does not affect just the government. The forces that may arise from it concentrate the fiercest hatred against the working class. The worst of the reaction nests in them. If the situation of the workers is not very promising today, it will be a thousand times worse if a coup succeeds.

The tension between the Church and the government is not a question that concerns only those two forces. It is a question of interest for the entire working class. Each step taken by the Catholic reaction is an advance of the capitalists and imperialism against the workers and the country. Each flyer, each publication, each clerical manifestation will also mean an increase in prices, more hours of work, dismissal of the more militant workers, worse medical services in the factories, more piecework, more exploitation, more and more machines for each worker and will mean also greater profits for the bosses and more concessions to Yankee imperialism.

The proletariat and especially its more conscious sectors must keep this well in mind.

### **How the working class should be mobilised**

The statements by the leaders of the CGT and the trade unions are not enough. While the discussion of the problem of Catholics and the coup they prepare does not come down to the working class, the statements will be very nice but the problem will not have become flesh in the workers. As long as there is no discussion in the jobs, the question will not have left the sphere of a tug-of-war between the government and the Church.

The working class must face the confrontation of the Catholic mobilisation through its own mobilisation. How should this mobilisation be carried out? The problem of Catholics must be discussed in all places of work. The clerical mobilisation, the demonstrations, the separation of Church and state, the danger of a coup, must be discussed, starting with each workplace, broadly and democratically, with complete freedom of opinion for all workers, including Catholics or Communists. Above the political differences, the workers of any tendency, even those whose leaders respond to imperialism, will know how to orient themselves, we are sure, by a position that represents the interests of the working class at this moment.

This discussion in a workplace, in a sector of a workplace, is already a beginning of mobilisation of the class from the moment it begins to become aware of a problem that affects it and expresses its concern for it.

The extension of this discussion to the whole shift, to the whole factory, from factory to factory, from union to union, will signal the mobilisation of the entire working class. This change of ideas will put the workers in a position to clarify the problem that appears so dark and will turn them into true judges

of the events that affect their immediate future. From all the meetings by section, factory or union, from all the factory committees and congresses of delegates, there must be pronouncements against the Catholic mobilisation and the coup d'état.

The active participation of the working class will thus forge the unity that can prevent the advance of imperialism and the bosses' offensive.

Only through this unity can the working class respond blow by blow to the clerical mobilisation. And only to the extent it has understood the true essence of the Catholic offensive can the working class be ready later to respond to the coup the reaction prepares with a trump card, the general strike, which is the ultimate demonstration of unity and discipline of the class around a goal: to defend the country from Yankee imperialism through the defence of its own achievements.

## 5. Yankee imperialism and the Church prepare a coup d'état

(*La Verdad*, Avellaneda, 19 May 1955)

### Unity of the working class to crush it!

Parliament has just sanctioned the abolition of religious education in schools. At the same time, it has resolved to apply to religious schools those taxes they had, until now, been exempted from. Also, the draft for the election of constituents who will reform the Constitution by separating the Church from the state has entered the Chamber of Deputies.

Moreover, the newspapers report every day of arrests of priests in different parts of the Republic and frustrated plots in which clerical elements would take part. All these news are accompanied, in the Peronist press, by an anti-clerical campaign in which the friars are ridiculed and all the frictions the Church has had with the state since the time of Maria Castaña<sup>3</sup> until today are resurrected.

But, what is the reason for this tension between the Catholic Church and the government that has been increasing for seven months and which today takes on virulent forms evidencing a coup d'état is being prepared?

The reasons are deeper. The own policy of imperialism tries to hide them and this conceals the reasons from the eyes of the people.

Is it that the priests have become bad overnight? Or as the "contras" say: the priests are angry about the sanction of the laws of divorce and prophylaxis? Not at all. The priests are the same reactionaries of always, defenders of all the principles of the exploiters, allies to the most retrograde ideas. As for divorce, in countries where it exists, there is no issue between the Church and the government.

In November of last year, Peron said in a speech to the governors there was no conflict with the Church and it was only about 15 or 20 priests who were plotting against the government. In *La Verdad* No 6, appeared on 3 December 1954 and in subsequent editions, we pointed out the reasons for the conflict were broader. We noted the Church was trying to form a party that favoured the colonisation plan of Yankee imperialism, opening the country to its conquest. Also, that the government wanted to reach an agreement with Washington but in the best possible conditions while the Yankees, without rejecting the talks, wanted to impose on the country a servile government in the style of Castillo Armas.

From then until now, government relations with the Church have become increasingly strained. Masses and sermons have become "contra" rallies, processions in demonstrations and demonstrations, like the one on the 6th of this month, in true displays of strength endowed with an aggressive character, organised with strike groups and terrorist methods.

After seven months of tension, the government continues to give secondary reasons to the conflict with the Church. In statements made by General Peron to an Italian journalist, he said, among other things, there is no issue with the Church; "what there is, is a conflict between a part of the clergy and the

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3 **Maria Castaña** was a woman of the fourteenth century who is known very little actually. By the time of Cervantes she had already become an ambiguous temporal reference to refer to a very distant past, equivalent to "the times of Methuselah".

organisations of the Argentine people". In short, even today he still insists the tension obeys to the whim of some priests who, who knows for what reason, came up with the creation of organisations similar to the Peronists but of a Catholic nature. And, it is not known why, giving up the enormous advantages the government had granted them, they place themselves in a position to lose them.

Peronism, indeed, confirming its reactionary nature, had given the Catholic Church unbeatable positions and a pre-eminence it had not had even with the most reactionary conservative governments. Peron himself told the journalist religious education cost the state 87 million pesos during the past year.

### **The government's reluctance to surrender tied hand and feet to Yankee imperialism is the essential cause of the conflict with the Church**

Yankee imperialism does not refuse to deal with the government the entire investment plan. Moreover, through the negotiations, it has already achieved some gains. But these do not satisfy imperialism, Washington needs in Latin American countries to have governments that do not offer resistance to its aspirations but facilitate them and grant them greater advantages day by day. The Peronist government is not one of those. Peron wants to reach an agreement with the Yankees but trying to defend as much as possible his stability based on the support of the masses he would lose if he proceeded to a total surrender of the country.

All the gains of imperialism achieved in our country give it encouragement to get new and better conditions. Therefore, to the extent it succeeds, the Church, responding to Yankee intentions, becomes more aggressive.

In the same way, to the extent the government does not allow the working class mobilisation to stop imperialism and its national agents, the country's position will weaken in the face of imperialist advances and the insolence and impunity of the Church and its pro-imperialist supporters will increase, in preparation for the coup d'état.

Why, then, does the government not act decisively before the Church if its own fate is in it? First, because it wants to reach an agreement with imperialism. Second, because the government is aware the working class mobilisation will overstep the limits of its control and raise all the problems the proletariat faces: bosses' offensive, price increases, lowering of the standard of living. And, today, Peronism can no longer grant concessions to the workers without earning the opposition of all the bosses, with whom it has great relations.

But not only does the government not tell the people what the real reason for the conflict with substance Catholics is. The interest to maintain within a cordial plane the negotiations with the Yankees force it to hide the heart of the matter and to vaguely point to those who prepare the handover of the country.

### **The CGT and the workers' organisations have the obligation to denounce the coup d'état and prepare the working class to face it**

Vuletich<sup>4</sup> said on May Day the triple alliance has re-manifested itself and it is composed by the clergy, the oligarchy, and capitalism. We believe such a general language cannot be that of the CGT. The Workers' Central has the obligation to clearly and unequivocally point out what the true relations between the Church, the bosses' organisation, and Yankee imperialism are, and it should be the GCT that drives it in any arena necessary.

The CGT must denounce right now the danger of the coup d'état and prepare the working class to prevent it.

We have to know the meaning of a coup d'état and its consequences. Far from solving the problems of the workers and the country as a whole, the forces that can dominate after the coup d'état will be more reactionary than the current ones, will exert a power that will directly respond to the orders of the bosses and imperialism. They will crush the internal commissions, liquidate in the short term the gains of the workers, sweep off all workers' organisation and independence, and deliver to Yankee imperialism

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4 **Eduardo Vuletich** was Secretary General of CGT in 1952–1955.

the levers of control of the national economy and sever the sovereignty of the country by granting it military bases.

How should we face this danger? Neither the bourgeois opposition nor the government offers guarantees to stop the colonisation plan of Yankee imperialism and stop the coup d'état. The working class needs an independent policy, free of compromises with the capitalists, that allows it to successfully confront and push back imperialism and its allies preparing this coup d'état within the country. This independent policy must be expressed through a workers' party. The union activists who today fight against the bosses and the workers aware of the dangers posed by the advances of capitalism and imperialism against their gains have to unite around a program that reflects the interests of their own class. This unity is the only way for the country and the working class to stop the Yankee colonisation plan and the bosses' offensive.

The workers face this plan and this offensive which point out toward the coup d'état. The coup is already floating in the atmosphere, which translates by the growing tension in the relations with the Church which the radio stations abroad encourage. The Workers' Central must act quickly organising their crushing in their own sources of origin and not just with speeches or communiques. Bombs and bludgeons are fought only with weapons. It is necessary the CGT and all the organisations that claim to be of the working class to democratically discuss this need, in the workplaces, in the factories, in the unions.

Only the mobilisation of the working class will stop the coup d'état. The most important task at the present time is to prepare that mobilisation. It is not enough for union leaders to speak out against the Church. The entire working class needs to be manifested. Right now, we must prepare assemblies in all the factories of the country; these must have ample freedom so all the workers, of whichever political tendency they may be, even Catholics, have the possibility of freely presenting their motions. Afterward, the CGT must publish all the motions and the votes they get. This will be the best manifestation of the workers' will and of preparing the class against the coup d'état and the colonisation plan of Yankee imperialism.

## **6. After the first coup, Yankee imperialism and its allies remain firm in their offensive to colonise the country**

*(La Verdad, 25 June 1955)*

### **Let's prepare the defence of our achievements and organisations from the attacks of the reaction**

The 16 June is not over. The same problems continue to be raised and the struggle still stands. The coup d'état has failed. But the forces that made it are better placed than before the coup and they have achieved a series of important concessions. The capitalists and imperialism are still trying to establish their own government. For this, they will try to defeat the working class.

### **The causes of the coup are still standing**

The capitalists and Yankee imperialism, along with their ally the Church and some sectors of the armed forces, prepared the conspiracy to sweep out the Peronist government, the CGT, the internal commissions and the delegates and thus be able to suppress the gains achieved by the working class and allow a greater penetration of Yankee imperialism in the national economy.

The Peronist government made up and makes up the main obstacle to the achievement of this program. They want the class struggle that Peronism does not allow, to suppress gains and workers' organisations. From these columns, we have pointed out for many months these intentions of the bourgeoisie and imperialism and their coup d'état. The capitalists and imperialism acted with a clear program:

- a) in the economic field: implementation of the bosses' program in the Congress of Productivity;
- b) greater penetration of Yankee imperialism in the national economy;

c) defeat of Peronism and CGT and the rise to the government of a right-wing political party with a popular base that could be led by the Church or Radical Unionists.

We must look for the causes of this attitude in the national economic situation. In the first place, a reduction of the national income (fewer goods to be distributed) produced by the fall of Argentine product prices in the world market, which made the bourgeoisie set itself the goal of reducing the standard of living of the working class. Along with this, the situation of the whole national industry, which because of the bad policy of the capitalists has all its machinery old, making the productive power of the Argentine industry very low.

For the capitalists, there is only one solution to these problems. On the one hand, tighten the tourniquet to the working class to produce more and earn less and, on the other hand, with the penetration of Yankee imperialism through loans and investments.

Peronism does not oppose this policy. Simply, it tries to take it little by little, to avoid divorcing the working class while the capitalists want to carry it out at once and relying on a majority that the middle class would provide.

Moreover, Peronism plays into the hands of the bourgeois opposition, not alerting the working class and the country to the motives of the former.

### **The politics of conciliation is the politics of the bourgeoisie**

And so we come to June 16. A tragic date for the workers and the country, in which many of our brothers died, victims of imperialist reaction. The situation of 16 June has not been resolved, Peronism is still in power but with a different character and the opposition forces are emboldened and owners of the situation.

Within the government, the army is the preponderant force and although it does not dominate the situation, it gravitates more intensely, a position similar to that which the CGT had before the coup. Peron says the revolution is over, that the government calls for conciliation because it believes the goals of the Peronist revolution have been achieved and a new democratic period is imposed in which we will all contribute.

The president does not make clear what the goals achieved are. We believed and believe Peronism did not bring to fruition its slogan of “economic independence, political sovereignty, and social justice”.

Economic independence, we do not have. Imperialism owns the main companies in the country. (CADE, meatworks, Alpargatas, SIAM, etc.). Political sovereignty is about to be severed in part by the agreements on oil. And in terms of social justice, while it is true Peronism brought a series of gains to the working class it is no less true these very same gains are lost gradually with the high cost of living and with all the manifestations of the bosses' offensive.

We disagree that Peronism has been victorious in its political objectives and hence it abandons the revolutionary stage to enter the constitutional period and of free examination of all issues. The truth of coexistence seems to be that it wants to unify all capitalist forces of the country. Peronism is similar to Radicalism or conservatives in that they are non-workers' parties, which defend capitalist private property and the bourgeois order. The same unity achieved by the capitalists in the CGE tends to be achieved in the political arena.

Faced with the thrust of the working class, their future struggles to defend their standard of living and their gains and faced with the terrible situation of the Argentine capitalist economy, which prevents the bourgeoisie from giving improvements to the workers without seriously damaging their interests, it is imperative a policy of unity or collaboration by all the bourgeoisie's political parties to stop the great mobilisation of the working class that is prepared to curb the capitalist appetites.

When the working class is calm, the capitalists and their various parties can afford to have differences and fight each other. But faced with the working class, they unite.

But conciliation also has another meaning. Peronism cannot face, as before, the combined pressure of the capitalists and Yankee imperialism. The threat of a new coup d'état still hangs over its head. The

only way to stop it is to mobilise the working class and the government knows this very well. Therefore, it gives in to the pressure of Yankee imperialism and its allies, which require it to give freedoms to the parties defending their interests. Peronism, faced with the alternative of capitulating before imperialism or mobilising the working class, leans towards the first because it knows very well once the working class has risen in defence of its interests, it will continue until the final liberation, and then the whole capitalist regime will falter.

On the other hand, the contras and the bourgeoisie want conciliation to unify their forces. To create their great party that, relying on the middle class, allows them through a majority to get the working class to lower their head. The bourgeoisie wants to liquidate the influence of CGT and of the working class and for that, it needs to overthrow Peronism and to remove Peron from the presidency. The Radical and clerical demonstrations have this meaning, to make Peron renounce, to start the new era, the era of the total surrender of the country to Yankee imperialism, the era of the bosses' offensive and the crushing of the working class, the era of hunger and misery. In this sense, conciliation is already an important step, the parties of the bourgeoisie will have the opportunity to organise and prepare the battle against the working class.

However, we should not be pessimistic, the weapons used by the capitalists against us sooner or later turn against themselves. The working class must know how to use those freedoms to give itself its great workers' party that leads not only to the working class but also to all the exploited masses.

## 7. Oil and coup d'état<sup>5</sup>

But the imperialist offensive on the country did not act only through the clerical agitation that began in late 1954. Already since 1953, Yankee capital and its native agents were pressing on the Peronist government from within, through the ministers of the economic team who increasingly imprinted on Peronist politics a surrendering character in face of the demands of Washington and Wall Street and of growing support for the bosses' campaign against the workers' gains. So successful was this Yankee pressure that some of the main agents of American capital in the country did not hesitate to proclaim Peronism was regenerating and would become a good bosses' and pro-Yankee government. Thus, Guillermo Kraft, a notorious agent of the Yankee capital invested in Argentina, declared in 1954 that "a profound transformation is taking place in our country. The private company is recognised and the businessman is trusted. The assets that were once nationalised are being returned one after the other to private entities. We are invited to participate in the management of state organisations. And all this, with absolute freedom of opinion and total political independence. However, these are the first steps. Our government thinks of loosening gradually the bureaucratic springs and giving private activities not only the role of their own existence but also — and we already have unambiguous signs of this — to make their intervention in our activities disappear."<sup>6</sup> And this was also the opinion of Federico Pinedo, who trusted the evolution of Peronism would "make the coup d'état unnecessary".<sup>7</sup>

In truth, imperialism had reason to celebrate the success of its offensive from within against Peronism because it had achieved important advantages such as the law of foreign capital establishment, the Kaiser contract, and the strangling contract with California Standard Oil, amen of the attempts to increase the exploitation of the working class with the tale of "productivity". Faced with all these measures of the Peronist government — which were as many wins of the Yankee offensive against the country and against Peronism itself, since they undermined it from within —, the tendency of Puiggros, Ramos & Co hastened to express its approval, stating the Peronist government thus strengthened... the independence of the country. In this way they collaborated with Guillermo Kraft and Federico Pinedo — i.e., with Wall Street — in blindfolding the working

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5 This chapter and the following were part of Chapter 6 in Editorial Pluma's republishing in 1974. We present them as individual chapters and we have added subtitles to facilitate reading without altering at all the text published then.

6 *Argentina at the VII Plenary Meeting of the Inter-American Council of Commerce and Production* (Mexico, 1954), p. 126. NM

7 Federico Pinedo, *El fatal estatismo* [Fatal statism], Kraft, Buenos Aires 1956), p. 17. NM

class and shaking the ground from under Peronism, which by dint of making concessions to Yankee capital was left handcuffed and losing freedom of action against the pro-imperialist opposition that, grouped around the Church, began to win the streets. The Trotskyist socialist revolutionaries, on the contrary, pointed out to the working class the race towards the abyss the Peronist leadership undertook and explained this basic concept: if the economic policy is not directed by the working class through working class ministers appointed by CGT, any concession to imperialist capital will only help to sink the country, the working class, and Peronism.

*La Verdad* said on 4 March 1955:

### Argentina faced with the colonisation plan

Argentina has been the Latin America country farthest from the domination of Yankee imperialism and which has best resisted the colonisation plan. For several reasons: 1) For having non-complementary economies, i.e., both countries produce more or less the same products, which prevents a large exchange; 2) Because our country has a diversified economy, i.e., it produces and exports many different goods, which gives the bourgeoisie and the government a greater margin of manoeuvre.

This situation kept our country closely linked to European imperialisms; they were sold meats, hides, and cereals in exchange for their manufactured products (something it could not be done with the US), which allowed England to control our economy: transport, energy, and meatworks were controlled from London.

The outbreak of the Second World War resulted in the weakening of British imperialism, which orderly withdrew from the country. The sale of the railways was done by exhaustion of British imperialism unable to renew the rolling stock — and not by the anti-imperialist will of the government, which did not nationalise, for example, either CADE or the meatworks that continue to give huge profits to imperialism.

The withdrawal of British imperialism and the good position of the Argentine bourgeoisie allowed the government to adopt anti-imperialist poses and display certain independence. But today the good situation is over. Sales to Europe at very high prices are over and the government and the bourgeoisie are faced with having to solve again the serious problems of the country's economy.

First, the low yield of labour in the industry, a product of the backwardness of the machinery. And the low yield of agricultural work, a product of the lack of mechanization of agriculture and the existence of large estates. What is the solution capitalists give to these problems? The arrival of Yankee capitals to the country, bringing machines and capital and an increase of the exploitation of the working class.

The workers must not accept these solutions because they are capitalist solutions, i.e., alien to the interests of the country and the working class. Workers must demand solutions that suit the country and do not mean an increase in exploitation.

In the first place, if Yankee capitals are needed they may come but let the working class negotiate and let the negotiations be public so all the people can take part in their discussion.

Second, the large state in the countryside must be eliminated and the land given to the peasants.

Third, we must demand the expropriation of companies that are already paid and that sabotage the progress of the national economy, such as CADE and the meatworks. This is the best way to confront the imperialist offensive and the bosses' offensive.

And on 19 August 1955, after the first coup attempt, *La Verdad* said:

### We must reject the colonising oil agreement: the parliamentary bloc of the CGT must act in this sense

In *La Verdad* No 15, we talked about the meaning of some clauses of the oil agreement with Standard Oil, already signed by the Executive Power and put to the consideration of the chambers. We were not wrong to say the fate of the Yankee attempts to colonise the country now depended on this covenant since Yankee Imperialism has forged this as the best instrument to achieve its basic goal, i.e., to control

the southern part of the continent as a preliminary step for the management and defence of the Strait of Magellan.

The Panama Canal — the “key to the defence of the Western Hemisphere”, as the Yankees call it — is in danger of the immediate possibility of collapse and it offers an easy target for possible bombings. If the management of the Canal Zone by the Yankees cost the Colombians a revolution, Yankee imperialism — this time with more refined methods — is trying to wrest an area of Argentine territory under the mantle of an oil agreement. At half a century of US plundering in Central America, which provoked the rejection of all Latin American workers, the Yankee colonisation plan aims at repeating a new outrage over sovereignty, this time in our country.

### **The “contra” is wrong: oil is not what the Yankees want**

The arguments of the Peronist press to defend the oil agreement are based on the real needs of the country to solve the energy problem. Raised the problem like this, one could discuss the convenience of giving the Yankees the task of drilling and extraction of oil. In other words, although foreign capital investments are an important bridge to increase the number of companies controlled by imperialism and thereby make its pressure to control the country even more felt, one cannot disagree in principle with using foreign capitals and technology. But the important thing is that according to the contract Standard Oil has no obligation to extract oil in the area given to it!

Making the problem turn only around the oil issue is to confuse the workers. The “contra” moans for the “death” of YPF. Peronism answers rightly that Radical and Conservative governments were the ones that made it possible for foreign companies to control a part of our oil production, such as ESSO, etc. What everyone forgets is that oil matters least to the Yankees, who have enough of it in Venezuela, Peru and other countries.

Together with the verbosity on oil, it is increasingly clear the correctness of the claim made by us in previous issues, that by Article 64 of the Covenant we go back 100 years in the treatment given to foreign companies by accepting the disputes that may be filed between Standard Oil and the State must be resolved by a foreign court, which the same contracting company controls in the end. The arguments of the Peronist press are true in the sense of denouncing the anti-imperialist verbiage of the Radicals and their past full of submissions and shenanigans. However, the same press and even high government officials could not deny the colonising meaning of the clauses of the oil covenant. Dr Gomez Morales, secretary of economic affairs of the Government, told reporters on 9 August: “Personally, I consider inadequate the part of the contract that resolves the appointment of an arbitrator... to solve differences that may arise between the State and the company.”

As we see, the authorities themselves have recognised much of the shameful oil covenant; but these are not the only colonising clauses, nor can they be labelled as inadequate. Truth is, the oil covenant contemplates the maximum aspiration of Yankee imperialism and it does not solve the real problems the country has. We must reject it!

### **The working class must mobilise for the oil covenant rejection**

The government’s increasing concessions to capitalism and imperialism — without yet becoming the Castillo Armas they wanted — raise the problem of the attitude of the working class on the political scene with increasing urgency. The Government’s go-ahead to the bosses’ offensive and the important concessions the oil covenant makes to Yankee imperialism, the postponement of the Constituent Assembly and the urgent need to separate the Church from the State; but above all, the retreat faced with the main exploiter of our country, Yankee imperialism, raises the need for an independent workers’ policy.

Since the beginning of *La Verdad*, we have been insisting on the need to form a workers’ party to break with the Peronist bourgeois leadership without falling back into the Radical quagmire again. This approach of ours is not impossible nor is it advice for our great-grandchildren. Right now, it is necessary to unite the best union activists following an independent workers policy, at the moment focused on the denunciation of the oil covenant and the struggle for the next collective bargaining.

Those comrades already present in the unions and in the country and who want to carry out a policy of consistent opposition to the bosses and the foreman of bosses — Yankee imperialism — should set in motion in their factories and in their unions for the rejection of the oil pact knowing that with it they are fighting in the first row against the Yankee plan of Latin American colonisation. It is necessary to press so that in each factory, in each union, the workers express themselves against the colonising agreement and demand the CGT deputies, who claim to represent them, vote in the Chamber of Deputies against the covenant. The next assembly or congress of delegates of the textile, railway, metallurgical union, etc., the first factory or section meeting held must discuss this problem so the CGT deputies know the position they must represent in parliament.

CGT, which in recent times has resolved frequently to meet apart from the Peronist party bloc and adopt positions sometimes different from theirs, must also do so in the present with the problem of the oil covenant and resolve a position that contemplates the thought of those who were their constituents. It is not enough to have independence and to separately meet to solve the problem of the authorities of the Chamber or small problems. This attitude must be adopted in the face of all problems. This position will find the supreme disadvantage the CGT itself is part of the “Peronist movement”. As long as this situation is not modified and the ties that bind it to the State and its ideology are not cut, there will continue to be a fence that separates it from the authentic representation of an independent workers’ policy.

## 8. Competing with the Peronist “national left”

Of course, the pro-imperialist opposition placed itself squarely on the side of the Catholic Church, in favour of the imperialist putsch. On 27 November 1954, the National Committee of the Radical Civic Union (582 Rio Bamba Street, Federal Capital) published an unworthy leaflet, signed by Arturo Frondizi and Federico Mojardin, entitled “Solidarity with persecuted Catholics”, where it said: “The Regime started new persecution. It now adds the pressure exerted against a vast sector of the Argentine people, whose religious faith is converted by the Regime into a political problem, to serve the purposes of intimidation, on which it bases its power.”

Radicalism opposed in Parliament all the progressive measures that Peronism took against the Catholic Church. And on 13 June, three days before the putsch, the president of the Radical bloc in the Chamber of Deputies of the Nation (Alende) said: “We are with the Catholics who suffer persecutions and prison, we are for the freedom to profess any cult, for men of all religions, we are for the freedom of Jews when it is their turn, we are for the freedom of Protestants when it is their turn.”<sup>8</sup> This is how the pro-imperialist action of the Catholic Church was covered!

For its part, Stalinism docked to the putsch with all their soul. The Argentine Communist Party supported the Catholic Church! Days before the pro-imperialist coup d’état, its official organ, *Nuestra Palabra*, stated: “It is undeniable the reform of the Constitution in order to propose the separation of the Church from the State is a smoke screen: they want the people to forget the handover of oil, steel, metallurgy, forget the cost of living, forget the politics of war and the reactionary line.”<sup>9</sup>

That’s how things stood before 16 June. The oligarchic opposition (including its Stalinist caboose) deployed its united front with imperialism. Trotskyist revolutionary socialism materialised its anti-imperialist united front with the Peronist government, in the Bolshevik style — without supporting the Government, without trusting it, without removing a comma to its criticisms, without failing to denounce it, demanding above all the independence of the proletariat and the intransigent struggle for its class goals. As *La Verdad* said: “We have never stopped characterising the Peronist government as alien to the interests of the working class, we have never failed to emphasise we do not have the slightest trust in this government, but at the same time we have never stopped insisting we must fight to the bitter end the contra, who are in favour of the coup d’état.”

<sup>8</sup> Argentine Republic, Chamber of Deputies, *Record of Proceedings*, 3 June 1955, p. 5361. NM

<sup>9</sup> *Nuestra Palabra*, organ of the Communist Party of Argentina, 24 May 1955, p. 2. NM

But what was the position of the “Marxist” agents of the Peronist leadership? What did the Ramoses, Puiggroses, Astesanos and the entire company of writers sensitive to the interests of Apold’s<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Propaganda say? Their words and actions in those days have the undeniable merit of crying out the way in which the agents of the Peronist leadership and apostles of the submission of the worker to the Presidency of the Nation and the Ministry of War are indirect agents of imperialism in the decisive moments. In April 1955, the Trotskyist revolutionary socialists wrote:

“The Church, as an agent of Yankee imperialism and the exploiters, is at the forefront of the Yankee offensive to colonise the country. In these moments, when the government makes concessions to Yankee imperialism, the Church sees the opportunity to weaken it and, together with all the “contra” elements (Radicals, conservatives, Repettos’ socialists, and communists, who, by a rare phenomenon, are converting to Catholicism), tries to form a great popular-based front to defeat Peronism and implant a Castillo Armas-type dictatorship and give the country bound hand and foot to Yankee imperialism. A government to do everything the bosses want: that the workers’ gains be annulled, that the collective agreements be fixed between the board of directors and the chief of personnel.”<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, Rodolfo Puiggros said in a *Report to the First National Assembly of the Communist Workers’ Movement* (Chapter XI: Clerical Conflict): “The struggle against clerical reaction is part of the struggle for industrialisation, for planning, for the increase in productivity... The Catholic Church is the most powerful political power in the capitalist world. We say ‘political power’ because even Yankee imperialism gives it the mission to lead the reaction, as its best agent, in some countries like Italy, Spain, France, West Germany and the United States itself.”<sup>12</sup>

These few words say more than hundreds of pages. The struggle for the increase in productivity, i.e., the offensive of the bourgeoisie to increase the exploitation of the working class, which was part of the preparation of the clerical-bosses-imperialist putsch, is described like... fighting against the Church! At a time when the Catholic Church becomes the political party of Yankee imperialism in Argentina, Puiggros sees nothing and says the Church is the best agent of imperialism in some countries (Italy, Spain, France, Germany, United States), but not in Argentina!!!

Still in June 1955, days before the putsch, Puiggros’ newspaper devoted over three pages to the conflict between Peronism and the Church but did not say a word about the Church being the agent of Yankee imperialism, nor about the imminence of the putsch. When even the blind could see the pro-imperialist coup against the working class and the country was approaching, the newspaper *Clase Obrera* remained deaf and mute and did not foresee or alert the working class. But this is nothing, or rather, this is not all. In the same issue, the talented Marxist Eduardo Astesano gave a show of cretinism as has not been seen in the country for a long time. At a time when the entire Argentine bourgeoisie was galvanizing around the Church, the mainstay of imperialism; when the oligarchic rabble of the distinguished neighbourhoods turned to the streets, led by the priests, to show that, finally, after the failure of the Democratic Union, the Argentine bourgeoisie had found in the Curia its political party, Mr Astesano wrote — take note! —: “It is clear that a Christian Democracy, a spearhead of imperialism, does not correspond to the actual situation of the country.” And this political genius added: “The Catholic Religion is a geopolitical factor of continental unity from Mexico to Argentina that should not be underestimated and that can help to oppose the penetration of British or Yankee imperialism linked to Protestantism.”<sup>13</sup>

The least a person who wrote this in Argentina in June 1955 can do is commit suicide or enter a convent. Until then, we had believed Mr Astesano was a salaried employee of Apold, but now we doubt. Maybe he is an amateur who works on his own. After all, Apold could not be foolish to the

10 **Raul Apold** (1898-1980) was a journalist and Peronist politician who became known for his work in the Undersecretary of Press and Media during the presidencies of Peron.

11 *La Verdad*, Avellaneda, 21 April 1955. NM

12 *Clase Obrera* [Working Class], Buenos Aires, April 1955. NM

13 Eduardo Astesano, in *Clase Obrera*, Buenos Aires, June 1955, p. 10. NM

point of taking such an obvious imbecile into his service... Truth is, in this way, *Clase Obrera* served objectively imperialism, helping it to deceive and confuse the proletariat while the Church was preparing the coup.

In the meantime, what did Mr Jorge Abelardo Ramos, several aliases, the combative anti-imperialist who lived in the pay of the Peronist newspapers and who diverted his leisure in writing books for the UCR's publishing house, do? He wrote in *Democracia* articles of palpitating actuality about the revolution of 1890 in which he "demonstrated" this revolution had been a clerical-oligarchical-imperialist coup against the nationalist government of Juarez Celman–Roca. However, in 1949 the same Mr Ramos wrote: "with Roca and Juarez Celman the landlord class copies the economic map imperialism drew from London for its colonies."<sup>14</sup>

A character capable of stating in 1955, without blushing, without explanation or self-criticism, the opposite of what he said in 1949 does not even deserve to be quoted and, moreover, this is not what interests us here. What we want to point out is that in June 1955 Mr Ramos had nothing to say about the character of the struggle between Peronism and the Church or about the imminence of the clerical-bosses-imperialist coup.

Of course, on June 17, the day after the putsch, Mr Ramos lashed with an article headed by the original title of "Buenos Aires open city" where he said:

"The working class has given its immediate reply. Distributed as a fan on the surface of the shootings, its vanguards entered fully, despite the inequality of the technical means, in the battle. The army founded by San Martin, tempered in the gaucho wars and organised by Roca and Riccheri fulfilled its duty to the end, underpinning with its action the fundamental achievements of the revolutionary process.

"The cattle aristocracy, displaced from the political power, the bigwigs of the surviving oligarchy, and the cohorts of the anti-national sects created the atmosphere of the coup."<sup>15</sup>

See how an intellectual prostitute "fulfils her duty to the end" of confusing the working class and preparing it for further massacres. Not a word of criticism for the Peronist leadership, which sent the unarmed workers to Plaza de Mayo to serve as a defenceless target for bombs and shrapnel. The rhetorical salute to the working class is not for its vigorous revolutionary class actions —the burning of the churches, the assault on armouries to arm itself — but for its weakness prepared by the government and the CGT. Instead, he makes the apology of the army "organised by Roca". Let's set aside that Roca's army only served to kill Indians and his war campaign was described by Ramos himself as a "military stroll through the desert with the withered laurels of a few hundred Indians executed". The important thing is that with the bombastic phrase "it fulfilled its duty to the end", Mr Ramos concealed prudently the army was engaged in the putsch and came out at the last minute only to prevent the Argentine proletariat from taking over the Ministry of the Navy on its own and from ending right there and then with traitors such as Olivieri<sup>16</sup> and "loyalists" such as Isaac Rojas.<sup>17</sup> The very "Peronist" War Minister, justifying the attitude of the army, said: "We are sure we have done a good to the Nation and in future times will be recognised that nothing could be happier for the fate of the country and its institutions than the position assumed by the army. Our professional knowledge allows us to deduce the chaos that would reign now in the country if we had followed another path. And it will be easy for them to meditate on the most serious consequences of the civil war, with the international bewilderment and the tragedy of bloody battles between children of the common homeland" (*La Nacion*, 12 July 1955).

14 Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *Amrica Latina*, op. cit., p. 133–134. NM

15 Jorge Abelardo Ramos, aka *Victor Almagro*, in *Democracia*, Buenos Aires, 17 June 1955. NM

16 **Anibal Olivieri** (1903-1984) was Minister of the Navy during the presidency of Peron and in 1955 took part in the uprising to overthrow him.

17 **Isaac Rojas** (1906–1993) was an Argentine Admiral of the Navy and de facto Vice President of Argentina from 1955 to 1958. Together with Eduardo Lonardi he headed the self-titled "Liberating Revolution" coup d'état against Peron in September 1955.

Finally, after his apology of the army, Mr Ramos points out as managers of the putsch the cattle aristocracy and the surviving oligarchy. Gracefully, he forgets thus the industrial bourgeoisie, which in the factories, since 1954 and especially since the convening of the Congress of Productivity, prepared the way for the putsch with an intense offensive against the workers' gains.

While the miserable Argentine Castillo Armas massacred the unarmed workers, while the prostitutes hired by Peronism joined them objectively, confusing and deceiving the working class, the Trotskyist revolutionary socialist militants distributed the following flyer on the afternoon of 16 June that synthesises all its anti-imperialist united front tactics.

#### Flyer of 16 June 1955

##### Fellow workers:

*La Verdad* calls on all workers — Peronists and non-Peronists—and we tell them: **let's crush together the reactionary coup of the Church and Yankee imperialism.**

To the Peronist comrades we say: the coup wants to liquidate all the gains Peronism has granted the working class and it wants to impose a dictatorial government that signs the bilateral pact with Yankee imperialism.

To the non-Peronist comrades we say: this is not about **defending** the current government but about preventing an ultra-reactionary and anti-worker government from succeeding.

**Everyone to fight against the coup, to crush it, forming groups of workers who must arm themselves to fight it.** It is necessary to avoid a new government in the Uriburu mould that liquidates the workers' organisations, imposes terror and implants the dictatorship of capital and imperialism.

UNITY IN DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY AND OF THE WORKING CLASS, OF OUR GAINS, AND OF OUR ORGANISATIONS !!!

LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS! DEATH TO THE BOSSES-CLERICAL-IMPERIALIST REACTION!!!

After 16 June came 16 September. Between both dates, Mr Ramos began the publication of a magazine called *Izquierda* [Left]. Its first issue appeared in August when it was perfectly clear the Holy Alliance of the Vatican, Yankee imperialism, and the Argentine bourgeoisie prepared a new putsch to put an end to Peron. Ramos wrote an editorial of several pages making the apology of the Peronist government. But throughout the editorial, there is not a single line warning the working class against the imminence of the putsch. In August 1955 all that Mr Ramos had to recommend to the proletariat was “to group around *Izquierda* magazine to prepare the construction of a great independent party of the working class.”

While Mr Ramos thus rambled on general issues, avoiding the ultra-concrete problem of the putsch, the Trotskyist socialist revolutionaries wrote in *La Verdad* on 19 August 1955:

#### The streets for the workers! The reaction prepares a new 16 June: All united to crush it!

The Ministry of the Interior has reported a sector of the reaction threatened with a new 16 June. We have denounced these plans in previous issues, pointing out that while a sector of the capitalists accepts pacification, abandoning — at least momentarily — their coup plans, another sector, fundamentally supported by a part of the middle class, the most desperate, that counts on the participation of the clergy and the worst nationalists, remains firm in its plan of civil preparation of the coup d'état.

Faced with this permanent threat hanging over the head of the country, the working class, its organisations, and its conquests, it is necessary all the workers' organisations, fundamentally CGT, prepare themselves to gain the street to the clerical-bosses-imperialist reaction, preventing thus the consummation of a new coup d'état.

For these reasons, we advocate that just as the reaction has weapons and prepares to use them against the working class, this must also be armed. Only then will we slow down the reaction.

It must be clear, only the mobilisation of the working class will stop the plans of the reaction. Therefore, we invite the CGT to begin a campaign in all the factories, branches, and unions to prepare the mobilisation. And above all, as a matter of urgency, we believe the CGT must call all workers to concentrate, at the slightest rumour of reactionary mobilisation, in places where it is cited, to gain the streets and give them the necessary thrashing so they understand once and for all the working class is not willing to passively let go of the gains.

All united in defence of our gains!

And when the pro-imperialist opposition demanded the resignation of Peron, the Trotskyists argued it was the working class that had to decide whether Peron continued in the government (a criterion that Peron himself adopted on 31 August, when he submitted his resignation to CGT) and they requested the vice-presidency of the Senate be taken up by a representative of the CGT, so that, should Peron and Teisaire resign, the government would pass legally into the hands of CGT. *La Verdad* said, on 5 August 1955:

### A sector of the reaction demands Peron's resignation; it is not them but the workers who must decide

In the previous issue (25 June), we pointed out there was a reactionary campaign aimed at achieving the resignation of Peron. We gave two examples or manifestations of this campaign: the shouts of the Catholic protesters against Eva Peron and the biased statement of the Provincial Committee of Radicalism. From that date, new facts have been added to those mentioned in the previous issue of *La Verdad*. On the one hand, new organisations, such as the Christian Democratic Union, demand Peron's resignation as a condition for pacification; but the line of action of the reactionary sectors that want to achieve this goal has become recently concrete: the rumour.

To understand the magnitude of this campaign, the first fact to clarify is the reason itself, the reason for the intensity of this movement. How to explain that within a few days — less than two months — of the failure of the coup d'état, the reaction has the courage to request Peron's resignation? Is it that their spearheads, launched on the streets on 16 June, have not been defeated? We could seek a thousand interpretations of this phenomenon and perhaps, of the thousand, those most "awake" will stay with: the reaction continues to agitate the streets because they are brave, because of the courage of Catholics, etc. However, the explanation is false. Not even the clericals who days ago cheered at the door of the Naval Centre the names of the coup leaders act only according to their bravery. The reasons are different and not very difficult to understand: the clerical-bosses-imperialist mobilisation that culminated in the rise of the Navy has not been crushed by the working class mobilisation.

The fact is clear. What prevented "the working class from playing the match", as Di Pietro<sup>18</sup> asked a few days before, was the lack of weapons in the hands of the working class and the subsequent coming out of the army "to maintain order". The working class participation was very important but not decisive. The reactionary mobilisation was strengthened with the attitude of the army since it was not crushed by the victorious mobilisation of the working class, which is why the clericals are still demonstrating today, and the reaction, especially in the middle class, feels emboldened.

But, and the coexistence? Does the reaction not enter the path of "coexistence"? This is the other problem to clarify. A strong sector of the bourgeoisie, the industrialists and the big business managers, have convinced themselves of the need for "coexistence". But they have not abandoned their goals because of this. If today they go for this variant, it is because they tremendously fear the reaction of the working class if a new coup should break out and because Peronism itself is making important concessions, such as the relative freedom of the press. They, feeling strong, will continue to press the government to a great extent so it ends social demagoguery and they can be granted new concessions, all with the minimum goal of securing victory in future national elections.

<sup>18</sup> Hector Di Pietro was Acting General Secretary of the CGT after Eduardo Vuletich resigned on 4 July 1955.

The whole reaction is firm in taking to the government a man who responds faithfully to their interests. But while some have taken, as we said, the line of coexistence, others are mobilised behind the line of immediate resignation of Peron or new coup. Now we refer to the latter.

Clearly, the middle class is the true centre of those who demand Peron's resignation. This does not mean they are alone. The same forces that took part on 16 June are a hotbed of conspiracies and attacks. But the support of the middle class gives this movement a broad and popular appearance. As we said before, they feel stronger than ever. They demand Peron's resignation because, although since the coup, the government has an increasingly right-wing policy, they know there is no one better than them to apply this line and even more. Their current way is the rumour. They want to keep the state of reactionary subversion latent. Through it, they want to create the conviction that "until the tyrant resigns" there will be no peace in the streets of Buenos Aires.

### **Only the mobilisation can stop them**

The campaign of rumours and the goal to which it responds cannot be opposed by radio communiques or special articles in the newspapers. The clerical demonstrations and their attempt to win the streets in demonstrations of force cannot be opposed by police actions. They not only have hatred against the workers; they are also afraid of them.

Of course, not afraid of isolated or disorganised workers. They fear the working class mobilisation and, on the other hand, the working class has no other way out than its own mobilisation. The response to the reactionary clerical mobilisation must be answered by the mobilisation of the working class. There is no other way out. But what does this mobilisation mean and what goal should it adopt?

In the factories, in all the workplaces, in the sections, and in the unions, resolutions must be voted against the reactionary plan that wants Peron's resignation. This line must be voted on by all, Peronists and non-Peronists because the reactionary plan does not want the workers to decide the government's problem. The second problem is to prepare so, if the plan succeeds and Peron's resignation is achieved, it will be discussed and solved democratically by the workers in their unions.

But there is only one way to prevent the presidency from falling into the hands of the reaction and it is to appoint now a senator from the CGT for the first vice-presidency of the Senate, which in case of resignation of president and vice president, take control of the destinies of the country and to fulfil the program the working class democratically elaborates.

We have always said the current government do not represent the workers and that its policy of alleged arbitrator favoured the capitalists. Let's suppose the working class must decide the fate of Peron's resignation, and then we will vote, consistent with our ideas, for the government to pass into the hands of the workers. We neither had nor have trust in the policies and methods of the current government but we will discipline to the majority. A direct representative of the workers is much more effective than a government that wants to follow a line of arbitration. The two main contenders in the struggle taking place in the country are: on the one hand, the reaction, led by Yankee imperialism, and, on the other, the workers. The mobilisation of the working class must culminate with a step forward towards the goal of a genuine workers' government.

Finally, when on 31 August Peron moves the country with the news of his resignation, the Trotskyist revolutionary socialists are present in Plaza de Mayo with a flyer that says:

#### **Comrades:**

General Peron has offered his resignation to the country "if it contributes to its pacification".

The only ones who have the right to decide whether or not to accept it are the workers, who with their support in the elections of 1946 and 1951 have taken him to the presidency.

We are against the president leaving by the imposition of those who prepared the coup d'état on 16 June: the Church, the bosses, and Yankee imperialism.

Only a National Congress of Workers, which faithfully represent the feeling and thinking of the working class, must decide in democratic debate whether Peron leaves or stays.

If the workers decide to accept his resignation, the government must pass into the hands of the working class through one of the senators of the CGT.

For all these reasons, the Buenos Aires Socialist Federation (National Revolution), which publishes the newspaper *La Verdad*, calls the workers to fight:

For respect to the popular will!

Against the anti-democratic and reactionary dispositions of Yankee imperialism, the bosses, and the Church!

For the convening of a National Congress of Workers to decide democratically on the resignation!

For the election of a CGT senator for the office of president in case of accepting Peron's resignation!

**Buenos Aires Socialist Federation (National Revolution). Read *La Verdad*.**

And in the last issue of its newspaper before the fall of the Peronist government, on 5 September 1955, Trotskyist revolutionary socialism said:

**Down with the clerical-bosses-imperialist reaction!**

**Free hands to the working class!**

The attitude of the President of the Republic sets a historic precedent: for the first time in the life of the country, a President of the Republic presents his resignation, not to the authorities of the Nation, but to the workers, through the CGT.

This is the recognition that above the powers of the Constitution there is a supreme power: that of the working class, the legitimate proxy of the most important and respectable national and social interests of the Nation.

The resignation of General Peron would have meant in this case a victory of the reaction, a victory for the instigators and directors of the 16 June massacre: the Catholic Church, the bosses, and Yankee imperialism, which after 16 June had as their slogan, expressed in the manifestations of dandy rosary rattlers, the resignation of Peron.

This plan was already denounced by our newspaper in its number 15, dated 25 June 1955. We said then: "This is the new plan of the clerical-bosses-imperialist 'holy alliance'. Radicals, when not!, rushed to take up this banner of the reaction. We do have no trust in the Peronist government. Many times we have insisted it is not the government the workers need. But in the face of the manoeuvre of the reaction, we propose: That in the event that Peron presents his resignation, it be discussed and solved democratically by the workers in the factories and unions! We will submit to the decision of the majority of the workers but our position is: Let's prevent the government from falling into the hands of the reaction! Let's prevent the victory of the reactionary plan!"

(...) We proposed a Congress of all workers to decide on the possible resignation of Peron but we believe that yesterday's assembly expressed the will of the workers that Peron continue to occupy the position of president. We are disciplined to the will of the working class and we accept the popular verdict, we respect and we will respect the will of the workers that Peron remains president of the Republic.

The fact we accept the will of the majority of workers does not mean we are Peronists, nor the left wing of Peronism, not even allies of Peronism. We are an organisation distinct from Peronism. Our party is a workers' party, Peronism, on the other hand, is a bourgeois party, i.e., it is for the defence of the current order of things: that the bosses own the factories, that the landlords own the lands, and that they continue to live off the work of workers and peasants. We fight for another order of things. We want the workers to be the owners of the factories and the peasants of their lands since the workers are the only producers of wealth. We fight for the current government to be replaced by the workers exclusively, for workers and peasants, they alone, to rule the destinies of the country. What makes us to

be in some events together with the Peronist government and against the opposition, is that, although we are in favour of replacing the current government by a CGT government of all workers' and peasants' organisations, we are against the current government being replaced by a government of the priests, the bosses, and Yankee imperialism.

In this sense we respect the will of the workers organised in the CGT but we will continue fighting for our postulates and for attracting the Peronist workers to our program, but fighting more and more against the reaction and their plans to implement a government of the clerical-bosses-imperialist forces that crush the organisations and gains of the working class.

All united against the plans of the reaction! All united in defence of our gains and organisations!

### Abelardo Ramos in September of 1955

The second issue of *Izquierda* appeared in September 1955. It went out on the streets on Monday 19, day in which the Peronist leadership capitulated, preferring to lose power to keep it thanks to the armament of the proletariat. This issue of *Izquierda* makes a document of inestimable value, which proves the extreme political sagacity of Mr Ramos and his notorious capacity to serve the Apolds to the very end. According to him, on 16 June the Peronist government had left strengthened. However, it was clear to anyone — except for the retarded brain of intellectual prostitutes — that after June 16, “Peronism is still in power but with another character and the opposition forces are emboldened and in control of the situation. Within the government, the army is the preponderant force and, although it does not dominate the situation, it gravitates more intensely.” Instead, Mr Ramos wrote, in September 1955! “the administrative displacements of the state apparatus were the subject of a deep brooding”. Peron “was in the hands of the military”, the Navy “remained in revolt” (Mr Ramos also believed this was “rumours”), the army “imposed conditions”, the era of the CGT “had concluded”, by translating their wishes for realities “imperialism and its native agents committed neither the first nor the last of its fatal errors”. As can be seen, when translated into political analysis his desire for Peronism not to fall and his salaries disappear, Mr Ramos committed neither the first nor the last but one more of his numerous errors, which are not fatal just because the Argentine working class take no notice of him.

The September issue of *Izquierda* carried throughout the length and width of its cover a vigorous title that reads: “The Armed Workers’ Militias: Bastion of the Argentine Popular Revolution”. Leaving aside the talk about the “Popular Revolution” (?), had Ramos dared to rise — late and wrongly but finally — the slogan of the armament of the proletariat to confront the clerical-bosses-imperialist putsch, as the revolutionary Marxists long demanded? Not at all. The Peronist government itself, through CGT, had threatened the formation of workers’ militias, certainly without the slightest intention of effectively materialising them. CGT offered the army minister the reserves of the workers and the Minister of the Army replied that, as established by law, reserves would be called in case of need. That was all, and that is why the putsch of 16 September was victorious.

Faced with this comedy about the armament of the working class, the first thing that should be done was to unmask the game and demand the effective armament of workers’ militias. But Ramos, “fulfilling to the end” his task of confusing the working class for the benefit of the inept Peronist leadership, made the apology of the comedy by sending “our fierce combat greetings to the powerful union central of our country.”

### The revolutionary Trotskyists before the victorious coup: three historical fliers

During the putsch of 16 September, and after its victory, the Trotskyist revolutionary socialists decidedly applied the policy of the united front with Peronism, as shown by the three leaflets we reproduce:

## Flyer of 17 September 1955

**Workers:**

The Buenos Aires Socialist Federation (National Revolution), which publishes the newspaper *La Verdad*, launches an urgent call:

Support the instruction of the CGT leadership; defend the current situation against the reaction that wants to implant a reactionary military government!

It is not about defending a government, the Peronist, but about preventing an overtly pro-capitalist and anti-worker government from succeeding.

We, for example, are not in favour of the Peronist policy, nor of the management of union leaders who enrich themselves at the expense of the workers and suppress union democracy. But, in this case, we put in first place the unity of the working class and the trade union movement against the attack carried out by the reaction to implant its government. If the military coup succeeds, the workers' movement will lose its union organisations and its unity, and the bosses, imperialism and the clergy will be the complete owners of the country.

This is why we believe we must support the action of the CGT against the coup. This does not prevent us from fraternally alerting ourselves to the following dangers:

- if the working class is not mobilised,
- if the resolution of the CGT on workers' militias is not put into practice...
- we can lose EVERYTHING.

We must not forget that on 14 June the leaders of the trade union movement said nothing was happening and two days later the coup broke out. We should not forget either that until a few days ago we were told nothing would happen and we had to keep calm by going "from work to home and from home to work". This policy has been revealed as a serious error; if the working class had mobilised, it would not have suffered two coups in three months.

What we have been saying for a year, we repeat again now:

Only the mobilisation and initiative of the working class can crush once and for all the reactionary coups. This is why, in a disciplined manner, we request and pressure the trade union leaders to put into practice the resolution of the workers' militias.

Comrades: All the workers united, without exception, we must fight against the coup d'état of the reaction and we must demand the resolution on the workers' militias be put into practice, the only way to crush ONCE AND FOR ALL the clerical, bosses, imperialist reaction.

**Buenos Aires Socialist Federation (NR), 17 September 1955. Read *La Verdad***

## Flyer of 17 of September 1955

**General strike for 17 October**

The Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party National Revolution, which publishes the newspaper *La Verdad*, assumes the historical responsibility, faced with the silence of the leaders who claim to be of the workers' movement, to call all the workers to a general strike, peacefully, for 17 October.

We thus gather the will of the majority of the Argentine working class, which considers 17 October its day of protest and struggle against the bosses and imperialism.

It is not a matter of arguing with Radical, communist, apolitical, or anarchist comrades whether or not that day is a protest. It is an indisputable fact: the vast majority of Argentine workers consider 17 October as their day of protest and our organisation accepts it, calling the general strike peacefully of all workers in the country, to carry it out.

On the other hand, it is not a matter of going to strike to overturn the current government but to put into practice the promises on freedom and democracy for the workers' movement proclaimed

repeatedly by such government. Since the army and tanks are on the streets, we must carefully avoid falling into tragic and bloody adventures, although this does not mean abandoning the gains made by the working class, with 17 October being one of them.

This year, like the previous ones, the strike on 17 October must be carried out as usual. In non-essential services, workers must not go to their places of work. In the services considered essential, the strike must be symbolic, of 10 minutes: from 5:00 to 5:10 pm.

To achieve this strike be general, on the one hand, and peaceful, on the other, we need:

- To conduct assemblies in factories and sections, in the same places of work, to vote the general strike and appoint commissions and pickets to guarantee it.
- Press all the CGT union leaders to assume the responsibility, as we have done, to declare the general and peaceful strike.

Comrades: the general strike is today the only way to show we are all united in the defence of our social and national achievements, which we will keep and improve.

No adventures or provocations!

All to the general strike!

**Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party (NR)**

Read *La Verdad*. 15 October 1955

### Flyer of 14 November 1955

#### **Long live the general strike!**

The Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution, which publishes *La Verdad*, fully sympathises with the indefinite general strike decreed by CGT.

Since the fall of Peron, the Argentine working class has suffered outrage after outrage on the pretext of democratising their union life. The tanks and army troops have repeatedly massacred the workers, such as in Gerli, Piñeiro, Villa Jardin, Rosario, and Tucuman, to teach them the wonders of the current democratisation.

It was promised the union structure of CGT would not be attacked at all, and this promise was violated, allowing armed gangs to assault the union premises. The military government swore once and a thousand times before 17 October that, if the unions did not strike, the unions would be respected and, after this date, they turned against the unions, arresting workers and union leaders, assaulting premises and, what was fundamental, decreeing a standard statute for all unions that made expire all the authorities by declaring the unions in a state of assembly. This statute meant nothing other than leaving the whole workers' movement at the mercy of the bosses, since the delegates, internal commissions, trade union commissions and of CGT expired for at least four months. This would have meant the collapse of the Argentine workers' movement.

The union leaders, who had capitulated a thousand times to the government's arrogance, when they saw the water reached their necks, decided to appeal to the workers' ranks calling for a general strike on the 2nd of this month, to save the organisations and the social gains and, by the way, they would be saved as well.

The enthusiastic decided support of the exploited forced the government to retreat and to lift the state of assembly in the unions and in CGT, accepting that until new authorities are elected, the current ones maintain the integrity of the organisation. If the success was not complete, it was because the leadership of CGT unexpectedly lifted the strike, trying to save itself, and did not organise it properly.

After the general strike of the 2nd of this month, the "free union leaders" went back to their old ways assaulting La Plata branch of the CGT and founding a new CGT, with the approval of the military government, which in turn took over the Rosario branch of CGT. Their goal was and is clear: to break the CGT's organisation.

This new indefinite general strike is the last opportunity left to the workers to defend their organisations and their gains since, otherwise, the bosses, together with the “free leaders” and the military government, will achieve a victory dividing the worker’s movement, the CGT, and the unions.

### **The errors of the CGT leadership**

The workers’ movement is jumping out of its skin to stop the military government, the bosses and the “free leaders” who want to break the CGT organisation.

Unfortunately, the leadership of the CGT, neither before nor now has been up to the circumstances.

A strike is organised and reported with enough time.

The leadership of CGT has done nothing in this sense; it has neither organised strike committees nor pickets. Neither has it informed with time and in a full form of the powerful and unpostponable reasons that demand the general strike be carried out. The goal is to stop the bosses and government offensive against the workers’ movement, the union organisation and the gains of the Peronist era. It is not a matter of making a general strike to defend the bad leaders but only to stop the military-bosses offensive against the workers’ movement.

The existence of bully leaders and colluding with the bosses is used by the “free leaders” to confuse the workers telling them the general strike is to defend these leaders.

We, who have hundreds of militants and sympathisers persecuted and beaten by these thug leaders, assure the working class that what is at stake is whether the government and the bosses will do what they want with the Argentine workers’ movement.

We, who have criticised the leadership of the CGT because by cowardice it did not declare the general strike during the September revolution and last 17 October, we support with all fervour this indefinite general strike because we want to save the Argentine trade union movement from its enemies.

### **To win the general strike we must get organised**

Public transport and electricity must be stopped to win the strike. To achieve this victory, a strong organisation is necessary to overcome the union organisation. We believe the best activists should organise themselves in neighbourhoods and factories to organise strike committees (one delegate for each factory in the neighbourhood) and pickets to develop the strike. Strike committees must issue a newsletter every day to prevent the press, in the hands of the bosses, from confusing the workers.

Thus, our advice to win the strike is:

- Stop public transport and electricity.
- Organise pickets of three to five activists dependent on the strike committee.
- Organise neighbourhood strike committees (one delegate for each factory).
- Publish a daily newsletter by neighbourhood or locality.

Long live the achievements of the Argentine workers’ movement!

Down with the divisionists of the trade union movement!

Out the government military takeover in the unions!

Long live a united and democratic CGT!

Long live the indefinite general strike!

14 November 1955

# After Peron what?

## Introduction

Peronism has been a new phenomenon in the country; its fall a historic fact. So great is its importance that the analysis of its meaning is a decisive issue for any union or political activist. We made an accurate analysis of that phenomenon. Not satisfied with this, we warned over the course of a year about the inevitability of the fall of the Peronist government if it did not appeal to the mobilisation of the masses. Precisely for this reason, we believe it is necessary to begin this document by analysing the most important consequences, for the country and the working class, of the fall of the currently called “deposed regime”.

If we leave aside the profound national, international, economic, social, and political reasons that led to Peronism, to underline the clearest aspects that characterised it, we will have to recognise Peronism was the first Argentine government that had the full support of the working class and, also, was the first Argentine government that managed to exercise total control over national life in all its spheres. If we are not afraid of words, we can synthesise Peronism as a totalitarian government (which controlled everything) that had the massive support of the working class because it was the one which made it the greatest concessions.

Given the contras in the service of the current government define Peronism as we do, as totalitarian, we have an obligation to show the profound differences we have in interpreting of the Peronist phenomenon. For us, the qualifier of totalitarian is a scientific definition and not insulting, as it is for the contra. This is revealed in the fact the Peronist trade union activist himself saw clearly that, even in cases where the Peronist government was on their side against the bosses, it controlled his action preventing him from an independent activity. Thousands of times we have heard from his lips “... it is of no use; you cannot go ahead without orders from above”. This phenomenon of control extended to all the activities of the country. It reached the regimented press, as well as radio stations and other organs of expression. However, this does not mean we sing praises to the “liberating revolution” saying everything is better now. Far from it, considered in a block, the current regime is much more reactionary, or much worse than the previous one. But this does not prevent us from pointing out the facts as they happened. Peronism, on the one hand, was the government that conceded the most rights for the working class and, on the other hand, it was a totalitarian apparatus for the control of all national activity.

Inevitably, we ask ourselves: what were the reasons that motivated the existence of such a contradictory government and, at the same time, a government of clearly totalitarian forms? Several.

First, to prevent Yankee imperialism — with its immense resources, embarked on a broad plan of colonisation of the country and Latin America — to use democratic freedoms to create a current that would prepare the liquidation of Peronism. Second, to prevent the working class, without the totalitarian brake, from liquidating the Peronist tutelage and following an independent

policy against the bosses linked to Peronism. These are the fundamental reasons, but not the only ones, that existed. With the general control, it also prevented the class struggle from taking a frank and open aspect with the consequences this entails. It also prevented the bosses, supported by their parties and seconded by the middle class, to launch brutally against the working class, the basis of support for the regime. The totalitarian apparatus of Peronism is a thing of the past and will not have repetition. There can no longer be a totalitarian government with the massive support of the working class, as Peronism was. Precisely, it is by liquidating the possibility of its repetition as a mass-based totalitarian government that the fall of Peronism inaugurates a new historical stage in the country. The stage is characterised by two decisive facts: the working class considers the current government as its mortal enemy and, on the contrary, Yankee imperialism believes it to be its unconditional agent. This new stage has among its fundamental characteristics the following: first, from now on imperialism will make its colonisation plan be felt. This will gain clarity for everyone. Up to the present, Peronist totalitarianism hid to the eyes of the masses the true character of the Yankee offensive on the country. This was facilitated by the traditional domination exercised by British imperialism. But today, with the new government addicted to the Yankees, the curtain rises on the real scenario. This will show the Argentine workers, with increasing clarity, the true goal of imperialism. At the same time, it will make them see that their fate is not different from that of the other Latin American peoples.

Second: the economic and political offensive of Yankee imperialism far from stopping the class struggle will give it new impetus. And it will be so for three reasons: a) because imperialism will try to reach agreements with the most important sectors of the bosses and the middle class against the working class; b) because the bosses themselves will try to divert the weight of the Yankee offensive by burdening it on the working class through greater exploitation; c) finally, because, free of the totalitarian brake of Peronism, the class struggle will take broad paths and assume a violent, categorical, and sharp character. This will be the tone of the future struggle.

Third: under Peronism, the working class and the middle class were separated and divided among themselves. The middle class could not tolerate the predominant role of the proletariat in the social scene, nor its greater participation in the national income. Precisely because of this, it became the firmest base of the pro-Yankee contras. At the same time, Peronist totalitarianism — restraining the working class — prevented it from allying with and leading the middle class against imperialism and the bosses. But this situation has changed. Before, the working class saw in Peronism its government. Instead, now, it sees in the current government its biggest enemy. The middle class, on the contrary, looks at the current government as its government. But this is not a homogenous class and fatally the lower sectors of it will be harmed by the plan of imperialism and the bosses. These sectors, once they make their experience with the current government, will approach the working class. In this way, the elements will be given for a revolutionary situation in which the working class and the poorer sectors of the middle class will demand a change in an anti-imperialist and anti-bosses sense.

Fourth: the liquidation of Peronist totalitarianism will lead to the political crystallisation of all classes. They will develop their ideology and achieve political reflection in their different layers. In short, the ideological and political development of the different classes will be accelerated.

Fifth: the process stated in the previous point is particularly important in the case of the proletariat.

Here we have to point out a double result. On the one hand, the working class has been defeated in its last movements; on the other hand, the fact these defeats were inflicted upon it after a heroic struggle accelerated its experience, especially regarding its former leadership. The workers not only put into practice new methods of struggle but, at the same time, saw clearly the resounding failure of their former Peronist bureaucratic leadership. In this way, new leadership for the workers' movement begins to emerge, although not conclusively. This new leadership, that makes fast learning in the union and political terrain, gives a base for the formation of the future revolutionary leadership of the masses. In other words, the process of radicalisation began

under a fierce Peronist control has now accelerated under the fire of the class enemy. In this way, a vanguard emerges that makes up a magnificent step forward in the achievement, on the part of the proletariat, of its future leadership.

Summarising: from the point of view of class relations, the Peronist period means a time of class collaboration. The good economic situation of the country allowed Peronist totalitarianism to cushion the contradictions. It is a period in which, under a totalitarian form and based on a magnificent economic situation, the class struggle does not take on a sharp character and there are no great battles.

With the fall of Peronism, all this ends. The offensive of imperialism against the country and of the bosses against the workers takes the crudest forms and the clearest aspects. It becomes clear to everyone. In terms of results, the working class loses the first skirmishes. But its heroic struggle equipped it not only with new experiences in terms of methods of struggle but also in relation to its previous bureaucratic leadership. A new militant leadership begins to emerge, which makes an accelerated trade union and political experience. However, we should not be deceived. The fundamental thing of this stage is that the working class defends itself before a violent offensive of imperialism and the bosses. This is decisive. The current struggles of the proletariat are essentially defensive in nature. It does not take the initiative, it simply defends itself.

This process, which may be of months or years, prepares a new stage that will be revolutionary and characterised — now yes — by the offensive of the workers and the poor sectors of the middle class against the imperialist and bosses plans. The offensive will change hands. At present, it is imperialism and the bosses which are advancing and the working class is retreating, defending itself. In the next stage, it will be the masses which will take the offensive and imperialism and the bosses who will retreat before their mobilisation. Such is the panorama the fall of Peronism reveals. Within it, the working class takes on a predominant character, given the decisive role it will play. Its fighting ability is taken for granted since the days of June, September and November 1955. The future of its organisation and leadership is an unknown, in which our tendency has an important role to play to solve it successfully.

## **1. Peronism fell for not being a true workers' government**

Peronism was a front of the national anti-Yankee bosses that took on totalitarian forms and leaned on the working class. Although it responded to the general interests of imperialism and the bosses, it oscillated between the different sectors of it. At the same time, it oscillated between Yankee imperialism and the working class. But the fact one pole of that oscillation was the working class explains, at the same time, its fundamental contradiction and its fall.

Peron won the presidential elections under the slogan “Braden or Peron”. This, of course, is not a coincidence and it is not because Peronism emerged as a front of resistance to Yankee imperialism.

Let's see: Yankee imperialism, since it overcomes its 10-year economic crisis in 1939, tries to penetrate deeply into the country and evict its British rival. At the same time, it tries to incorporate the country into its sphere of influence as well as its defence mechanism. Given this, the Argentine livestock oligarchy and their ally — British imperialism — implant a fraudulent conservative government to prevent Alvearism from reaching power; and they want to prevent this because the Alvearism had gone over to the side of the Yankees. At the same time, the Second World War produces two opposite and parallel phenomena: British imperialism weakens while Yankee imperialism is strengthened. Little by little, our country begins to reflect this new situation in its economy and in its politics. The national oligarchy itself begins to split, polarised by different individual interests. The big industrialists and landowners with interests in the industry, in need of machines and equipment, want collaboration with the Yankees since these are the only ones that can supply it. The cereal trusts, Bunge & Born and Dreyfus, traditional friends of the Europeans, begin to collaborate with Yankee imperialism so that it allows them to sell cereals in America after

the closing of the European market because of the war. The famous Bemberg bankers, who had their base of operations in Switzerland and France, moved their headquarters to New York for the same reason.

Because of the change of coat, these sectors of the Argentine oligarchy are carrying out, the anti-Yankee sectors of the same, such as the cattle barons and the dependents on British and German imperialism, were extremely weak. The conservative party expressed all this; first, in its division and, second, in the transfer of its leadership to pro-Yankee hands.

Given the change produced, the sectors of the bosses who resist Yankee penetration thrown themselves into the hands of the army to prevent the government from falling into the power of the pro-Yankee wing of the conservative oligarchy. This is how 4 June came about as an indirect reaction to the strengthening of Yankee imperialism and its offensive against the country.

The government of General Ramirez<sup>1</sup> tried to follow the line of the last conservative government without a mass foundation. The sorry general forgot the strength of the Conservative government resided in the almost complete unity of the country's bosses with British imperialism. This element of strength no longer existed and it was this absence that explained the presence of the army and Ramirez himself. The army had left the barracks precisely because British imperialism was weak and the Argentine bosses were not united as in other times. But the current enemy was too strong; Yankee imperialism could not be successfully confronted without a strong mass foundation. It is then when they seek the support of these and they surround Peron, who can achieve it. These sectors, reluctantly because there was no other solution, let the man who won the support of the working class do, not because they liked it but because there was no other solution. Their old support — British and German imperialism — no longer were a guarantee against the strengthening of the Yankees.

This policy of winning over the working class could be carried out because of the good economic situation of the country. Peronism arises then as the government of the anti-Yankee bosses but not anti-imperialist. These are the sectors that resist Yankee colonisation, relying on the working class to defend — with their methods and not with those of the working class — the independence of the country.

The Popular Front and fascism are two forms of mastery of the bosses. However, they are characterised by a different class relationship. At the same time, they are new phenomena in the history of capitalism; both take place after the war of 1914. When a critical situation endangers the bosses' order, they try to get stronger on their foundation calling for collaboration to the workers' organisations. Then the so-called Popular Front takes place. Fascism, on the other hand, happens when the bosses, closed any other way out, resolve to crush the working class with the support of the middle class. For this, they liquidate all workers' organisations, including those that collaborate with the bosses. It is a class war for the crushing of one of them: the working class.

However, although they are opposite phenomena, fascism and the popular front have a common origin insofar as they are ultimately explained by the general and without exit crisis of the capitalist and imperialist regime and, at the same time, by strength of the working class that, although it lacks a revolutionary leadership, it endangers or can endanger the established order. Ultimately, they are defensive forms of capitalism.

In backward countries, where the strongest poles are the working class and imperialism, any bourgeois government that wants to resist imperialism with any chance of success needs to lean on the workers' movement. There is no other way out. Therefore it is forced to carry out a special Popular Front regime.

In this sense, we can say Peronism was a manifestation of the Popular Front although it did not have a classic form. We call classic form the one taken, for example, in France. There, the traditional organisations of the working class, their parties, and unions joined with the parties of the bosses. The same happened in Chile; there the traditional organisations, the unions, and the socialist and

<sup>1</sup> **Pedro Pablo Ramirez** (1884-1962) was an Argentine general and dictator. He was the second of the so-called "de facto presidents". He ruled between 1943 and 1944 during the so-called Revolution of 1943.

communist parties collaborated in the government together with the parties of the bosses. It was a Popular Front at the service of Yankee imperialism and the bosses. In the United States, on the other hand, the Popular Front took another form: the government and a bosses party — the Democrats — won the support of a new organisation: CIO [Congress of Industrial Organisations]. What is new here is that the workers' organisation collaborates with the bosses' government but does not take part in it. In other words, what characterises the popular front is not the form it adopts in one or another place but its class content: the working class collaborates with a government or with a bosses' party. In this sense, Peronism won the support of the working class. But not under the classical form through its traditional organisations but through new organisations created and protected from the State. It achieved this under openly totalitarian forms. This contradiction confuses many superficial observers who thought they saw a fascist regime in Peronism. In reality, the support of the working class for Peronism, like the desire of the latter to achieve and maintain it, the same as the goal of that relationship — to stop Yankee imperialism although with bosses methods — have a significance opposed to that of fascism. This is why Peronism was an anti-Yankee popular front that took on totalitarian forms. Thanks to this support of the working class, it could resist and sometimes get partial victories against Yankee imperialism. This, as has been said, was paid at the price of totalitarian control of all the activity of the country. And it was so because the anti-Yankee bosses, to prevent any democratic loophole from facilitating the Yankee plan of penetration, had no other means than the one already mentioned of tightly controlling all national life, from workers' activity to bosses' or imperialist activity.

This makes Peronism be in a permanent contradiction. On the one hand, it gives continuous improvements to the workers to keep their endorsement. In this sense, it constantly broadens and widens the union organisation of the proletariat; but on the other hand, it is forced to control it with an iron hand. This contradiction, however, is not the only one; Peronism, by giving concessions to the working class and fomenting its union organisation by extending it to all sectors, is the socially most democratic government the workers have known. In other words, in the workshops and in the factories, in the intimacy of workplace relations, it was a democratic regime. But this characteristic ends at the very door of workplaces to give rise, outside, to closed totalitarianism.

This totalitarianism was strong while the economic situation allowed the enthusiastic endorsement of the workers, making tolerable the lack of freedoms in the country. But the beginning of the lean times displays the isolation of Peronism and the sharpening of its contradictions. Peronism is being left alone. Between 1947 and 1949, because of the weakness of British imperialism, Peronism loses its active support: the railways are nationalised and the country gains more independence from the British. But the livestock sectors, like the sectors of the bourgeoisie that had supported Peron, begin to abandon it. Not that Peron does not want to super-exploit the masses but he wants to do it through their conviction, in order to maintain his popular foundation. It is about different tactics. The bosses who supported Peronism want a quick and absolutely favourable definition; they demand a policy of iron with the workers and the labourers, liquidating all conciliation. Peronism tries to keep everybody happy; this is no longer possible, given the relative decline in national income.

Through the Congress of Productivity, Peronism tries to convince the working class to allow itself to be exploited further. At the same time, it tries to channel the bosses' offensive to avoid that the bosses, in their excesses, go beyond what suits Peronism. It reaches partial agreements with the Yankees but not a definitive agreement; this disgusts the pro-imperialists who want a definitive agreement with the smooth and plain surrender of the country. The anti-imperialists are also angry about entering capitulating negotiations. So although Peronism signs the Rio de Janeiro treaty and receives a Yankee loan, it does not ratify the OAS [Organisation of American States] pact or it approves the oil pact.

It tries to reach an agreement with the bosses and the middle class by trying to organise it as it did with the working class; these are the goals of the General Economic Confederation (CGE) and the General Confederation of Professionals. At the same time, Peronism opposes the attempts

of the Church to form an opposition party based on the same middle class and bosses because it would unconditionally serve Yankee interests.

Peronism tries to reach an agreement with the bosses and the middle class and enter conversations with their parties. But the agreement is impossible because they demand precisely the liquidation of Peronism for its conciliation with the workers. They want the agreement with the Yankees and the crushing of the working class to unload on it the full weight of the crisis. In brief, against Peronism are all the sectors, even those that had supported it, that are in opposition to continuing collaboration with the working class so as not to completely capitulate to the Yankee plan and maintain at least one attempt at national independence.

Despite its fabulous facade and its attempts to organise and negotiate with the opposing forces, Peronism fell.

We, the only ones who predicted the inevitable fall of Peronism if it persisted in its bosses' method of not mobilising the masses, those who said we did not have trust in Peron's methods, nor in his leadership, those who, despite all of this, were in the front row with the Peronist workers against the Catholic mobilisation, we have the right, today, to analyse who was right.

Let's start by saying there are many ways to defend the country independence. A landowner, a boss also, may want to defend the country independence. But they will defend it in their own way because, in addition, and above all, they have to defend their profits. Peronism was that: a bosses' attempt to defend the country independence, defending the profits of the bosses. To defend national independence, Peronism had to use the support of the working class. This inevitably caused it to fall into a contradiction when, at the same time it tried to lean on the workers' movement, it defended the bosses' profits that arise, precisely... from the exploitation of the workers. In this clash, the bosses were winning precisely because, although sometimes it clashed with sectors of the bosses, the Peronist government was basically a bosses' government. The Peronist government was a manager of the bosses, with the peculiarity that gave a good treatment to the workers, because it needed its support to defend their company (the country) against very powerful adversaries (the Yankee imperialism that wanted to colonise us).

This bosses' nature of the Peronist government lost it. Peron wanted to combat the imperialist-bosses conspiracy through the army and the police which are organised just to serve the bosses and imperialism. Peron did not want to give arms to the working class because, once it had them on hand, it would not only liquidate Peron's enemies but also its own enemies: the bosses and imperialism.

Moreover, Peronism did not extract the workers' improvements from the bosses' profits. He granted these improvements harming the middle class, which created a tremendous antagonism between the two working classes. Imperialism and by the bosses used this antagonism in a great way.

The bad economic situation made the Peronist government lose the support of the bosses and accelerated the middle class opposition; even some sectors of the working class began to look apathetically on the country's political course. The Church took advantage of all the weaknesses of the government. Peronism instead of arming the working class, instead of forming a cabinet composed of democratically elected workers' representatives; instead of making the economy and the armed forces be run by the working class, i.e., instead of doing everything we pointed out, it allowed the military and economic technicians at the service of the bosses to rule the country. Thus, it was not a miracle these technicians responded to the Church and the coup d'état instead of responding to the government chosen by the vast majority of the country.

The Church defeated Peronism because it was not a workers' government, nor did it rule with a workers' program, nor with officials democratically elected by the workers. If, instead of respecting the profits and interests of capitalism and imperialism, it had really been a workers' government instead of falling it would have been increasingly strengthened.

The current government recognises the expropriation of the Peronist fortunes would solve the problem of oil exploitation and the construction of housing for all workers. Well, if Peron had expropriated besides those, all the great fortunes and foreign companies, if he had planned the economy and put it under the democratic control of the working class, then he would not have had any serious economic or social problems. In a word, the country, the working class, and Peron himself, as a government, would have improved their situation day by day. But Peron just did none of this because he could not do it as it was a bosses' and not a workers' government.

To do what we noted, we needed a government in the sole and exclusive service of the workers and not in the service of the capitalists, as Peronism was. This is the great conclusion we have reached a long time ago and which the trade union activists must etch in their memory. Peron fell for not being a worker's government, the country and the workers have no other solution to secure the future than to impose a workers' government that sweeps off the capitalists and imperialism.

## 2. The experience of the last major strikes

The result of three months of great struggles of the working class has been the loss of its most primary organisations, the trade unions and those in the factories, as well as the total disorganisation of its ranks and a state of discouragement and defeat that can be overcome in the short term.

All this, although the working class fought heroically and repeatedly had victory in their hands. The exclusive fault of this historic defeat for the working class lies in the political and union leadership of Peronism. This defeat has its history and its stages which we will try to review.

Since the economic situation worsened, the bosses and imperialism embarked on a redoubled offensive. Peronism tries to curb this offensive by making important concessions to them. The union and anti-imperialist activists know Peronism gave gains to the workers and the country until 1949 and since then these gains have diminished or disappeared. From then on, the concessions are for the bosses and imperialism.

However, the bosses and imperialism are not satisfied and demand the crushing of the working class and the surrender of the country. In other words, the concessions granted to them are not enough to keep them happy but they are enough to accelerate the imperialist-bosses' offensive. Unable to defeat the working class in a single battle, they develop their offensive in different stages. They were:

First: it culminates with the liquidation of Peron's government, which — although it defended the profits of the bosses — also collaborated with the working class, not allowing a frank offensive against the workers.

Second: liquidated Peronism as a government that had the massive support of the working class, the situation went to another stage — to liquidate and destroy the centralised union organisation. That is, the liquidation of the CGT as a single centre and of a single union per guild. The workers defend themselves with two colossal general strikes in which they were defeated.

Third: once liquidated the CGT and the national unions, the bosses, sponsored by the government, set the goal of suppressing the internal commissions and delegates committees;<sup>2</sup> that is, the factory structure. Naturally, this battle, characterised by an infinity of skirmishes, is more difficult because it has to face the personnel directly. It also needs a large number of officials or servants to cover all establishments. In general, it has managed to liquidate internal commissions or control them, although they have not achieved the same with the delegates committee.

This anti-worker offensive has led to union disorganisation and to the loss of trade union organisations by the working class. At the same time, the complete failure of the Peronist union

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<sup>2</sup> 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 or **internal commission**.

leadership accelerated the intense learning of union activists and a new leadership began to replace the previous one.

Even when the Peronist government was close to its fall, it was careful not to mobilise the working class; the same did the CGT leadership. Both, instead of appealing to the general strike, preferred to deceive the workers by telling them nothing was wrong. For this reason, the coup against Peron was victorious. No conscious worker can or should forget the rally held on 14 June 1955. In it, Di Pietro asked Peron to leave the matter in charge of the CGT. Peron replied this match he would play it alone. The results are plain to see. Neither Peron, nor the CGT leadership wanted to mobilise the working class to stop the coup d'état and, on their own, they could not do so.

Once the first impression had passed and Peronism fell, not only was the brake released for the class struggle in the country but also for the energies and initiative of the working class that until that moment had been forced to wait.

By the time Lonardi<sup>3</sup> assumes command, Rosario and the workers' belt of Buenos Aires are practically in the hands of the working class. Now the efforts of the trade union leaders to stifle the movement are useless. That is, on the same day of the defeat of Peron, the first step is taken in the overcoming of the Peronist union leaders by the workers; even if for the moment no new leadership emerges. Precisely this lack of new leadership to centralise the struggle prevented the movement from becoming an insurrection against the Lonardi government. Rosario fought and went on strike on its own. The neighbourhoods of Greater Buenos Aires went out to the fight completely disconnected; Gerli came out on Friday and Lavallol on Saturday. There were no strike pickets, nor anyone to show how to stop the tanks. The union leaders, opposing the workers, advised for calm and the return to work. But the activity of the working class had already found its way. From there on, although without leadership to guide it, the working class will give battle after battle. The CGT leadership tried to fit in with sectors of the army and the new government. The working class, on the other hand, showed with the general strike it was willing to stop the bosses and government offensive. Here, disobedience to the CGT leadership was highly progressive.

Until 17 October, and acting with great skill, the government promises to respect union organisations. In exchange for this, the Peronist political and trade union leadership calls for the calm of the workers' movement for that day.

Our tendency was the only one that did not fall in the government manoeuvre and proposed for that day the peaceful general strike. Despite the orders by the union leaders and the fabulous pressure of the government, 70 per cent of the industrial workers went on strike. If the CGT leadership had wanted it, 100 per cent would have stopped.

The government, understanding the cowardice of this leadership, gets out a standard statute for the union movement. Among other things, it stated all the unions were in a state of assembly. On 2 November, seeing their own existence in danger, the CGT leadership declared a general strike against the standard statute. With the triumphant stoppage and in full development, the leadership again betrays the movement and ends it at 2am. Despite this capitulation, large sectors of workers continued the movement and only thanks to that the government backed down respecting the union structure and raising the state of assembly, although keeping the administrative comptrollers.

However, the "free unionists", elements at the service of the bosses and Yankee imperialism, are launching the assault of the CGT unions protected by the pro-Yankee wing of the government. The fall of Lonardi and the anti-Yankee wing — Bengoa, Uranga<sup>4</sup> — accelerated this offensive against the union movement; this prompted the declaration of a new general strike for 15 November. It

3 **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 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.

4 **Justo Leon Bengoa** (1907-1979) was an Argentine military who took part in the coup that overthrew Peron and the subsequent dictatorship. **Juan Jose Uranga** (1907-1999) was an Argentine military who took part in the Liberating Revolution, which appointed him Minister of Transportation of the Nation and director of State Carboniferous Deposits (YCF).

was a strike resolved in six hours; from 18.00 to 24.00 of the 14th. Needless to say, there was no preparation of the workers' ranks or information, i.e., it was a typical Peronist strike. This explains the fundamental reason for its failure. The CGT leadership went from the most abject cowardice to despair and adventurism. They carry out the general strike without preparation, without money and without organisation, nothing less than to face the most reactionary government the country has had. The truth is they declared the general strike not because of their trust in the working class but in the anti-Yankee military wing of Bengoa-Uranga and in the possibility of a military coup.

As we anticipated in a flyer we published back then, the general strike exceeded its union leadership from the first moment. The workers' movement moved towards the neighbourhoods, with embryonic forms of neighbourhood and factory organisation emerging. Picket lines are formed and in some parts, although under our influence, strike newsletters appear.

However, as the strike did not extend, it had to fail. Without stopping public transport or cutting the electricity in Greater Buenos Aires, this was inevitable. Thus, the second great defeat of the working class takes place and, as a result, the primary organisations of the workers' organisation are lost: the industrial unions and the single central that grouped them.

However, together with the strike against Lonardi when he took office, this strike was a historic event. For the first time in 20 years, the working class of the country faced a government through the general strike.

On 17 October 1945, the working class confronted only one government sector, with the support of the other. Here, however, it faced the whole government, with the army on the streets. It showed the general strike immediately raises the problem of power and the question of who owns the situation. Through the struggle to stop transport and against the scabs, as well as against the army, the working class learned a strike of this kind is a fight to the bitter end; it can only be won with a great organisation and an authentic workers' leadership. But above all, the working class understood the general strike is its great weapon and by using it, it can be won as long as it is carried out with a good organisation and the experiences are taken advantage of. In this sense, it is a defeat that inevitably prepares for victory: a new well organised general strike to sweep away this government and its reactionary plans.

This defeat produced the displacement of the axis of struggle. This moved from national unions to factories. The struggle is then waged in the factory organisation and it is different for each workplace. It is also confronted differently by the workers of each company. First Siam and then Philips give and lose this defensive battle. The new experience shows to the workers the government cannot be made to give up by means of isolated battles; it is necessary to prepare the great common battle. With the metalworkers union, the fact that each leader wanted to keep "his" factory organisation made the struggle difficult and facilitated the defeat.

By making the leadership of the CGT and Peronism responsible for this defeat, we do not argue the honesty or personal courage of this or that leader. What we relentlessly criticise is a method of action that cost the working class a historic defeat.

The leadership formed under Peronism was educated in negotiations with chiefs and officials and not in trusting the mobilisation and initiative of the working class. It is logical, leadership of this kind places much more trust in a general like Bengoa or Uranga, or in the terror that produces the explosion of a powder keg, than in the mobilisation of the working class.

With the victory of the government in the strike of 15 November, these three months of heroic struggles of the Argentine working class ended. It was the end of the struggle that fought to defend, first, the government it considered its own; later, the unions and the workers' central that grouped them and, still later, to the internal commissions and delegates committees, the last strongholds of the trade union organisation.

But the important thing is that, while the working class retreated and, what is more serious, it lost confidence in itself, the activists advance in their union and political experience. The disappearance of the Peronist apparatus, which has not been restructured so far, facilitates this

process. Exceptional conditions exist for the structuring of a revolutionary trade union tendency and, in another arena, for the formation of a workers and revolutionary party with mass influence. To achieve these two goals we have just to work on union activists.

For the union activists, the defeat meant a great development of their class consciousness and of their criticism of the leadership, as well as a magnificent selection: those who resist continue in the breach increasingly surpassing each other. It does not matter whether, in this eagerness to start again the restructuring of the trade union movement and the repudiation of the dismal Peronist union leadership, it manifests, for the moment, as an apolitical trade unionist tendency. Many trade union activists believe union restructuring is essential but they want to achieve unions that have nothing to do with politics, the cause, according to them, of all current workers' woes and defeats. This current, in a certain sense, is positive: it reflects the repudiation of the bosses' politicking involved in the unions, the cushy jobs, the clientelism, the orders from above of state or political officials, and so on. We must know how to understand this phenomenon in order to elevate this new leadership of the Argentine workers' movement, the union activists, without sectarianism or capitulation, to a truly revolutionary leadership.

### 3. The current fundamental task

It is logical that union activists, in general, feel confused. They live from surprise to surprise and they suffer blow after blow. The activist verifies in the company where he works that there is a violent offensive against his workmates; the best-known leaders and activists are imprisoned, confined, or expelled; the government has taken over and disorganised all the union organisations and, where it has wanted, the factory commissions; there is a Prebisch Plan<sup>5</sup> to deliver the country to imperialism and leave the working class at the mercy of the bosses; the government crushes without mercy any political or social organisation that opposes its plans; and, finally, there is a catastrophic decree, regulating the increases and specifying the conditions for the next collective agreements.

Faced with this situation, the activist wonders: how to make the situation clear? Do we face the problems one by one? If we do, which one do we start with? We will try to give a solution to these questions.

We have already said Peronism was a government that had the support of the working class. It got and kept this support developing while controlling with an iron fist from the State, the organisation and unification of the union and workers' movement. This organisation reached all corners of the country and was extended to all workers. This was a fabulously progressive aspect of Peronism. Thus, it developed the union and unitary consciousness of the working class, although not the revolutionary, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist consciousness. In other words, it convinced the workers they had to be organised in a union but, at the same time, forced them or convinced them to collaborate with capitalism and imperialism until the end. Not only was Peronism progressive in extending unification and union organisation but, on the other hand, it was also progressive in intensifying the union organisation by promoting in each factory and workplace the creation of delegates committees and internal commissions.

Peronism aimed these two progressive aspects at winning the support of the working class and controlling it as the basis of its bosses' resistance to Yankee penetration. Some honest anti-imperialists do not understand this; let's not say anything about the communists. The emergence of CGT and the industrial unions were, in fact, and whether their Peronist managers knew it or not, anti-Yankee and anti-imperialist measures that strengthened the country. The fact the CGT leaders were obstinate climbers and bureaucrats, who did not even know the word imperialism, hides, precisely, the fact the organisation and the unification of the Argentine working class in a gigantic CGT and in gigantic unions of industry strengthened the country against Yankee penetration. The

<sup>5</sup> **Prebisch Plan** is the name given to the report presented by economist Raul Prebisch (1901-1981) to the dictator Eduardo Lonardi on 1 October 1955 and extended on the 25th of the same month. The term was then applied to all subsequent proposals of Prebisch to the regime of the Liberating Revolution.

Prebisch plan would have no chance today if there were an all-powerful independent CGT, whoever led it because the weight of the unified working class would be decisive.

Precisely the plan of the current government is to liquidate the unitary organisation of the entire Argentine working class; hence, its violent policy against the workers' movement, its union and factory organisations. It is completely false, for example, that the current government has as its goal the liquidation of the Peronist state organisation. Today, the unions are more state-controlled than ever since they are under military rule. This union statisation, carried out to the absurdity of taking over all unions with the military, has an obvious goal: to buy time until the government proves what the best way is to destroy the unitary and industrial union organisation of the working class. The government does not yet know what the best way is to just liquidate this centralised union organisation. The "free unionists", who are the trade union agents of Yankee colonisation and government, are so devoid of support that the government observes with terror the alternative of cold transferring to them the leadership of the workers' movement so they fulfil the task of liquidating the union movement or of controlling it in favour of the plan of the government and Yankee imperialism. Moreover, the government contemplates the possibility that the resounding failure of the "free unionists" will make it see as most feasible to leave the workers' movement to its own fate, pressing with all its might and encouraging the total division of the trade union movement.

All these months of great defeats of the workers' movement have given rise to automaton currents and even sectors of the working class that do not want to know anything else about the trade union movement. For the bosses and the government these demoralised sectors of the working class, added to the old trade union leaders of Peronism willing to pact with the government, would be the basis of the manoeuvre to leave the trade union movement to its own fate to divide it into thousand small unions and to destroy the unitary CGT. This manoeuvre would have the advantage of giving the impression of authentic democracy and freedom of association, eliminating odious union military takeovers. Everything makes us believe the government, to carry out its policy of dividing the unified workers' movement, will have to lean on to this last variant.

On the other hand, by the fact that it has already disorganised the trade union movement, the government would be eased the way in this manoeuvre. Many union activists believe the serious problem the working class is facing is that unions are taken over. We believe this is a very serious error, what is a historic defeat of much greater importance than the take-overs is the fact the trade union movement has been disorganised: without organisation, without direction. The workers' movement would be much better off if the trade union organisation subsisted underground, even if the unions were officially taken over. The tragedy today is that not only unions are taken over but there is real anarchy in the unitary trade union organisation. To convince ourselves of this, we would only have to ask 10 workers or trade union activists of any trade union, for example, textiles, to which union organisation and leadership they respond. If he is from Grafa, he will say to its Internal Commission; if they are from San Martin, he will say to the Executive Council; if he is from Alpargatas factory No 7, in Gutierrez, he will say to the Delegates Committee of Alpargatas and if he is of any of the factories in Patricios, he will say to the Movement for the Unification and Reorganisation of the union. If he is from Ducilo he will say to the Delegates Committee and to no other leadership. If he is from 4 de Junio, he will say to the old Blue Slate. If from the Berlanesa or Medias Paris, he will say to the old Green Slate.

This is the true defeat of the trade union organised workers' movement, having been totally disorganised and anarchised, having reached such a point of disorganisation in which each worker, each activist, each leader, each tendency, each factory, and finally each branch go their own way and do whatever they want.

We Trotskyists, the revolutionary socialists, we say to the working class, its leaders, its activists, to what remains of its industrial and union organisations: the main and fundamental task begins with liquidating this anarchy and this disorganisation. The task begins with reconquering something much more important than the legality of the union movement, something much more

important than expelling the Comptrollers; it begins by controlling our own union organisation, the industrial unions and it begins by reorganising each union so there is only one union for each industry. If we achieve this, throwing out the Comptrollers and regaining legality for the union movement will be an easy task. If we fail, we will be at the mercy of the manoeuvres of the Government that, even if tomorrow withdraws the union take-overs from the unions, it will have enough power to keep us divided and anarchised as we are today.

The single trade union by industry together with its collective bargaining agreement and the factory organisation are the great organisational achievements of the working class under Peronism and the reason for the success in the anti-bosses struggle. Small unions of tendencies (Radical, socialist, communist, anarchist, Peronist), like the independent factory union, are the bosses' favourite because they condemn the workers of one industry to isolation and facilitate all kinds of bosses' manoeuvres. To face a tendency or factory union, the bosses need only have an understanding with their guild chamber — because they are organised by industry — to easily crush them factory by factory or tendency by tendency.

While an industrial union exists this is impossible. This explains why the government immediately took over all industrial unions. Also, the same “free unionists” agents of the division in the workers' movement, if appropriate, can help us to have a factory organisation. But they will not help, and they will sabotage any attempt to regain or rebuild the national industrial organisation. They will immediately state that “any group of workers has the right to form their own union”; in this way, they will raise the right to break the unity of the trade union movement with the tale of freedom of association.

The workers' organisation must adopt the most effective forms for the anti-bosses struggle. The bosses are grouped by industries, so the working class must also be grouped by industries to be able to defend their standard of living. Hence the decisive importance of the national union; hence, also, why the reorganisation of the workers' movement must begin with the Emergency Boards, or whatever we call them, that reorganise and regain the unions by industry and the unitary CGT for all the workers.

The problem arises when we consider how to reorganise the unitary trade union and the also unitary factory organisation. The total and absolute disorganisation of the trade union movement is reflected in two equally fundamental aspects: in the ranks and in the leadership. Nowadays, the workers of each factory or union do not know to which trade union body they must respond, or to which union leadership. There are honest union activists who propose to solve this problem on an ultra-democratic basis that reorganises the union movement from the factory through inter-factory committees. Here, another similar problem arises since in each factory different commissions dispute the leadership.

Thus, we would find ourselves with each current of the trade union movement having its own inter-factory organisation and instead of a single reorganisation of each union there would be as many organisations as there are inter-factory committees. Specifically, the division would reach the apex. It is a matter of guaranteeing the unitary reorganisation, in a single trade union organisation. To achieve this, there is no other way than to begin by establishing commissions of a general trade union nature to restructure the entire trade union movement in each union. These commissions of a general nature must be now, right away, the leadership of the union until a democratic congress of the restructured union is held. This is the only way to guarantee from the beginning a certain unity of the union that is being restructured.

In short, the issue is that if we do not begin the tasks of restructuring the union with a temporary union leadership that centralises the tasks of reorganisation, there is no possibility of unifying the reorganisation movement. The line of reorganising the union without a provisional leadership leads to each tendency, factory, or group of factories wanting to do what they want.

It leads to union anarchy and not to union reorganisation. We, like the rest of the working class, call these provisional committees Emergency Boards. We believe these meetings in each union should be formed not only from above, from the leadership, but also from the ranks. At the

top, whether we like it or not, we must give an example of discipline and unitary criteria and until the union is democratically reorganised, there is no other, there cannot be another, provisional leadership of the union than the one in charge of it when it was taken over. Only if these leaders refuse to work for the unitary reorganisation of the union will it be time to dismiss them. The trade union policy of believing we, or the trade unionists, anarchists, communists, or any other “ists” are the right leadership to reorganise the union ends in anarchy and disorganises the trade union movement. There is not, there cannot be, at this time, another provisional leadership of the union while it is being restructured than the one existing when it was taken over. Knowing who the provisional leadership of the guild is will eliminate a tremendous factor of disorganisation. To this commission or emergency board must be added the comrades democratically elected by the ranks and the other leaders of the union.

This means, every honest activist to ensure the unitary reorganisation of the union, recognises as temporary leadership of the same the old union leadership that led the union when it was taken over. But if they really are willing to achieve the union reorganisation, this commission has an obligation of incorporating to the provisional commission of reorganisation the best rank and file comrades and the other leaders of the union. Specifically, it is a matter of uniting all union tendencies that want a single union around a provisional reorganisation commission that unifies all the activists.

In addition to all that has been said, the organisation of the Emergency Boards or provisional commissions for the reorganisation of the unitary industrial union is currently the most accessible task from the point of view of the rank and file. The organisation, including all the workers of the factory, was only possible under Peronism because it was guaranteed and forced from the State.

With Peronism liquidated, in the current conditions of defeat of the working class, the old total factory organisation is impossible. This does not mean we should abandon the factory organisation but it is easier to group the active elements of the entire union, including the factory, to begin the general reorganisation of the union, without waiting to reorganise first section by section and factory by factory. That is, without leaving aside the general organisation of the union, without waiting to organise first sections by the factory, although at the beginning there are few and the organisation is weak, to make up the reorganised union. This will help in the factory organisation; it will be the best way to facilitate this organisation. The fight against the bosses of the whole industry will make easier the organisation of the best elements in the whole union, and it will be achieved before all the activists of a single factory organise the factory section by section. Beginning with the reorganisation of the union will eliminate the isolation of the best elements of each factory, who, especially at the beginning, will be a tiny minority. Their relationship with those of the other factories will give them confidence and a feeling of their own strength. And above all, it will maintain something very important at the moment: the industrial union conscience and not just factory conscience.

Today the fundamental thing is to form an emergency union board in each union that fights to reorganise the union first and to regain union legality later. No matter what we call it, Emergency Board or another name, the fundamental thing is to form a broad and unitary commission to reorganise the union and fight against the take-overs. This commission or Emergency Board will be integrated by the leadership of the union and by all the leaders who agree to keep the trade union organisation by industry against the comptrollers. The democratically elected delegates will be added to all existing factory groups that respond to the committee or emergency board of the union. These activists will reconstitute the factory and regional organisations.

All leaders who are for the union reorganisation, without exceptions, will be incorporated to the emergency board to avoid any division in the task of union reorganisation. The more divided they are among themselves by personal or clique interests, the more they have to be forced into unity, under penalty of being isolated. A board thus structured obeys a profound reason: the union must continue to exist whether or not the gorillas or the leaders want it.

In this sense, it is a very important fact and a great step forward that we support the emergence of the CGT Emergency Board. This points the way to the activists and leaders of the workers' movement. First, we need unity to carry out this gigantic task which is to regain the CGT for the Argentine workers. We support, with all our enthusiasm, the attempts by these leaders to keep the organisation of the CGT and the industrial unions. We are not interested whether they are friends of Bengoa, Uranga, or Aramburu.<sup>6</sup> What interests us is whether the working class know them and they want to regain the CGT and the industrial unions by reorganising the workers' movement. We propose there should be a single Emergency Board for each union, a single Emergency Board for each regional CGT; a single Emergency Board for the national CGT. Only in this way will we can assure the union reorganisation, the regaining of the CGT, and the liquidation of the pro-imperialist plans of the government in the trade union movement.

This support to the Emergency Board does not mean we will be silent about our deep differences with its leaders; these divergences exist and will exist because they have their origin in profound class differences. Indeed, the opportunistic, negotiating and manoeuvring characteristics their leaders present, and also their faith in summits and not in the working class, have an objective explanation. Its social base is given by the sectors of the Argentine bosses who need a working class that responds to them to put pressure on the public powers; to this extent, they also need a sufficiently representative bureaucracy. The goal of these bosses is not to crush all workers' organisations, as in the case of imperialism, but to keep a status quo allowing the "normal" development of their activity. Then, they need elements in which the working class has some trust and they can thus keep "social peace" and use the working class to press against the adversaries of the Argentine capitalists. This is why there are sectors of the government itself and of the bosses themselves that do not look with such bad eyes on the emergence of the Emergency Board and even —as it is said in the language of our workers— they "wind it up".

These leaders of the Emergency Board are fit for this task because they have been educated by Peronism in the negotiations with the public powers and the bosses. They are the working class leaders of the time of collaboration with the Argentine bosses. Therefore, instead of relying exclusively on the working class, most of them have used the working class to climb.

Our position and our methods are fundamentally different from theirs. We defend trade union organisation with opposing methods; we only trust in the organisation and mobilisation of the working class. Currently, for example, while they seek the "normalisation" and "legality" of the workers' movement based on negotiations, we pose as the axis of our activity the reorganisation of the unions and factories by the ranks and by the leadership. They go to the bosses or military top echelon and we go to the rank and file. When they appeal to the ranks, they do it as reinforcement to their negotiations. We negotiate only as reinforcement to our activity of union reorganisation.

Some comrades will wonder how, with such opposite methods, we can march with them in this stage of reorganisation. We will begin by saying for us it is an obligation to work with the Emergency Board. If its components are negotiators and not revolutionaries, it is because the Argentine working class, whose mentality they reflect, is not with the revolutionary methods but with the negotiations. It is a product of the Peronist era of the collaboration of the workers with the bosses. In such a way that if we did not work with the Emergency Board because of these characteristics, it would mean we actually gave up to work and convince thousands of activists who, with all their shortcomings, are the best of the working class and their strongest promise for the achievement of revolutionary leadership. Precisely, this future result depends on our current attitude towards this movement. The working class is currently like that and not as we would like it to be. So are its leaders.

We have to prove to the working class itself that the methods of those leaders are wrong. Working with them in the organisation of the workers' movement will be the best way of explaining

<sup>6</sup> **Pedro Eugenio Aramburu** (1903–1970) was an Argentine Army General. He was a major figure behind the military coup self-named Liberating Revolution against Peron in 1955. He became *de facto* president of Argentina from 13 November 1955 to 1 May 1958.

it to them in the facts and based on their own experience. During this task, the working class will know how to recognise its authentic leaders and will achieve its own revolutionary leadership.

For this reason, for a militant of ours, there is currently no more important task than to reorganise the trade union movement in their union and sector of work. All hours of the day are too few to achieve this goal. We must organise Emergency Boards everywhere. If necessary, in clandestinity; but we must organise them.

We know many bona fide comrades and even leaders do not believe this is the fundamental task. They believe the fundamental thing today is sabotage and nothing more than sabotage. They have every right to think so; in the same way, we have the right to keep our opinion. However, the reality is one. We, in principle, are in favour of using any form that will help us fight. But those forms depend on the moment of the battle or on the fact we are engaged in a battle. During the last general strikes, we were for violent means, precisely when the same leaders who today encourage sabotage were hiding under the bed. But back then we were in the street fight and we will hold this position again when the fight resumes.

Now it's about setting up an organisation that allows us to go back to the battle. An organisation like the one we lost because of the bad leadership of those who now want, with a coup d'état or sabotage, to recover what has been lost. Therefore, the fundamental thing at this moment is the union reorganisation of the working class and to raise its spirits after the defeat suffered. Is it not painful that self-sacrificing fighters waste their time, energy and freedom in individual attacks when their time, energy and freedom are so important to forge the organisation that will give us the victory? That is, the reorganisation of the union and factory movement for the reconquest of industrial unions and the CGT.

Peronism, by relying more on the strength of a bomb than on the workers' movement, does nothing more than repeat old mistakes. It again displays the same lack of trust in the action of the workers that sealed its fate in September 1955. Centring our activity in the trade union movement reorganisation and in the reconquest of their organisations, we say we only trust in the mobilisation of our class. Once the reorganisation has been achieved and the battle has been raised again, then we will try to forge the best bombs so the tanks do not make easy prey for our comrades. Then it will be time to use all energies in sabotage and street combat. Because we do not just want a heroic struggle but victory.

We, Trotskyists, revolutionary socialists, not only believe in the working class but fundamentally in the revolutionary working class. Thus, for us, reorganising the union and workers' movement does not mean repeating the vices of the old Peronist organisation. Our support for the Emergency Board does not mean we give up on imprinting on the reorganised unions an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist orientation. But we want the majority of the organised working class to democratically adopt this orientation. We do not pretend to dominate or pretend to impose ourselves; we want to convince. In this sense, we are the most democratic because we believe in the correctness of our line and based on it we believe it is possible to imprint on the organised workers' movement an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist orientation from the beginning.

Although today we are a minority within the workers' movement, we believe we can convince the majority and win it over to our positions. But it is necessary we do not fall into the fetishism of the stages. That is, the fact there are currently no unions in the hands of the workers or mass workers' parties does not mean that opportunist unions will first have to exist and then we will have to transform them into revolutionaries. No. That would be fetishism. We try that from their own structuring they be classist and anti-imperialist organisations; i.e., we will try to convince the workers we do not have to be first negotiators and then revolutionaries but that the guarantee of victory lies precisely in being classist and anti-imperialist in the first place, on account of both our goals and our methods.

Specifically, we will try to ensure the reorganised and reconquered organisations do not repeat the vices but that they draw on the experiences of the previous period.

Precisely, to achieve this we need to show, in the facts and in the tasks of union reorganisation, that we are the true direction. For this, to gain the trust of the ranks, we must work with it as it is and free of all sectarianism. Unless we are free from sectarianism, there will not be a great revolutionary union centre either.

The immediate and urgent task is to reorganise the trade union movement. Let's reorganise the industrial unions surrounding the union leaders with and forming around them Emergency Boards to reorganise the factory delegate committees.

#### 4. Reorganising the trade union movement

Within a frame characterised by the defeat of the working class, losing their trade union organisations, and at the same time by a general discouragement, the government has launched the wage increase decree. Such an increase reaches 10 per cent and its conditions are deplorable for the working class.

This explains why the working class has not reacted to the decree. But this does not mean it has not been interested in the question. On the contrary, it has been seriously concerned. We revolutionists must not forget this. Although it hates the current government in general, the problem that most interests it now is the future collective agreements.

This is precisely why it is not possible to exclude the possibility that, during the time of discussion of the collective agreements, the workers assimilate the defeat by gaining new confidence in their forces. We must aim to achieve this goal. The government works in the opposite direction. For it, the decree is a first blow and others will follow during the negotiations.

Same as when opposed to other problems, Peronism had had a contradictory attitude towards the collective agreements. Implementing the collective agreements of industry and making them finish on the same date unified the working class in its activity and this was progressive.

But not letting the workers' bodies discuss independently and strictly controlling them was a highly negative factor. The current government tries to liquidate precisely the positive aspect of this Peronist policy: the collective character and the joint discussion of the agreements. The fundamental goal of the manoeuvre is to divide the working class. Hence, the government proposes the following principles for the discussion of future agreements: that the collective agreements be by zone and not the same for the total of the workers, that the next agreements be discussed in different dates for each union.

This divisionist manoeuvre is accompanied by certain verbiage and also an economic concession of importance for the lowest paid women.

But dividing is not the only goal of the decree in question. It has also the goal of exploiting workers. Therefore, it establishes two preconditions: by the first, it gives free reins to the boss in working relationships; by the second, the boss has the right to say how and where the workers should work within the establishment.

This reactionary decree presents us thus with the problem of how to face it. Some revolutionary workers have thought the application of the decree must be resisted right now. We believe we have to look at reality as it is. Today the working class has no chance of withstanding the decree. Hence, our advice is that it is not the right time to reject the decree. In this, we disagree with the Emergency Board. The Board poses that every government decree or agreement is invalid because it has not been democratically discussed by the working class. We think rejecting the decree without having the strength to do so is an adventure. In the same way, being satisfied with saying current negotiations are not valid is abstentionism and opportunism. Consequently, we believe we need to organise the fight against the decree. In this sense, the government's own manoeuvres in the processing of collective agreements can mean a victory of the reorganised workers' movement. We will achieve this insofar as accepting to discuss the collective agreements we use this discussion to reorganise the workers' movement. We will give great importance to this discussion. Our

purpose in taking part in it will be to disrupt, one by one, the manoeuvres of the government, thus facilitating the reorganisation of the workers' movement. Without the union reorganisation, we are lost. The government tries to impose its collective agreements speculating on the division and disorganisation of the working class. We will try to use those discussions to reorganise the working class.

The fact this reorganisation has to be done generally in secrecy, should not make us forget the use of legality for everything we can. The Emergency Board and the internal commissions will give a general battle to get the collective agreements discussed by the real delegates of the workers. Even in the case of not being able to get a complete victory over this, we must try to infiltrate representative comrades, chosen by the ranks, in the discussion of the collective agreements. These are our time bombs inside those anti-democratic joint discussions. They are the ones who will have to derail their plans. For this purpose, immediate and on the day publicity of the progress of the negotiations is essential, even if they are expelled from the joint discussions. The mere fact of making this information possible justifies its presence. However, the enormous possibilities of these representatives do not end there. Not only must they inform but they should try to oppose the program the working class needs now to the program of the bosses, the government, and their allies, the "free unionists". They will base their protests on the fact the representation is not composed of democratically elected comrades. That is, they will attack intransigently the ridiculous and anti-democratic form of election decreed by the government. They will raise their opposition to the increase of exploitation through the reform of works standards, making it clear any increase in remuneration resulting from the increase in work, is not a gain but a step back. Together with all this and as a fundamental issue, they will raise the following points:

**a) Increase in wages of 50 per cent, massive and even for all workers**

This is, at least, how much the working class standard of living has been lowered in recent times. We must avoid the imposition of unequal increases by hierarchies, which is an old bosses' manoeuvre to divide the workers. If, for example, in Chaco an increase of 20 per cent is proposed and in Buenos Aires of 50 per cent, the workers of the Chaco and Buenos Aires will not feel identified but divided and there will be no way to confront the bosses with the unity of all the workers of the country. We say the same for the case in which different percentages are proposed for tradesmen and labourers. In either case, the bosses will manage to divide the workers and it will be easier for them to impose their convenience. The struggle for massive and even increase avoids this division. The single collective agreements by each union mean progress but we can and must overcome them by gaining massive and even increases for all the workers.

**b) Minimum and vital wage of 1,600 pesos and a sliding scale of wages for all workers**

If we understand by minimum and vital salary what a father of a family with two children has to earn in order to live, we believe this salary cannot be less than 1,600 pesos because at present we cannot live with less. But, for this salary not to be mocked by the price increases, we need to accompany it with the sliding scale of wages. If prices rise, wages must increase. At a minimum, the law requiring the quarterly readjustment of wages should be applied if the cost of living increases.

**c) Guarantee of 80 biweekly hours and insurance against unemployment**

These two gains must be achieved to avoid suspensions and dismissals. As in the meatworks, every worker must have the guaranteed payment, working or not, of 80-biweekly hours. If dismissed, the State must guarantee the payment of the minimum and vital wage.

The "free unionists", agents of the division and the bosses, will say these points are crazy, given the "bad situation" the country is going through. Naturally, they will also attack us for demagogues. This has been said by their organ *La Vanguardia* and the Comptrollers of the railworkers union.

The honest activist, however, will have an easy argument to defeat the arguments of the bosses, imperialism, the "free unionists" and the officials of the current government. If, as this

government says, by expropriating the Peronist fortunes the problem of oil and workers' housing can be solved then by expropriating, together with them, the fortunes of the "contras", we will fulfil our program with ease.

Acting like this day by day, through flyers, leaflets, etc., we will strengthen the struggle of the comrades who want to reorganise the trade unions, at the same time we will have managed to transform a reactionary government manoeuvre into a weapon of workers' agitation for the union reorganisation.

This, and not abstentionism, is the way. We should not wait patiently, but work every day for the reorganisation of our class, taking advantage of legality if possible, but not stopping from resorting to clandestinity, if needed, and not stopping in the face of obstacles.

We must transform the reactionary decree on wages into its opposite, in a pretext to get two great victories: to achieve magnificent collective agreements and to reorganise the unions during the discussions ordered by the government.

## **5. Reorganising the workers' movement to liquidate the current government**

Somehow, contrary to the rumours coming from some sectors of Peronism in the sense the government is extremely weak, we believe it enjoys a lot of stability. We can say that, throughout Latin America, a government is really stable when it relies on Yankee imperialism or the working class. There are no intermediate points for government stability.

In this sense, the current government is stable precisely because it has the undisputed support of Yankee imperialism. Along with this, it has defeated the working class. We could define the current government saying it is a pro-Yankee front that tries to rely on the bosses and the middle class and the parties of the Advisory Board. The Aramburu government, therefore, has the support of Yankee imperialism and its overlapping sectors within the country: the middle class and the bosses; they are united in the plan to hand over the country and crush the working class.

This does not deny the existence of strong factors of instability in the current government. These factors exist. First: for the crisis of the Argentine economy. Second: because it has the total opposition of the working class, the strongest, most homogenous and revolutionary national class which, although defeated, will inevitably raise its head. Third: because the crisis will be turned not only onto the proletariat but also onto sectors of the middle class. This phenomenon will subtract from the government the support of those sectors that will thus join the working class. This will end the division that separated the two classes under Peronism. Fourth, because the handover of the country to Yankee imperialism as a solution to the crisis will produce increasing and even desperate opposition from sectors of the bosses, who will be harmed by this new ordering of the country as an appendage of Yankee imperialism. This is why we can say the Aramburu government, although relatively stable, is resting on the volcanoes of the class struggle and the anti-imperialist struggle.

It does not matter that in the current stage this fight is determined by a violent offensive of the bosses and imperialism and, therefore, solidifies the situation of the government that is essentially an anti-working class one. This bosses' offensive will condition at the same time an inevitable reaction that will make the government stumble. In this sense, when we state this government is more stable, we say it in relation to Lonardi's.

Peronism was defeated by two clearly defined sectors. The old Democratic Union in the service of Yankee imperialism and the oligarchic sectors that — although anti-Yankee and having for years supported Peronism critically — later distanced themselves from Peronism because of its workerist policy. Such is the case of the nationalist and Catholic sectors.

The Lonardi government was unstable because of its heterogeneity. On the one hand, it wanted to defend certain independence of the Argentine bosses against Yankee imperialism, relying on the middle class. Hence our prognosis, later confirmed, in the sense the government

would be divided into two wings, as the Argentine bourgeoisie is divided; a pro-Yankee wing (cereal sectors, import trade and large financial groups, such as Bemberg and Co) and, on the other hand, the sector opposed at the moment to the total capitulation to Yankee imperialism and in favour of the negotiations (farmers, industrialists and merchants). Rojas and Busso,<sup>7</sup> on the one hand, with the advisory boards and Bengoa-Uranga, on the other, politically reflect these two wings.

The victory of the pro-Yankee wing was inevitable given it had all the support of Yankee imperialism, while the workers, on the other hand, did not support the more independent wing of Bengoa-Uranga.

The interesting thing is that Bengoa-Uranga, in their attempt to resist the Yankee plan, had to try to also rely on the working class. They agreed with Peron in the formation of a national unit of resistance to Yankee imperialism but they did not tolerate that inside it the workers were the dominant popular support element. This took them away from Peron and enlisted them in the coup. However, once free of Peron, they had no choice but to appeal, as he had done, to a policy of collaboration with the working class to outline a national defence policy, not because they liked it but because there was no other way out. Wishes are one thing and another quite different thing is the real dynamics of the class struggle. Once again, the premise was fulfilled that in all of Latin America, the collaboration of a bourgeois sector with the workers is not a matter of desire but of necessity when the latter wishes to outline resistance to Yankee imperialism. This situation was precipitated by the fact the Yankee wing captured the government.

The negotiations of the Bengoa wing began then with the union bureaucracy since — in the same measure in which it needed the support of the workers — it finds indispensable the strictest control over them to prevent any overflow endangering the privileges of the *estancieros* and other bosses sectors that support it. Within this tone, the putsch of the army against the government is prepared. The cadres who are for the Bengoa-Uranga coup are precisely those who reflect the *estancieros* and bosses sectors aspiring to certain independence of the country.

The Emergency Board of the CGT reflects this need in the workers camp, in the same way, the army reflects it in the camp of the armed forces. But the discrepancy with the pro-Yankee wing ends here. What unites all those who made the coup against Peron, even the Bengoa-Uranga wing, is the conviction we should not return to the “arbitrariness” of Peronism. They call “Peronist arbitrariness” the policy of concessions to the workers’ movement that Peronism carried out.

Regarding the role of the middle class, let us say that just as Peronism depended on the support of the workers, in the sense that even with bosses methods it expanded its share in the national income, the current government is fundamentally a government that has the support of the middle class because it aims to correct this “arbitrariness”; it aims to restore its old situation to the middle class or large sectors of it. This is why the middle class makes up the massive support of the reactionary government. To the same extent that Peronism defended the working class, this government, in its attempt to maintain its social base, has to make concessions to the petty bourgeoisie mainly in the field of democratic rights. Hence, criticism or opposition to the government is allowed, as long as they do not start from the workers’ movement or from the Peronist sectors related to it. Moreover, the fact Yankee imperialism tries to grant its government in the country a more or less democratic popular electoral base that gives it stability strengthens that policy. Of the intention and the need on the part of the government to maintain this social base depends on the possibility of legal loopholes to continue existing. The great heterogeneity of the middle class, with its infinite sectors and nuances, increases this possibility.

Of course, this possible government policy will be valid to the extent it does not oppose the fundamental goal: to ensure the colonisation plan of Yankee imperialism. In the event of such a contradiction, it is clear democratic rights will be liquidated to ensure the applicability of the government’s reactionary plans. Precisely the sectors of the petty bourgeoisie that break with the

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<sup>7</sup> **Eduardo Bernardo Busso** (1898-1983) was a politician and jurist specialised in Civil Law. Lonardi appointed him Minister of Interior and Justice, a position he assumed on 23 September 1955.

government for their opposition to these plans will be the first to feel the consequences of the change.

We have said the support of the middle class to the current government is explained by the intention to prevent the return of Peronism, which decreased the participation of this class in the national income for the benefit of the workers. This unites all sectors of the middle class. But while some sectors want this improvement by giving themselves to the Yankees, others seek it through a policy of national independence. In the first sector are the Socialists, the Christian Democrats and the Radical Unionists; in the second, Radical Intransigence. The fact the latter also flirts — like Bengoa-Uranga — with the working class confirms what we said above that the solution of the national problem can only come from this class. The pressure of the Noblia<sup>8</sup> wing within Intransigence reflects the desperation of sectors of the bosses and the middle class who have not found any solution to the problems that afflicted them under Peronism.

This government has the repudiation of 90 per cent of the workers and 70 per cent of the population of the country. On this, there is an anecdote that if not true, it deserves to be. It is placed as happening in the dialogue between a Peronist trade union leader and an Intransigent Radical leader. The first asked the other how things were going; this replied they were exactly the same as before. To this, the Peronist replied: “No, doctor, if we, who are 60 per cent of the population, are much worse than before and you, who have almost the rest, are the same, it means things are not the same as before but much worse.”

Indeed, the current government is oligarchic in the purest sense of the word. The problem is how to achieve another government that, reflecting the majority of the people, runs a government favourable to the workers and the middle class, against imperialism and the bosses.

There are those who argue the solution lies in the call for a constituent assembly or national elections. This means those who will organise one and the other are the current oligarchic and pro-imperialist government that is based on a tiny minority of the population. Naturally, it does not solve anything at all. It is a matter of getting a way to overthrow the present government so constituent and democratic elections are called. Otherwise, we play the game of the government because we recognise it and we also consider it capable of calling elections and of gathering a democratic constituent.

Let's not forget this government has sent to illegality the Peronist party, the wide majority party in the country. Is it possible that an election can be democratic in which the Peronist party, currently the majority, does not take part? Hence, the prerequisite is to sweep the current government away. The slogan of constituent assembly and elections, without previously clarifying the government must be liquidated to achieve the realisation of the slogan, is pure opportunism.

This does not mean that if the government calls to elections, even if they are fraudulent, we do not take part. We have to take part if the working class does not have enough strength to liquidate the government. But we will do it to take advantage of the election for the reorganisation of the workers' movement. Our fundamental strategic slogan is not, therefore, a constituent assembly or national elections but to reorganise the workers' and union movement to be able to throw out the government and put in its place one that represents the majority of the workers.

The current situation is potentially revolutionary, and this is how we understand it when proposing the liquidation of the current government as a task. If this is the government of the Yankees' colonisation of the country and if the vast majority of the population and 90 per cent of the workers want to liquidate the government, we only express this historical need and this sense of desire of the working class by posing as the fundamental task of this historical stage the liquidation of the current government.

This does not mean legality is not used in the fight. But this use, whatever it may be, is subordinated to the central goal: overturning the government. Any use of legality is only a means to achieve the strategic result. It cannot be an end in itself, nor can it be a substitute for the goal

<sup>8</sup> **Hector Virgilio Noblia** (1901-1977) was an Argentine physician and politician, who would act as Minister of Assistance and Public Health during the presidency of Arturo Frondizi.

of an entire stage: the liquidation of the reactionary government. The organisation of the workers' movement is a fundamental tool for this task.

Our task, then, cannot be other than to reorganise the workers' movement to liquidate the current anti-democratic and oligarchic government.

From this point of view, the attempt of the current government to call democratic elections or a constituent useful for something is laughable. Those who think to achieve this through workers' pressure against the government are deluded and opportunists. Deluded because by simple pressure, no matter how big, nobody can make an oligarchic government stop being... oligarchic. In the same way, you cannot achieve with pressure that a bourgeois government stops being bourgeois. Nowadays, it is as difficult for the Aramburu government to give legality to Peronism — a fundamental democratic task for an election or constituent — as asking the Eisenhower government to stop being imperialist. Precisely, being oligarchical is the reason for being and not one more feature of the current government; hence its policy of fierce persecution of the workers' movement.

But we say, besides deluded they are opportunists because if the mobilisation or pressure were so great as to force the government to do all this, then it would be pure opportunism to settle for a call to elections or constituent since there would be plain and simple enough power to liquidate the government. Indeed, the same power is needed to liquidate it as to make it call a more or less democratic elections or constituent. And we cannot fight for any form of a constituent that is not democratic... only that for this the first obstacle is the government.

As for the possibilities of pressure, we will say a government that has a mass base can be pressured to get from it certain minimum objectives; but there is no way to pressure a government based on the Yankee fleet and Yankee imperialism to stop being pro-Yankee and oligarchic. Moreover, this is the international experience; the Russian revolutionaries took advantage of the legal possibilities of Czarism but at no time they thought of replacing the goal, which was the liquidation of Czarism. They used those legal possibilities to help the liquidation of Czarism, and not because they thought Czarism would stop being Czarism by simple pressure or by the simple use of the legal means allowed by Czarism itself.

Using the legal possibilities does not mean capitulating to these possibilities, or forgetting in the Argentine case the experience of the workers or the class character of the current government. We could say the same of the Castillo Armas government. Regardless of the legal resources the Guatemalan people can use, their decisive task is not to pressure the government to stop being a butcher government in the service of imperialism but it is still its liquidation plain and simple.

In the Argentine case, the liquidation of the government can be a matter of months or years, but this does not change the nature of the task; it remains to overturn the government based on the insurrection of the workers and the pauperised sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

All the hours of the day are few to remind the working class that the fact of using a call to constituents or to take part in elections without Peronism, although they are fraudulent, or to make the active boycott against them, as the case may be, they have only one purpose: the use of all these means to organise the liquidation of the government. Precisely because only its liquidation based on the organised workers' movement can accelerate the call to a democratic constituent; constituent that will include the legality of all parties including Peronism.

The Intransigents and the Communists criticise the government but do not believe in the need to overturn it as a prior matter. Radicals think about taking it over based on the young military; their tactic is to pressure the government to give elections and then win these, free of Peronism.

Along with the Stalinists, there are other leftist groups that propose elections as a fundamental political task. These groups are, despite their revolutionary language, the leftist opposition to the government, its agents in the workers' movement.

We agree with Peronism and 90 per cent of the working class we have to overturn the government, but we disagree with their methods. Peronism tries to make a military coup, preparing

the environment through sabotage. They use the best working class elements they have as assistants to the military in sabotage and nothing else. We try to see things as they are. Today, you cannot overturn the government. The conditions for doing so will only be present when the poor sectors of the middle class join the workers and are willing to take the risk. Also, the working class will need not to feel defeated as at present. That will be the moment.

For us, the fundamental thing now is to give a new impetus to the working class, to arm it again for the struggle. For this, it is necessary to liquidate the bosses-government-imperialist offensive. Only the organised workers' movement can stop this offensive and liquidate the government. On top of that, it will have to replace the current reactionary government; it will have to be the basis of the future government. Only such a government can call to an authentic constituent assembly, a truly democratic election.

The Peronist workers may tell us they agree to reorganise the workers' movement but for the return of Peron. To them, the vast majority of the workers' movement, we propose: let's restructure together the trade union movement to liquidate the government; once this is done, we will comply with any resolution the organised workers' movement may take, reserving the right to criticise what seems wrong. If by then the workers want Peron to return, we will comply with the resolution, although we believe it a huge mistake.

We want for the future government a workers' team democratically elected by the workers, so they apply a workers' program against the bosses, the landowners, and imperialism. If we are against Peron and Peronism, it is because they have a program which ultimately is of the bosses.

Therefore, our slogan is: neither national elections nor a constituent assembly called by the reactionary oligarchic government.

The reorganisation of the workers' movement for the liquidation of the reactionary government hated by the working people, so those who the workers want rule according to the program elaborated by the workers organised through their class organisations.

This will not prevent us, at all times, from reserving the right, even accepting the majority of organised workers, to disagree and criticise that majority for not having a consistently anti-bosses and anti-imperialist program.

## **6. The reorganised union movement must oppose the Prebisch Plan**

The Prebisch report has had the virtue of provoking a lively polemic around the problems of the Argentine economy. This polemic has revolved around the same two fronts in which the country is divided: Contrás and Peronists. Prebisch, by assuring in his report the country is going through the worst crisis in its history, serves the contrás. The Peronists, when they state that what Prebisch says is totally false, logically defend Peronism. And when Intransigent Radicals claim neither Prebisch nor the Peronists are right, all they do is confirm their mediocrity, their incapacity and their cowardice.

We believe that, in their own way, Prebisch and the Peronists are right. And it's not a joke. Prebisch is absolutely right when he says this crisis in the Argentine economy is very serious but he lies hypocritically, when, to save the responsibility of Wall Street, he places all the blame on Peronism.

The Peronists are right to point out the economic progress made under Peronism and when they claim this it is not the cause of the current crisis. They are not right when they say Prebisch exaggerates and the economic situation is good.

The truth is the Argentine economy is in crisis, in a very serious crisis, and Peronism is not the main culprit. When you read the reports by Prebisch or other technicians on Latin American countries, you find everyone says the same thing: tremendous crisis, lack of productivity, poverty, low performance, agrarian crisis, a weak currency, and need for capital. Except for Venezuela, Cuba and possibly Mexico, the same thing happens to all Latin American countries.

And yet, Peron did not rule in all of them but only in Argentina. In other words, the cause of the economic crisis in Latin America is general and not partial. We must seek the reason in causes present in all countries. The fundamental cause is the domination exercised by Yankee imperialism over its political and economic life. Yankee imperialism prevents the harmonious development of Latin American national economies by preventing the unity of these countries in the economic field and by guiding the development of the industry of each country according to their needs or to the petty domestic market of each country.

But that is not all. Imperialism develops or protects the most tremendous hindrance of the Latin American countries: the agricultural-livestock large estate. All Latin American countries, to a greater or lesser extent, suffer a tremendous agrarian crisis. Production per man and per hectare is minimal. This agrarian crisis combines with the pressure and control of Yankee imperialism and causes permanent backwardness, unevenness, and contradictions in the Latin American economies.

The more or less advanced industrial development in all the countries of Latin America accelerates the contradictions of its economy under the weight and control of the landowners and of imperialism. This industrial development of Latin America makes the economic unity of these countries indispensable but neither the landlords, nor Yankee imperialism, nor the industrial bosses want this unity because it hurts them.

The own industrial development needs the resolution of the agrarian problem for the increase of the production; but the respect for the agrarian income of the landowners, great friends and partners of imperialism and the industrialists, prevents the solution of the agrarian crisis. Further, this same agrarian production is at the mercy of the market controlled by imperialism.

These are the real reasons for the structural crisis that, in general, all Latin American countries and not just our country suffer.

But that this is the general basis of the crisis does not mean there are no particular causes in each country. Argentina is no exception.

Until the crisis of 1929, our country could combine the development of agricultural production with industrial production. From that date on, an event of decisive importance took place in the country's economy: the agrarian crisis. Modern Argentina is the daughter of agricultural colonisation. A part of the immigrants went to the countryside, rented a piece of land and harvested cereals that they easily sold abroad. These farmers were the base for the development of commerce and national industry. Other immigrants stayed in Buenos Aires and worked in the nascent industry.

The general development of the world economy facilitated this general development of the Argentine economy, although delayed from the beginning by the monopoly of the land by the big landowners: Anchorena, Pereyra Iraola, etcetera.

The high leases charged by these landowners prevented deeper agrarian colonisation. This prevented 50 million European peasants from settling and colonising the country from end to end. The landlord and *estanciero* scum, in their eagerness to spend millions in end-of-century Paris, prevented a complete and effective agrarian colonisation. Despite this and even with all its limitations, if it existed is because of the great development of the world cereal market. This development allowed the farmer to live despite the plundering of which he was the object. From the crisis of 1929, the possibility no longer existed for the farmer to earn for himself and also for the landowner.

Neither did this possibility remain in relation to the small landowner, exploited by the meatworks. Thus the crisis, the product of the combined blackmail of imperialism and the landowners, broke out.

To compensate for the crisis, which the landlords themselves suffered, all the Argentine bosses — but the importers — launched a campaign to protect the industry. This relative industrial protectionism allowed the landowners to invest capital in industry and, at the same time, absorb

the labour that remained free in the countryside. In the eagerness to overcome the crisis, the landlords and *estancieros* not only aim to develop the industry but also try to deliver the country to the British Empire so it guarantees them the purchases of their meats. The landowners transform us thus into a British semi-colony.

This dependence on the British Empire will be fatal to the national economy. Precisely Mr Prebisch, a member of the conservative oligarchy brain trust and a genius and figure until the grave, was one technician who restructured the country as a British semi-colony.

This dependence will make the country, without taking part in the war, to participate in the losses of the British Empire. During the war years, Argentina, for the agreements signed by Prebisch and his friends, charged nothing for the sales of their meats. Added to the agrarian crisis this has given rise to the current crisis.

During the war, the country, instead of receiving the machines, spare parts, and raw materials it needed, received absolutely nothing for the meat, its main export product. They were seven years without receiving machines, tractors, wagons, and so on and so forth.

Peronism was not guilty of this situation. It did nothing but inherit it. But it is guilty of not having fought to extract from imperialism what the country's economy needed. Nevertheless, we must recognise Peron did much more than Prebisch and his friends to remedy the situation. Peronism is not to blame for the industry to run out of machines, or for the agrarian crisis. The conservatives are to blame for that. But Peronism is guilty of not having addressed these two problems with substantive solutions, having done it, instead, by bosses, erroneous, or adventurous methods. It is also guilty of having capitulated to British imperialism and the landlords, making them thousands of concessions. As well, it is guilty of allowing the fabulous profits of Jorge Antonio, Juan Duarte, and Miguel Miranda.<sup>9</sup>

To compensate for the lack of machinery, Peronism developed the industry using more labour, up to a dangerous degree. So the average of relative productivity fell and the modernisation of the country was greatly delayed. However, the culprit that the machines needed did not arrive in exchange for the exported meat was not Peron but imperialism that squeezed the country before the "deposed regime" came to power.

Fallen Peronism, which was the arbitrator between Yankee imperialism and the capitalists on the one hand and the working class on the other, the political conditions were in place for imperialism and the bosses to tackle a comprehensive economic plan to solve their problems. All the bosses of the country are crying for loans and Yankee machinery. And with good reason.

Both industry and agriculture urgently need to renew or modernise their machinery. To achieve this, there are only two ways out: to surrender to the strongest capitalist, which has machines and capital, Yankee imperialism, or to plan the national economy by linking it to the rest of the Latin American national economies. The latter would mean liquidating production for the benefit of the bosses and planning it according to the real interests of a people. There are no other ways out. For a certain time, you can live without depending on imperialism but later on, you need capital and machinery and then if you do not take the path of total planning for the benefit of the country and the people, you have to capitulate to imperialism. This is the current situation, and this is the situation the Prebisch plan responds to.

This economist makes a perfect plan to satisfy the general interests of the bosses and imperialism. Its fundamental goal is simple: to create the economic conditions for a total agreement with imperialism. Prebisch tells both all capitalists and all imperialists: "Gentlemen, we

9 **Jorge Antonio** (1917-2007) was an Argentine businessman and political adviser linked to President Peron.

**Juan Duarte** (1914-1953) was an Argentine politician, older brother of Eva Peron who served as private secretary to President Peron.

**Miguel Miranda** (1891-1953) was a politician, businessman, and Argentine economist who held the position of President of the Central Bank of the Argentine Republic during the presidencies of Farrell and Peron. Later on, Peron appointed him to the head of the National Economic Council, where he constantly advised him.

are arranging the Argentine economy so it can be exploited by your capitals; so now you help this economic arranging.” The fundamental goals of the Prebisch plan are:

First: free foreign exchange so foreign capital, especially those of Yankee imperialism, can enter and leave whenever they want. At the same time, it devalues the peso so that exporters, such as meat packing plants and grain trusts, get much more Argentine money even if they get less foreign currency. An indirect consequence of free exchange will be that foreign raw materials for the national industry will cost much more in Argentine pesos.

Second: to get foreign loans and investments, especially from the US, guaranteeing a stable currency. Thus, under the pretext of economic needs, it forces the government to accept all colonising pacts. It has already ratified the OAS treaty and entered the International Monetary Fund.

Third: to fabulously increase the exploitation of the working class and raise a little the standard of living of the middle class. Favouring the same production be carried out with the work of fewer workers and, if these are surplus, some can compete among themselves and others return to the countryside.

Fourth: to develop agricultural production to the detriment, if necessary, of livestock and industry. This increase in agrarian exploitation strengthens the landowners, grain producers and, indirectly, Yankee imperialism, which dominates the world cereal market.

This program, by benefiting — or trying to benefit — the sectors of the Argentine bosses relegated by Peronism, has caused and will continue causing the resistance of important sectors of the own bosses. Fundamentally of the industrialists and cattle raisers who are seriously threatened by the resurgence of the landowners (owners of land, who do not exploit it but lease it), the big cereal trusts and mainly by the scourge that Peronism swept away: the big financial consortiums, especially Bemberg. Precisely, the entire Prebisch plan is designed to facilitate the takeover of the Argentine economy by the great Argentine-foreign financial capital of the Bembergs, Tornquists, etc. These will act as intermediaries between imperialism and the country, between the New York financial capitals and the national capital.

That is why Yankee imperialism sees this plan as its plan. The Prebisch plan is, in general terms, the same as the one the Yankee missions recommend to the other Latin American countries.

The history of the crisis is repeated here. Peron ruled only in Argentina but plans like Prebisch's are suggested or imposed on all Latin American countries. Yankee imperialism needs to dominate all Latin American countries to facilitate, among other things, the free movement of their capitals. Ford is interested in investing capital in Argentina and Bolivia with no control by the native governments. They want to take profits or invest them at the moment they think fit. The Yankees want complete freedom for their capital and products in order to control Latin American economies without accountability to anyone. If they achieve their goals — and they are already achieving them — the Latin American economies, divided into 20 different markets and with 20 different currencies, would be at the mercy of Yankee imperialist blackmail. Ford, just by threatening it will take its capital, will achieve the depreciation of the currency in the country it enters, thus achieving all the concessions it wants. At the same time, imperialism will definitively guide the economies for its exclusive benefit. But that is not all — the Yankee capitals will accelerate the more “scientific” exploitation of our workers and peasants. The Prebisch plan is essentially the US Department of State economic plan No. 20; the plan of the economic colonisation of Argentina by Yankee imperialism.

For a short time it may improve the national economy somewhat but at the price of its total dependence on Yankee imperialism and the worsening of working and life conditions for the workers. This dependence will be revealed as fatal in the future Yankee economic crisis.

The Intransigent Radicals and the Peronists talk and talk against the Prebisch plan but cannot give concrete solutions to solve the situation. This is logical, because both Peronism and Intransigent Radicalism defend, in a more or less direct way, the interests of the bosses and the

national landowners. And for the bosses, although it hurts, there is just no other economic way out than the agreement with the Yankees. That is why Peron capitulated in the face of the oil problem and the Intransigent Radicals, in a servile attitude, do not denounce the OAS or the International Monetary Fund.

Only the working class can solve their problems and, at the same time, those of the country. It currently lacks leadership and structured bodies enabling it to study and solve the problems of the national economy. Hence, the struggle against the sinister Prebisch plan necessarily involves the reorganisation of the working class. Only through it can the workers plan the economy once the current pro-imperialist government has been defeated.

The organised workers' movement will propose that, if for Prebisch profits of the capitalists are sacred, for the workers there is only one sacred thing: the welfare of the working people. That should be the goal of the plan. First, we must liquidate the influence of Yankee imperialism. For this, it is necessary to elaborate a joint plan of all the Latin American countries. Right now, the trade union organisations of Chile, Bolivia, and Uruguay, together with the illegal leadership of the Argentine CGT, must hold a Congress to replace it. The mere fact the economic union of these countries takes place will mean an impressive economic improvement of all. The Prebisch plan in favour of imperialism must be opposed by a regional and Latin American plan against the offensive of Yankee imperialism.

But this is not the end of the matter. Peronism developed a series of hints for the defence of the Argentine economy: the control of currency exchange and the control of foreign trade. We believe those measures were not very useful for two reasons: they were incomplete and, in addition, they were applied by officials at the service of the big bosses and not the workers. To the manoeuvre of Prebisch, of returning to absolute freedom of trade to deliver the country to imperialism, the organised workers' movement must oppose the following measures:

- Defence of foreign exchange control and of foreign trade and its complete nationalisation: everything sold and bought abroad, to be sold and bought by the government.

- Democratic control by the working class of foreign exchange control and of foreign trade.

But to overcome the crisis, not only is it necessary the unity with Chile, Bolivia, and Uruguay, and also workers' control of foreign exchange and foreign trade, internal economic measures are also necessary.

- Nationalisation of CADE, the meatworks, and the cereal companies. The country, in this way, would earn millions of pesos in foreign currency.

- Defence of all nationalisations made by Peronism but ensuring its efficiency through its control by the working class.

But the matter does not end here either. Now that the Peronist robberies are being talked about, we must clarify we are in favour of expropriating the Peronist fortunes; but much more important than this is that the lands stolen from the State for 150 years be rescued for the country and the workers. This will be not only a measure of strict justice but the only and true solution to the Argentine agrarian problem; nationalising the land paying nothing to the landlords. Thus, it will be easy to increase agricultural production through a bold immigration and agrarian policy, which will give the land free to those who wish to work it. There is no other way to eliminate these tremendous national parasites: the landlords, who have stifled the development of the national economy for a century.

All these are elements of the economic plan we propose to overcome the current economic crisis and which we will summarise:

- 1) Economic unity with all of Latin America and immediate with Uruguay, Chile, and Bolivia through a joint plan elaborated and controlled by the workers' organisations of the four countries.

- 2) State control of foreign trade and exchange, under the administration of workers' organisations.

3) Nationalisation, without payment and with workers' control of CADE, the meatworks, and the large cereal companies. The same to be done with the big trusts or consortiums: wine, sugar, Tornquist, etcetera.

4) The Peronist nationalisations will be respected and will be under workers' control.

5) Having the lands returned to the State to which they belonged a little more than a century ago will solve the agrarian problem.

These and no others are the bases of a joint plan to be drawn up by the working class and its reorganised trade union movement for the benefit of the workers. This plan is just the opposite of the Prebisch Plan. It will go beyond the national and Latin American economy, sinking the imperialist companies, the big national trusts, and the landowners while raising the standard of living of the workers. The reorganised union movement must analyse this plan as soon as possible and make intense propaganda within the working class, making it clear that only a new government, based on the reorganisation of the workers' movement, will be able to carry out this plan.

## 7. The Yankee plan for the colonisation of Latin America

Despite the victory of Yankee imperialism over Argentina, the entire world is experiencing a revolutionary process. Every vanguard worker has the obligation to study the geographical and social map of the world from 1914 to the present. This is the best antidote against pessimism. This map will show that after the First World War only one country was free from capitalism: Russia. Ten years after the first war, capitalism and imperialism were relatively solid throughout the world and especially in Europe. Today, 10 years after the Second World War, the situation presents in a totally different way. It is no longer only Russia that jumped the puddle of countries dominated by capitalism but also China and Eastern Europe. Further, half of Korea and Indochina have been freed from the exploitation of landlords and imperialism and most of the Asian countries have gained political independence or are in the process of getting it.

The same process has arrived with great intensity in North Africa and Kenya, where huge battles for national independence are fought. Europe is not lagging; the revolutionary process in Italy and France, although postponed, has gained a chronic character. At the present time, we can add to this crisis Cyprus and Spain, which make the European equilibrium falter. Completing the picture and, to make matters worse for capitalism, the great Arab countries, led by Egypt, aspire to a policy of national independence: they defy the Baghdad pact and also outline a political and military union that, although condemned to failure under the political leadership of those bosses' governments, poses a problem that the Arab masses will take care to carry out until the end.

The Americas as a whole and Latin America, in particular, cannot present within the world revolutionary panorama, a service record as bright and revolutionary as the other areas of the world.

If we except Bolivia, a small revolutionary island in a "responsible" continent, Latin America does not currently offer great wars of national liberation nor immense struggles against landlords and capitalism.

On the contrary, the attempts of a timid policy of national independence have not reached, in any place, revolutionary characteristics such, as the cases of Guatemala, with Arevalo<sup>10</sup> and Arbenz;

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<sup>10</sup> **Juan Jose Arevalo** (1904–1990) was a professor of philosophy who became Guatemala's first democratically elected president in 1945. He was elected following a popular uprising against the United States-backed dictator Jorge Ubico that began the Guatemalan Revolution. As president, he enacted several social reform policies, including an increase in the minimum wage and a series of literacy programs.

Mexico, with the nationalist party; Argentina, with Peron; Brazil, with Vargas; Chile, with Ibáñez;<sup>11</sup> Ecuador, with Velasco Ibarra;<sup>12</sup> and Bolivia, with Villarroel.<sup>13</sup>

Yankee imperialism has castrated, crushed, or deflected these timid attempts. We need to ask ourselves: what happens with our continent that while the revolution is advancing all over the world in Latin America regresses?

The explanation of this phenomenon confuses the sectarians who, from the premise the revolution wins or is maintained throughout the world, draw the conclusion the same happens in Latin America. Latin America belongs to the same continent as the centre of the world counter-revolution; it is allied with the headquarters of the exploiters of the entire world. The advance of the world revolution multiplies the eagerness of the Yankees to dominate, even more than they have done, the Latin American countries they control. The fear of the revolution sent a sector of Yankee imperialism, that of Senator McCarthy, to the harebrained idea of imposing a fascist government in the United States, to crush the workers more even than they already are under Eisenhower. The concessions the Stalinists made to imperialism — to curb the war in Indochina, the North African war, the strikes in France — and mainly the revolutionary rise of Asia and the victory of the Chinese revolution, convinced this sector of Yankee imperialism which was dangerous and rushed, at this time, to change the ultra-reactionary government of Eisenhower by McCarthy's fascist government. This example proves clearly the historical process is contradictory since the world revolutionary rise brought the danger of fascism in the United States. The revolutionary advance in the world has accelerated and has not diminished the desire of the Yankees to exploit Latin America. They want to secure this area of the world. Today, the United States projects itself with greater strength and more powerful reasons against South America. This is the only one that, in case of war, cannot suffer strategic bombings. Besides, it cannot be separated from the United States.

But this is not all. The Panama Canal can no longer provide services as before. The big ships cannot go through it, some sectors collapse, and a well-thrown bomb can end it. These reasons force the Northern Empire to direct its views to the Strait of Magellan as a necessary step between the two oceans. Yankee imperialism inevitably needs Chilean and Argentine Patagonia. The Yankees want to dominate the world but on almost every continent they are on the defensive. Before dominating they have to crush the revolution. But where they are on the offensive, it is brutal. The Koreans have already suffered the consequences of the offensive in its military aspect. We Latin Americans suffer this offensive, for the moment, in its political and economic aspect.

Latin American workers and countries pay dearly for the privilege of not having suffered war in their territories; they are the only ones which in this hour of national liberation are being colonised. The ongoing social revolutions and the wars of national liberation in Europe, Asia, and Africa are a product of the war and the violent military colonisation suffered by those regions. Latin American workers must give the battle now.

The Yankee workers themselves, who did not suffer war in their territory, cancel today this privilege with the decrease of their real wages and the increase of exploitation to pay for the most fabulous arms race in history. And this production of armaments will lead to ruin, not only the economy of the workers but the Yankee economy itself.

Despite the world revolution, Yankee imperialism has won a great victory in Argentina by overturning Peron. But this last Yankee victory of having broken Argentina, the most independent of the Latin American countries, also presents its counterpart.

11 General **Carlos Ibáñez del Campo** (1877–1960) was a Chilean Army officer and political figure. He served as President twice, first between 1927 and 1931, and then from 1952 to 1958.

12 **Jose Maria Velasco Ibarra** (1893–1979) was an Ecuadorian politician. He became president of Ecuador five times, including 1952–1956. Velasco led the Ecuadorian political scene for a great part of the 20 century.

13 **Gualberto Villarroel Lopez** (1908–1946) was a Bolivian military man and politician. He was the head of state of Bolivia from 20 December 1943 to 21 July 1946. A reformist, he was sometimes compared with Argentina's Juan Domingo Peron

All of Latin America is being colonised and, therefore, also, all of Latin America is being united against its common enemy and will resist, thus united, the colonisation plans. Indeed, previously the anti-imperialist disputes, and also the relative strength of some Latin American countries, divided the anti-imperialist struggle by countries and by zones. During the 1930s, for example, the anti-imperialist struggle in Central America compared to Argentina was very different. In Argentina, the fundamental struggle was against British imperialism and the Roca-Runciman treaty; in Central America, it was fundamentally against Yankee imperialism. Mexico, during the same decade, was fighting against British imperialism. It is worth noting that before the total success of the Yankee colonisation, each country was a separate case in its anti-imperialist struggle. Today all Latin Americans, without exception, we have been Central-Americanised, colonised by the same imperialism and essentially with the same tools. The struggle for Latin American national independence takes on almost total equality, uniformity, and unity. Something else: the most advanced and numerous working classes in Latin America, the Chilean, Argentine, Brazilian and Mexican, who had turned their backs on one another, now find themselves that with the gravest problems each of their countries endure they are pushed to join with the workers of the other Latin American countries.

If the Yankees tolled bells to celebrate the win over Argentina, we believe those bells sounded more like requiem than victory. The Yankees with this victory have united all of Latin America in the anti-imperialist struggle. And, what is fundamental, they have united Latin American workers with their strongest sectors: Mexicans, Brazilians and Argentines.

The integration of Argentina into the Yankee Pan-American Empire ends the process of forming that empire. This process, although it fortifies relatively imperialism, prepares its own grave because it unifies and combines in the anti-imperialist struggle countries like Guatemala and Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil, or Bolivia and Argentina. Specifically, Yankee imperialism, by including the most developed countries in its empire, reinforces the resistance to its domination. The formidable Bolivian workers can rest easy. Yankee imperialism in overturning Peron has done them a favour; the facts will convince the Argentine workers their situation is not an exception in Latin America and the fate of the Bolivian revolution is linked to their own by highlighting the common enemy: Yankee imperialism.

This revolutionary situation and colonisation plans will pose to our workers' movement, in the process of union reorganisation, the way to face these plans.

Only the Argentine working class in our country, through its organisations, is the one which can face this situation. It will have to plan a Conference of Latin American Workers' Organisations to form a true Latin American Workers' Confederation. The mentioned task can begin with the organisation of Regional Conferences of the most representative workers' organisations, to discuss common plans for the workers and peoples of the countries involved in the Conference. Argentine and Chilean workers find there is an economic complementation pact which does not apply. The Argentine and Chilean workers' organisations can and should hold a Conference to see how to implement this pact. This application would be immensely useful. Faced with the economic crisis in Uruguay, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina a conference of the same kind would be essential to discuss an action plan to benefit the economies of these countries. The condition for carrying out these Conferences should not be that each union leadership be necessarily anti-imperialist. It is enough they are authentic workers' organisations. The mere fact of bringing together the organised trade union movement in Latin America to discuss freely and democratically the common national problems is more anti-imperialist than a hundred anti-imperialist statements. That is, we put into practice the tactics of United Workers' Front on a Latin American or regional scale; we propose the need for a unity of the most representative workers' organisations for common actions on the problems that most concern them. This does not prevent us from linking these immediate problems to our anti-imperialist program.

Parallel to this effort to link the Latin American workers' organisations to an immediate and common program, we will develop an intense campaign to carry out an anti-imperialist Congress

of workers' and popular, trade union and political organisations against Yankee colonisation. This will unmask the opportunist character of the anti-imperialist tendencies of the bosses and the middle class. That is, our struggle against the Yankee plan for Latin American colonisation begins by the union organisation of the working class of our country and by trying to develop the unity of the Latin American workers' movement. This task is, in fact, truly anti-Yankee although, at first, in its statements, it may not be so. Along with this task, combined with it, we will raise the need for a Conference or United Front of all organisations that claim to be anti-imperialist. All these tasks combine with each other but the decisive one, actually, is the task favouring the reorganisation and unity of the Argentine and Latin American workers' movement because only the Latin American working class will be able to defeat the Yankee imperialism.

## 8. Let's fight to reconquer our national independence

The current government has ratified the OAS treaty that Peron had signed. This has historic importance: it means entering fully into the legal and political structure set up by Yankee imperialism to exploit and dominate the Latin American countries. With this treaty and the one that completes it — the bilateral one —, our country, like the other Latin American countries, loses the most important attributes of its political and economic sovereignty.

The most important attribute of sovereignty is to have the right and independence to declare when you are attacked or when you must go to war. We have just lost those attributes. But the concessions made by the Aramburu government do not end there. Who will dictate the general lines of national trade? Sooner or later, it will be extra-national bodies.

Military bases will have to be given to imperialism within the national territory if the bilateral treaty is signed. All of this means, plain and simple, our country has already lost much of its sovereignty and political independence and, moreover, is in the process of losing what little remains of it. That is, it has transformed into a semi-colony and is quite close to becoming a colony. This is tragic for our nation, which achieved and defended its national independence for over 150 years.

Latin America was colonised mainly by two empires: Spanish and Portuguese. This colonisation was a consequence of European capitalist development; hence, all of Latin America has been an appendage of that capitalism: this was its strength and its weakness. Unlike Asia or Africa, from the beginning, Latin America organised all its fundamental production for the world market. Latin America was structured as a semi-capitalist region that produced for the world market in much higher amounts than other backward regions of the world. This situation allowed the emergence of a national capitalist class formed by the *estancieros* or miners, who conquered, together with the merchants, the independence of the different Latin American countries.

Although relatively strong, these mining, *estanciero* or merchant bosses did not fight for the unity of our countries because they were extremely regionalist, as they were content to sell abroad. If in Latin America there had been a great industrial development and an industrial bourgeoisie, these bosses would have fought and possibly conquered Latin American unity. It was not an industrialised region but it was relatively advanced. This relative advance allowed our regions to become independent countries, but the backwardness prevented us from uniting as in the United States in one great country. Had this been done, today the United States of Latin America would be as much as or more powerful than the United States of America.

The relative strength of our Latin American countries prevented them from being included in the division of the world carried out by the great imperialist powers since the middle of last century. This relative strength allowed not only to resist the imperialist pressure but to manoeuvre between the different imperialisms to defend the national independence.

But since the early 1880s, true imperialism has appeared on the scene of every Latin American country: financial capital. From that date, the great empires enter our country not only

with merchandise or with warships but with capitals. The influence of these capitals penetrates all spheres. This is how they achieve docile governments that make fabulous concessions.

In our country British imperialism achieves most of the railways; later it will snatch the famous Mitre law granting shameful privileges to the English railways. Our country becomes dependent on England. We are independent and democratic, but in reality, with or without fraud, the economic and financial interests of the United Kingdom rule.

The United States and other empires dispute the British supremacy in Latin America and in our country. But, with ups and downs, we remain a British dependency until 1933.

On that date took place an event of great historical importance, although not as much as it is now when it joins the OAS Treaty. The government of General Justo, controlled by the conservatives, decides to enter the British economic empire and signs the Roca-Runciman treaty.

We were, thus, transformed into a British semi-colony. Today the OAS Treaty is signed and it goes unnoticed. For us to realise the importance of the change produced, let's recall that when Yrigoyen promised to deliver the crops to European countries during the war, without charging them immediately, all the Argentine bosses clutched their heads and raised a hue and cry for what they considered a true surrender. And let us not mention what was said about the agreement Yrigoyen signed in his second presidency, guaranteeing the British the purchase of rails in England for a railway under construction, that clause was considered a capitulation of Argentine sovereignty.

Soon after, in 1933, the Roca-Runciman treaty was signed. It was no longer the rails for a railway but the delivery of the national economy to British imperialism. It guaranteed the entry into the country —without paying taxes— of more than half of the British products, besides the most benefited nation treatment. With that treaty, the country was incorporated — there are no two ways about it — into the British colonial empire from the economic point of view. The pact originated a true national storm.

Today history repeats itself, but in a much more tragic way: nobody, except for us, says or does much against this surrender. And this despite not only entering the economic sphere of Yankee imperialism but also its sphere of political influence and its defensive mechanism. The conservative government did not politically compromise the country; this could maintain relations and the government it wanted; there was no pact to prevent it. The Roca-Runciman treaty was purely economic. Our country lasted as a British semi-colony in this situation for 14 years.<sup>14</sup>

From 1947 the weakness of British imperialism, coupled with our economic development, allowed the Roca-Runciman treaty to die by starvation, without pain or glory. The Roca-Runciman treaty was accompanied in its burial by the railways and other properties of the British Empire. We must say all these losses took place with the greatest order, and through all kinds of concessions that Peron made to the British. That is, at no time was there a fight or anything that resembled it. But in any case, the fact British imperialism weakened and our country strengthened allowed us to leave behind our situation of British semi-colony.

14 Marxists have not defined with absolute precision the differences between a dependent and a semi-colonial country. This is not coincidental. Only now, at the height of the colonial and semi-colonial revolutions, does the need for the strictest terminological precision arise. A colonial country is ruled by another country. India when it was ruled by a Viceroy, and today British Honduras, are clear examples of a colonial country: the government does not belong to the country in question. A semi-colonial country is one that has its economic or political independence cut but not totally alienated.

The Central American countries for years had treaties with the United States that gave imperialism the right to control customs and the economy of those countries. They were semi-colonial countries since, although the Yankees did not appoint the government, the treaties almost completely cut off their political and economic sovereignty.

When foreign capital dominates a country but this does not have pacts that limit its political and economic independence it is dependent (the term economic semi-colony has also been used). All these forms are combined. A country can dominate others politically, that is, be imperialists, and in turn be economically dominated by another. Czarism or the Turkish Empire are clear examples of this. On the contrary, it can be a great economic power, like Canada, but, at the same time, be a semi-political colony of the British Empire. Although what always prevails is not the political form but the economic content; these often enter contradiction giving contradictory combinations. NM

From then on, a dynamic and fluid course opened. Between 1947 and 1949, England still had a predominant influence but its extreme weakness, and also the pressure of Yankee imperialism, changed this situation. Between 1949 and 1951, Argentina moves from the economic sphere of British imperialism to the Yankee orbit. This is materialised in the fact the United States becomes the main country in the Argentine economic exchange and the only country providing it with an important loan. At the stage when we became independent from England, the foreign debt was recovered; but from 1950 the country begins to be mortgaged by the United States.

All this stage is contradictory because Peronism tries — although with bosses' methods — to curb as much as possible the Yankee colonisation. But, unable to plan and organise the national economy, as well as to realise the unity of Latin America, Peronism inevitably enters the Yankee orbit. The signing of the OAS treaty, like the oil pact and the US\$ 60 million loan for blast furnaces, prepare the conditions for Yankee colonisation.

The government of Eisenhower, at the same time it has relations with Peronism, carries out a policy aimed at its liquidation. The concessions that Peron made to the Yankees did not favour him as he believed but, on the contrary, they sank him.

With the fall of Peron, the conditions are given for the almost total delivery of the country. This is how the OAS treaty is ratified. And there is no doubt it will be followed by the bilateral pact regulating the OAS treaty.

We are much worse than when we were colonised by the British because if from 1949 to 1955 we have been a country dependent on Yankee imperialism, from the economic point of view, since the fall of Peron we have also become an economic and political semi-colony. It is no longer a question, like with the Roca-Runciman treaty, of the delivery of the country's economy but also of having lost the right to decide when we should go to war. We have entered the defence mechanism of a foreign empire: the United States of America.

The struggle to regain national independence — which we lost badly between the years 1880–1890 first, and later during 1930–1933— nowadays comes to the fore. We do not want to be tied to the United States; we want to be free and be united to our brothers in Latin America.

To achieve this unity, it is necessary to break the pacts that unite us with Yankee imperialism and join all the countries that fight for their independence (those Latin Americans in the first place, and then those of the whole world).

The fight will be hard; Yankee imperialism will not give up its prey easily. But this deserves a separate chapter in which we will study the political plans of Yankee imperialism and the best way to frustrate them.

## **9. The reorganised workers' movement must oppose an anti-Yankee front**

The democratic republic was a luxury of the capitalist and imperialist regime in its heyday. Imperialism, thanks to the super profits it gained from the backward countries, could aristocratise sectors of the middle and working class of its country, which allowed it to count on the “democratic” support of its people for the imperialist projects.

Those super-profits that imperialism gained in the backward countries were used not only to aristocratise the workers of their own country but also to seek support in the dominated countries. The poorer imperialism was, the harder it was to “democratise” its domination in the countries it exploited.

At present, most of the imperialist powers are completely impoverished and have no possibility of aristocratising sectors of workers of the dominated country or even of their own country. An exception is Yankee imperialism, which is fabulously wealthy and does not extract most of its profits from the world market or its investments in it but from its own internal market. This situation does not exempt it but, on the contrary, it reinforces the tendency to conquer the world. The Yankees need to conquer and dominate all the countries of the world because their

internal market is becoming smaller every day and at the same time they cannot stop production since their goal is to get ever greater profits. This peculiar situation of Yankee imperialism, i.e., that it needs more and more of the markets of the whole world but, at the same time, it gets its main and fabulous profits from its own internal market, conditions its foreign policy.

Its tendency to dominate everything is irrepressible but it can combine this trend in times of great profits with another one of aid and concessions never seen. This aspect of the Yankee colonisation is the foreign counterpart of Roosevelt's domestic support policy (the Yankee governments had the luxury of paying a subsidy to their unemployed and farmers). Roosevelt's plans to help the domestic economy were only possible for US bosses because of their fabulous profits. The same thing happens today with the Yankee colonisation plans. They can combine these with some aid or protection of the country which they will colonise. But this aid is tragic for those who receive it. They have to be tied for life to the Yankee plans and when the crisis erupts in the United States these countries will be the first to suffer it.

Hence, Yankee imperialism strives to lead a liberal policy with the privileged layers of the proletariat and middle class of the countries it controls. Aristocratising these sectors helps to give it a mass base for its economic and political domination. But we must not forget that only Yankee imperialism is capable of carrying out this policy and only at this stage of enormous economic development of the Yankee economy. It cannot, therefore, be a permanent policy of Yankee imperialism; its only permanent policy is that of complete dominion, with or without a mass base, with or without class collaboration. Specifically today, in the whole world there is no other possibility of carrying out a policy of class collaboration than to depend on Yankee imperialism and the alms it throws out of its fabulous profits. Important sectors of the middle class who hate the working class and communism are willing to reach an agreement with the Yankees; this has allowed imperialism to be the base of support for centrist and liberal concentrations in Germany, Italy, and France. Yankee imperialism, with its economic aid and readiness for a counter-revolutionary war, is the only way out of the middle class to avoid falling into the hands of the workers' movement. Stalinism has facilitated this process by preventing with its policy that huge sections of the middle class lean towards the workers' movement.

The tactic of Yankee imperialism is skilful; let the middle-class parties fight among themselves for secondary problems — whether there has to be secular education, etc. — while making them form a coalition that matches, in essence, with the Yankee political needs: pro-Yankee treaties, etc. In this way it kills two birds with one stone; it distracts the public from its real plans, making those parties and the working class discuss secondary problems and, at the same time, makes them vote together in their favour on the fundamental issues. This is the reason and the basis of the great party coalitions that permanently rule Italy, France, and Germany.

In our country, Yankee imperialism has been fighting for 20 years to bring to government a democratic coalition giving a popular base to its colonisation. Initially, its manoeuvre was favoured both by the oligarchic nature of the conservative governments in the service of the British and by the popular front policy of Stalinism.

Alvearist radicalism, which had the way to government closed, as well as the sectors of the oligarchy going over to the Yankees, strengthened enormously the embryo of popular front. At first, the Socialist Party, servant of the oligarchy in the ranks of the middle class and the workers of Buenos Aires, did not want to enter the pro-Yankee popular front. The Alvearist radicals, the communists, and Workers Concentration were the base of the popular front. The people and the working class, confused by their leaderships as by their hatred of conservative governments, supported with all their strength that popular front. The historical merit of having opposed this front for anti-imperialist reasons belongs to FORJA [Force of Radical Orientation of Young Argentina], the left wing of radicalism, although it was not entirely conscious of the Yankee colonising offensive and maintained an abstentionist policy.

Yankee imperialism, by strengthening itself, was nucleating ever greater sectors of conservatism, i.e., of the oligarchy and, together with these, its servants in Buenos Aires: Repetto's socialists.

The famous political mystery of President Ortiz's blindness gains thus absolute clarity. Ortiz is the first member of the conservative ruling team to move to Yankee imperialism. Hence, he was supported by his usual enemies, Radicals and Socialists, and repudiated by his friends, the pro-British conservatives. The anti-Yankee sectors of the oligarchy liquidated Ortiz to prevent him, supported by the popular parties, from giving the country to Yankee imperialism. But it was not only he who jumped the fence; a little later, it is Minister Pinedo<sup>15</sup> who advises an agreement with the Radicals and is dismissed from the government. Pinedo is followed by the great politician and military of the Argentine oligarchy, General Justo, who supports Brazil in its entry into the war and makes furious pro-Yankee proclamations. The communists begin to play his game as the man of the Popular Front.

They are too many coincidences; three conservative and fraudulent politicians become both "democratic" and "pro-Yankee" at the same time. The truth is they entered the Yankee combination to dominate the country. Ortiz and Justo die, but the struggle for the structuring of the pro-Yankee popular front continues; the oligarchy is becoming increasingly isolated and the conservatives rule only with their most rancid mainstay: the most colossal landlords in the country, and with the Castillo government. But here again, the pressure of Yankee imperialism is reflected and a sector of the landlords linked to the big industry want an arrangement with Yankee imperialism to receive capital and machinery. A product of all this pressure is the candidate who, with the support of Castillo, the conservative party launches: Robustiano Patron Costa.<sup>16</sup> Although this win of imperialism was indirect, since the large conservative landlords continue to rule, the army takes to the streets and imposes the Ramirez government on 4 June 1943, to prevent pro-Yankee conservatives from reaching the government.

But the arm-wrestling for the popular front continues then in another form: as an "antifascist democratic struggle" against the military government. These pro-Yankee struggles are carried out, as always, by the Stalinists and Alvearist Radicals.

This pro-Yankee popular front was national; it was not an extension of the international popular front formed to crush Nazism first and the European and world revolution later. But there is a change in the situation: the working class is tired of the Socialist and Communist leaderships and its composition has changed, they are new workers, newcomers from the countryside. This working class begins to enthusiastically support the social demagogy of the military government which, feeling weak in the face of Yankee economic and political pressure, appeals to the workers and their trade union organisations, independent of Stalinism and pro-Yankee socialism.

From this date, it will be the new Argentine working class which, through its political and union support for Peronism, will stop the plans of Yankee imperialism and its political spawn, its attempt at a popular front — the Democratic Union, the *contras*.

For the 1946 elections, the Yankees finally organise their popular front with the support of all the traditional parties. However, the working class defeats this front and with it, again, Yankee imperialism.

Peronism reaching the government does not daunt Yankee imperialism, which continues to encourage the *contras*. As these cannot come to power through the electoral route, they prepare the coup against Peronism. But within the *contras* there is a phenomenon detrimental for the imperialist plans; the Radical party cannot fail to reflect the profound changes that have

<sup>15</sup> **Federico Pinedo** (1895-1971), was a lawyer, politician, historian, parliamentarian, and Argentine economist. He served as Minister of Finance in the governments of Augustin P. Justo and Roberto Marcelino Ortiz during the so-called Infamous Decade.

<sup>16</sup> **Robustiano Patron Costas** (1878-1965) was an Argentine politician and businessman. He was Governor of Salta, provincial senator, and national senator. In addition, he presided over the National Democratic Party for which he was a candidate for president of the Nation in 1943.

taken place in the structure of the middle class, as well as in its lower sectors, and it divides. The Intransigents, slightly nationalist, managed to control the party leadership. Since then, the pro-Yankee Democratic Union considers Intransigence as an unsafe ally. Subsequently, the Democratic Union is strengthened by the adherence of the Church to the preparations for the coup, since it moved with weapons and baggage to the side of Yankee imperialism.

As of 1949, the coup forces are reinforced by the sectors of the bosses, including the anti-Yankee ones, who disagree with Peron workerist policy in this new era of lean years. These sectors, and also the Intransigents, are unsafe allies for the Yankee colonisation plan and for their pro-Yankee centrist popular coalition plan. Both the Intransigents and the Catholic nationalists, with their bosses' or employees' hatred of "blacks", were against Peronism but not for total servility to the Yankees.

The axis of the Democratic Union has been the Radical Unionists and the Socialists of Repetto. The Christian Democratic Party, which is firmly aligned with Yankee imperialism against the USSR and the masses throughout the world, has recently joined them. This was the basis of the coup d'état against Peron. This is also the basis of the new government. The Advisory Board is the attempt of all sectors to provide "democratic" electoral support to Yankee colonisation. It is with this goal the Advisory Board patiently fomented all hatred towards the Peronist government, for its hatred of the workers, and all sympathy with the United States towards a policy of contra unity, of a broad anti-Peronist popular front. After so much hard work, the Yankees achieved their goal: to overturn Peron, trying later to give a popular base to the new government through the Advisory Board.

For the next elections, Yankee imperialism will endeavour to structure a centrist current or, if it can also achieve it, two. If it manages to structure two centrist currents controlled by it, it will be in heaven and its manoeuvre will give ample result. That is, in "free democratic elections" it will achieve, by any of the two routes, a pro-Yankee servile government.

Therefore, all its goals aim, at this time, to ensure the ruling Democratic Union is opposed by a friendly political current; hence, its goal to eliminate the Frondizist current or to tame it. The most possible variant is for the State Department to achieve its objectives and oppose, to the pro-Yankee Democratic Union, a candidate ultimately also pro-Yankee. In short, Yankee imperialism has managed to impose its centrist coalition on the government, the Democratic Union, its popular front, but since it is not sure of its electoral victory, it tries to oppose to its ruling centrist coalition another servile political current. All the hesitations and delays of the government in electoral matters have two goals: to strengthen the pro-Yankee popular democratic coalition (Socialists, Radical Unionists, Christian Democrats) and to achieve the opposition of another current which will serve in a future electoral process. Once these conditions are met, and only then, the Aramburu government and its mentor, the State Department, will give elections. Those are their intentions but the struggle against Yankee imperialism of the working class and the people and the opposition of the bourgeois sectors to the Yankee plan can force the government to change its plans, as well as to enable the defeat of these.

The reorganised Argentine union movement has to defend national independence with the same weapons: we must unite around the union movement all those who oppose the Yankee colonisation and its political plan; we must develop every friction of a personality or institution with imperialism, so it becomes a firm anti-imperialist opposition. For the front to be solid it is necessary that all the organisations that form it have absolute political independence to criticise whoever they want. In addition, the structure of the front should be based on clear and precise goals. Today, for example, we must propose this front to all the personalities and organisations that in one way or another have criticised the pacts signed with the Yankees.

The working class and its organisations must understand that Yankee colonisation is the main cause of all the ills suffered by the country and the workers. In their activity, they should draw a demarcating and precise line throughout the country: pro and anti-Yankee. As champions of the

anti-Yankee struggle for the defence of national independence will emerge the working class, its organisations and our party, the only one that unmasked Yankee colonisation.

Linked to the struggle against the Yankees, but without identifying with it, is the struggle for democratic freedoms.

## **10. Let's fight for the repeal of the state of siege and for the release of political and social prisoners**

The workers must understand the struggle for democratic rights in its real meaning, to have an accurate notion of their importance.

Bourgeois democracy, with its postulates of equality, broad freedom of speech, press, meeting, etc., is currently virtually unknown. We have to start by saying what this phenomenon is because of. In a general way, to the fact those democratic rights and freedoms, if tolerated by the bourgeois governments in their full validity, or at least in the fundamental, would bring as a consequence a danger of death for their ruling. As for the semi-colonial or colonial countries, we can state that at no time have they enjoyed democratic rights. This has been the case because imperialism, a dominant factor in the economy and politics of the backward countries, together with the bosses repress, either directly or indirectly, the democratic rights because they are a terrible weapon in the hands of the masses for their anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist mobilisation. Imperialism, united with the oligarchy, controls the news agencies, the supply of paper, etc., so everything that is known in these countries, or a little less, is what imperialism and the oligarchy want to be known. The national bosses, sold out and accomplices of imperialism, are not the best suited to fight for these rights, as they did when, as an oppressed class they had to fight their way against the absolutism of the monarchy.

Hence, fundamentally in the colonial and semi-colonial countries with the double bosses-imperialist control, the rights fall on deaf ears. To prevent the mobilisation of the masses, as well as their organisation and union or political expression, bosses and imperialism almost constantly ride roughshod over democratic rights as well as the much-vaunted "human rights". This is why democratic rights in these countries are practically unknown and, at the same time, they are increasingly being held back in the imperialist metropolises themselves.

Argentina has been no exception to this lack of democratic rights. On the contrary, it has been one country that has lived almost permanently subjected to presidential arbitrariness. Except for the 14 years of Radical governments, there has not been any other widely democratic period. It is because to the combination of the exploitation of the landowners, the bosses and imperialism — that all the Latin American countries suffered and that, in general, crushed any possibility of democratic life — specific conditions were added.

The fact all the national economic life has revolved around a gigantic city-port, Buenos Aires, but the bosses and landowners sectors existing in the country were very numerous and even antagonistic forced and allowed to emerge from the beginning strong and centralised governments that crushed all democratic possibility to regulate the contradictory relations of the different sectors of the bosses, among them and with imperialism.

Yankee imperialism and its kindred tendencies in the country have constantly raised the problem of democratic rights. The most serious charge they made to Peronism was precisely of being a staunch enemy of democratic rights and democracy. What do democratic rights mean for Yankee imperialism and its national agents: unionists, Socialists, Christian Democrats? Let's see. Democracy prevails within the United States as a political system but it is well to clarify this does not prevent the government from having anything to do with the interests of the workers or the exploited sectors of the people. On the contrary, the reign of democracy is accompanied by the greatest tyranny of big capital and the monopolies. Democracy, as the Yankees understand it, does not prevent blacks from being treated just a little better than wild animals. It prevents neither that

during strikes democratically decreed in meetings of workers these strikers are beaten and even killed by the forces of democratic government. Nor that the activity of the revolutionary tendencies is blocked in a thousand ways, or that the Taft-Hartley Act<sup>17</sup> against the workers' organisations is applied. Or that the multimillionaire bosses equip true armies of terrorists against striking workers. In the same way, it allows its "democratic" troops to support the biggest undemocratic assassins, such as Castillo Armas, Franco, or Chang Kai-shek, or to support the Aramburu government. Of course, let's not forget to point out in Russia there is no democracy.

So let's go slowly. In general, democracy or democratic rights mean the right of any person to publish what they want through the press, radio, etc. Also, to elect and be elected to government, or to vote for the party one wants, also to form one. It also means the right to associate with people who have common interests for the defence of those interests, with no one preventing it. Of all these rights, which ones are those defended by Yankee imperialism in the country for years, with the fairy tale it is democratic? Fundamentally, freedom of the press and freedom to choose for the government the "democratic" elements, i.e., the elements who will practice from the government a policy favourable to imperialism. So much so that the word "democratic" has become synonymous with Pro-Yankee and especially anti-communist. In this way, through the freedom of the press, i.e., through the right to be allowed to use all the paper that can be paid — and this has no limit because they have enough money —, Yankee imperialism wanted to penetrate all the pores and all the activities of the country, evicting the pro-British oligarchy first and then Peronism. As, in addition, imperialism controls all the information outlets, it can make the country aware of what it wants and ignore everything it is willing to keep ignored. Thus, Yankee imperialism can carry out an in-depth campaign against every government that resists it, controlling information from all over the world, buying politicians to give a "democratic" veneer to its penetration and colonisation plans. Hence, Yankee imperialism has demanded democratic rights in all the countries it did not completely dominate, like ours, in order to better penetrate and dominate them. In countries already dominated, instead, it imposes, if necessary, a dreadful dictatorship and even comes to the murder of the best anti-imperialist and revolutionary fighters.

Specifically, we can say the Yankees are striving to conquer fundamentally two types of freedoms in countries they do not dominate: freedom of the press and electoral freedom. Precisely these two freedoms are the least effective, the most hypocritical. Because freedom of the press, in this society ruled by the big capitals, basically benefits those who have enormous presses and paper. This is how public opinion can be shaped. The Yankees are champions in this trade. Electoral freedom is not lagging: the parties need fortunes for their campaigns that only the big imperialist interests can supply. Thus a parody of democracy is offered every four or five years.

This is the form of democracy defended by Yankee imperialism and the political parties that support their plans inside and outside the country. But as soon as the workers attack them in their political and union movements, they completely forget all democracy. When *La Prensa* was expropriated, all the pro-imperialist organs raised a hue and cry. But when at the same time there were no freedoms in the country for the workers' press, or strikers were imprisoned or suppressed, nobody remembered to mention it. Currently, the "democratic" and pro-imperialist government has taken away its publications from the GGT, which does not have a single legal organ. At the same time, it has liquidated the Peronist party, which represents 90 per cent of the working class and 70 per cent of the population; but do not think this is an attack on democratic rights but a measure of democratic and anti-totalitarian sanitation. In short, it means a measure favourable to the "democratic" pro-Yankee sectors. It means Yankee imperialism is in favour of democracies and democratic rights while it keeps curbed the workers' or anti-imperialist movement; but as soon as these are a danger, then the meaning of the word democracy changes. From then on, it does not mean everyone has the right to say what one wants but that one has to say what does not harm the imperialist domination. Thus this explains how, in the name of democracy, imperialism

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<sup>17</sup> The *Labor Management Relations Act* of 1947, better known as the **Taft–Hartley Act**, is a United States federal law that restricts the activities and power of labour unions. Senator Robert A. Taft and Representative Fred A. Hartley, Jr. sponsored the act, it became law 23 June 1947 and is still effective.

fighters against the “barbarities of fascism” and at the same time carries out the humanitarian function of killing thousands of men and women with a single atomic bomb. This is why Peron was not democratic when he hindered the action of the opposition parties and this government it is democratic when not only does that but it plain and simply suppresses the majority party and liquidated the workers’ organisations. Synthesising: the imperialism of all the principles of freedoms defends those who ensure their dominance and in the same measure; once that measure has been overcome, then democracy for them is transformed into fascism or demagoguery.

Instead, we defend democratic rights and do so with a consistent approach. That is why, when Peron liquidated democratic rights, we raised the struggle for them and the release of political and social prisoners without discrimination. We demanded complete freedom of the press, even for the bourgeois organs, and absolute freedom for the workers’ press. Not because we agreed with the imperialist penetration but because we understood that Peron’s police methods were the best way to facilitate this penetration. Indeed, we did not have the slightest trust in the Peronist government, which made enormous concessions to imperialism, and therefore we would not let it determine which organs were pro-imperialist and which were not. Had it been a workers’ government, the situation would have been different. In this way, defending the broadest democratic rights, we fought for the workers’ press to have them and thus be able to stop the Yankee offensive on the country, which the police and bosses methods of Peron facilitated. That is, we did not defend the broader democratic freedoms for the reasons and with the methods with which Gainza Paz<sup>18</sup> did but for the opposite ones. He defended the right of imperialism to penetrate the country and colonise us; instead, we defended this right for the workers’ press, for an authentic fight against the penetration. Unfortunately, our forecasts have been fulfilled. At the moment, any publication that, in one way or another, attempts against the Yankee plans of colonisation sponsored by the government is considered “frankly subversive” and it is seized.

The problem of “democratisation” has been explained by a military comptroller to the trade union leaders who asked him for free and democratic elections, in these terms: “No gentlemen; democratising the unions does not mean giving democratic elections but putting at their head ‘democratic’ elements, that is, anti-Peronist and anti-Communist.” We have nothing more to add.

Some sectors of the working class and the vast majority of the middle class have clashed with Peronism not only for economic reasons — when seeing the working class relegated them— but also for political reasons: the lack of democratic rights. We cannot fail to take into account this to reaffirm that if yesterday we were the champions of the struggle for democratic rights, today we still are. In this regard, we will make the greatest efforts to force those who were against Peron for democratic reasons to be consistent and join us, at the present moment, in the struggle for the most elementary democratic rights that the current government has severed.

Therefore, we demand from these contra sectors they be authentically democratic and raise the legality of the Peronist party and fight with us to achieve it. We demand these “democrats”, in quotation marks, they be truly democratic.

For us, it was as democratic to fight under Peronism for the freedom for all the parties, or for democratic elections in the unions, as it is now to fight for the legality of the Peronist party and the withdrawal of the union takeovers. We believe that if it was undemocratic under Peronism to prevent the free action of the different groups, including the Socialists of Repetto even if they had 10 members, we now believe it is much more anti-democratic to suppress a party supported by 90 per cent of workers and 70 per cent of the population. Even if this is done in the name of democracy.

This is why we call upon all those who truly are for democracy and the full democratic rights to fight for them. And, fundamentally, to fight for the freedom for the workers’, revolutionary, and anti-imperialist press, to ensure the victory against the pro-Yankee “democratic” sectors. Therefore, we give immense importance to this task. We, the workers, need like no one else of

<sup>18</sup> **Alberto de Gainza Paz** (1899-1977) was an Argentinean journalist and businessman. In 1943, he took on the role of editor of the ultra-conservative daily newspaper *La Prensa* from his uncle, Ezequiel Pedro Paz, who had retired for health reasons.

those freedoms to forge our mobilisation and for our political struggle. We ask for the release of all political and social prisoners and we fight for them because we know that of every ten, nine will be anti-imperialist workers. And if by chance the rest is pro-imperialist, they can only be repressed by the workers' courts and not by the bourgeoisie and its capitalist and pro-imperialist apparatus of repression.

We have already stated, in another part of our work, that Peronism was a totalitarian government that controlled everything. We have also explained the reasons for this control. This double character of Peronism has caused a lot of confusion. Indeed, we took to the bosom of the working class a very large campaign in favour of democratic rights. Our approach did not have a lyrical or sentimental character. On the contrary, our approach, although it may not have seemed so at the time, was based precisely on the true interests of the working class. From our premise that only the working class can solve their and the country's problems, we draw the conclusion it needed as no one else of the democratic rights to reach this result. We fought for the working class and its different sectors to freely discuss the solutions. That's why we asked for democratic rights for it and for the anti-imperialist organisations. The working class is not miraculous and can be wrong; precisely because of that, we wanted it to be free to discuss all the problems to find the best solutions.

Those who, under the label of Marxists or revolutionaries, tolerated Peron's totalitarianism and the liquidation of democratic rights have committed a historic crime against the working class since they have supported Peron's government and Aramburu's government in achieving their common goals: to prevent the free mobilisation of the working class. At the same time, they gave up the best tool to denounce Peronism in the bosom of the workers' movement itself. This same lack of freedoms prevented us from making further agitation against the coup d'état that was prepared and denouncing that the capitulations of Peronism facilitated the coup.

Specifically, democratic rights are an indispensable tool for the working class; it is the means of comparing different positions and adopting the one considered better and then rectifying oneself if one was wrong.

Today, the situation has become crystal clear. This government, which continues with all previous totalitarian measures, has posed with its reactionary and anti-working class measures the need for the most intransigent struggle for democratic rights. The working class now knows of what it means not having a state of siege in the country: peace and freedom to hold the campaign you want. That's why we have to fight tirelessly until we repeal the state of siege. But our struggle for democratic rights does not end there; rather, on the contrary, it begins. Together with the lifting of the state of siege, we urgently need the release of all political and social prisoners.

In this respect, our activity cannot be guilty of sectarianism or opportunism. Indeed, the revolutionaries have a tendency to be happy declaring "only the action of the working class will recover the comrades Ruanova,<sup>19</sup> Vandor or Marranti"<sup>20</sup> and do nothing to organise this action of the working class. When these "revolutionaries", who "only believe in the action" of the working class, do something they become shameless opportunists who only negotiate.

The problem of the prisoners, the most felt at this moment, like the other democratic tasks, must be a reason for the revolutionaries to show they are the most capable in the organisation of the working class. This does not mean we do not negotiate. On the contrary, at the present moment of the workers' defeat it is almost obligatory to negotiate; however, what is essential is not this but to organise the workers so they are the ones who negotiate. Workers' commissions must be formed by the factory and by the union to fight for the release of their comrades. In the beginning, the activity of these committees will be to inform and negotiate; this, although it may not seem like it, is a tremendous weapon; keeping the working class informed about the prisoners and their situation, means to permanently agitate the problem.

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19 **Oswaldo Ruanova**, metalworker, leader of Tamet, militant of POR.

20 **Ruben Marranti**, metalworker of Philips, in the same section as Vandor, of whom he was a friend, a militant of POR.

This, however, is only part of reorganising the workers' movement. It must be the workers' movement reorganised in their unions, or in the process of being it, who will face the fight against the state of siege, as well as the battle for full democratic rights in the country and the end of political and social prisoners.

## 11. The main democratic task is to win legality for Peronism

We have already said on numerous occasions that Peronism had contradictory aspects. We now have to specify its character as a political movement. The fact we fight for its legality as our main democratic task does not mean we capitulate to it or we silence our criticisms.

Peronism has been and is essentially of the bosses. It permanently defended the right of the bosses to keep exploiting the workers. In the same way, it defended their right to keep and increase their profits. These two facts are enough to define it. But for a precise characterisation, this is not enough: we also have to see how it differs from other bosses' parties or movements. It was a capitalist government that sought and gained the support of the workers to ensure its friends, the bosses of the country, did not have to share their profits with the imperialist bosses, or at least to give them as little as possible.

But nowadays the bosses do not want a government that collaborates with the working class because the economic situation makes them want to make the working class pay all the expense of the crisis. This is why these bosses have broken with Peronism. Nor do they want this friendship with Peronism to prevent them from reaching an agreement with Yankee imperialism, which is the only one that can save them from the crisis and sustain their profits. However, with Peronism fallen, some of these sectors do not get along with the new government because it makes too many concessions to the Yankee imperialists, treating them better than they are treated. In their friction with the government, they try to find, like Peronism did, the support of the working class, although controlling it. If the split of these bosses' sectors with imperialism takes place and they try to defend national independence in something, then the emergence of a more or less moderate nationalist tendency is inevitable. In these conditions, Peronism, as a current of the semi-nationalist bosses, can once again take on new strength and even return to power if the working class joins that current. This may happen, regardless of whether Peron returns. This is a possibility. The other one is that faced with a fabulous worker and anti-capitalist pressure, Yankee imperialism itself plays the Peron card rather than losing everything. We must bear in mind that, for Yankee imperialism, Peron is not an enemy but a dubious friend; who, at the same time he resisted it, also made it concessions of fundamental importance. Besides, Peron has made and continues to make statements favourable to imperialism.

Since the Argentine market is not complementary to the Yankee market, its dominance cannot be established exclusively in any economic sector of the country, except for the financial capitalists representing the Yankee banks. This is a weakness for imperialism and, at the same time, it is its strong point, since it allows it to manoeuvre with all sectors. Until 1945 the Yankees speculated with the industrial bosses. They promised capital, raw materials, and so on. Today they promise tractors to the agricultural-livestock bosses and fundamentally to the former. At the same time, it speculates with all sectors of the national bosses. This wide field of manoeuvre of Yankee imperialism can allow a change of policy of imperialism in relation to Peronism, if necessary. Facing a serious revolutionary situation in the country, Yankee imperialism can play the card of a return of Peronism, through a prior agreement with it, to paralyse the revolutionary rise of the working masses. Precisely because Peronism does not directly represent a class but a general desire for independence of the Argentine bosses, it can happen the same contradiction that threw it out of power return it to power in case of a large mobilisation of the working class. This contradiction Yankee imperialism—working class continues to exist and has full validity.

The workers' movement has not exhausted the Peronist experience, this is undeniable. Peronism was thrown out of government just when it began to lose its prestige and show its true

role as a bosses' agent. The fall of Peronism frustrated this experience of the workers' movement. This is why we believe the working class should set its future policy in a widely democratic manner. We accompanied our criticisms of Peronism with a no less relentless defence of the right of the Peronists to have their own political organisation; to act with complete freedom and to return to government if the majority of the working class supports them. We base this on a fundamental principle of the workers' and revolutionary movement: convincing the comrades while respecting their majority will. This proposal to fight for the legality of the Peronist party is not a statement for May Day. It is a point of our program and, like our entire program, for action. Hence, we propose a united front to the workers' and anti-imperialist organisations to fight for the legality of the Peronist party. This fight will help to show to the Peronist ranks the enormous importance of the democratic rights that Peronism cut in an unscrupulous way.

This does not mean we will reach electoral agreements with Peronism; neither does it mean we will propose Peronist candidates to the masses; we have absolutely no political trust in Peronism or its men. Far from it, we will fight against Peronism and its leadership. The fact most of the workers are Peronist forces us to play for the legality of the party, but it does not force us to capitulate to its ideology. We have trust in the Peronist workers: that's all.

At the present moment, however, we are ready to reach a union agreement with the Peronist leaders, reflected in the Emergency Board of the CGT. Whether they accept us or not, we consider ourselves part of this movement. In this organisation of our class, we are willing to be disciplined if it takes part in politics, as we intend to propose. In other words, we will abide by the discipline of our class in the organisations of our class. But we will not abide by the discipline of the Peronist Party or any other organisation not of our class.

## 12. Radical Intransigence: an expression of the contradictions of the modern middle class

It has been a year since our Trotskyist tendency defined with absolute precision the crisis of Radicalism. Then we said its division into three wings was inevitable and there was no possibility of a permanent agreement between Frondizi and Sabattini, despite both calling themselves Intransigents.

For us, [Radical] Unionism reflected the highest sectors of the middle class and the bosses who unconditionally serve the Yankee colonisation. Intransigence obeyed the sectors of the middle class and the bosses who resisted, although in a lukewarm way, the colonisation. In turn, the division of Intransigence was because of the division between the anti-Yankee sectors themselves. An important part of them turned coats and changed to [Radical] unionism; others, mainly in the interior, conserved their Yrigoyenism reflected today in Sabattini. Instead, Frondizi reflects the lower sectors of the modern middle class: small industrialists, small traders, professionals, and employees. Hence the contradictions of Frondizism: on the one hand it wants a great development of the country; but on the other, it fears the working class.

Intransigence aspires to the middle class being the arbiter between Yankee imperialism and the country, and between the workers and the bosses. When it states the companies have to be directed by the bosses, the blue- and white-collar workers, it puts on an equal footing the bosses and blue-collar workers — the fundamental economic forces — with white collar workers, who in relation to the previous two have no strength. It tries to speculate with the antagonism between the bosses and the working class, to make the middle class the gainful intermediary. This eagerness to be well with God and with the devil, with the bosses and with the workers, characterises Intransigence and its social base: the middle class.

Also like the middle class, Intransigence divides more and more. The position of Intransigence in relation to the Advisory Board reflects this weakness of the middle class: on the one hand, they are on the Board and support the reactionary policy of the government; but on the other, they criticise the Board as an oligarchic organism. This happens precisely because they hate Peronism as much as they hate the working class and the Yankees. Hence, they collaborate with the government

to prevent the return of Peronism. That is why they tacitly approve the illegality of the Peronist Party, at the same time as the military takeovers in the unions. For their plans, they plan to make their way by agreeing with the anti-Yankee sectors of the army and the bosses.

The support of the middle class to the government subsists because it hopes the economic situation will improve for them. Despite this, successive concessions to Yankee imperialism have already provoked certain fissures, within the middle class and within Intransigence itself: the Gelsi<sup>21</sup>-Noblia group reflects this relative resistance to government measures. But, while being aware of the relative stability of the middle class, we will not stop working on it, to radicalise it more and more, given its importance in the future revolutionary crisis of the country. For this we start from a premise: only the organised working class can impose respect and leadership on the sectors of the middle class and, at the same time, lead it to a consistently anti-imperialist policy.

In this sense, our work on the middle class has a propagandistic and indirect character. Propagandist because in this first stage we can convince only its vanguard sectors, fundamentally students, that only the working class can achieve the independence of the country. Indirect because for us there is no more important task than the prior organisation of the working class to carry forward the anti-imperialist struggle.

To achieve this goal there is nothing better than the united front: to propose precise common tasks to the Intransigents on democratic or anti-imperialist issues — the problem of the state of siege, of the prisoners, of the legality of the Peronist Party, of the national elections or of the Constituent Assembly, the independence of the trade union movement, etc. These are points we can propose to sectors of the middle class to carry a policy that is consistently democratic and anti-imperialist and to unmask, at the same time, their coward and opportunist leadership.

### 13. The crisis of Stalinist communism

The Argentine Communist Party suffers a double crisis. The first is for having been an agent of the Yankee colonisation plan for a good period and for the lack of understanding of the Peronist phenomenon. The second comes from the world crisis of Stalinism, of which the last Congress of the Russian Communist Party is a manifestation.

With its popular front position, native Stalinism served imperialism and its colonisation plan for years. In 1945, Codovilla advocated for us to enter the Pan American organisations. They also accused as fascist the sectors of the bosses and the middle class that resisted the plans of imperialism. At the same time, they considered the Alvearist elements “good democratic people”, they called the Sabattinists fascists because of their slightly nationalist attitude and they accused FORJA, an anti-imperialist current of the middle class, of the same.

The Argentine Communist party controlled the vanguard of the Argentine working class, displacing the Socialists and anarchists. From a party of a few hundred militants, it had become the party of the Argentine working class.

The coup of 6 September liquidated Socialism and anarchism; the two great powers of the Argentine workers’ movement until then.

The failure to give importance to the approaching coup or later to the formation of an illegal apparatus liquidated anarchism, which led the trade union movement.

Linked to this process was another of fundamental importance: industrialisation, especially in the construction industry, which begins to work on a large scale. Anarchism did not cope with the industrial development which forced to centralise, homogenize, and discipline the action and where the acts of individual heroism have no greater importance.

Stalinist communism put itself at the head of the workers’ movement during the great strikes that began in 1933 and lasted until 1943. This wave of strikes was led by the Stalinists who at that time had an exaggeratedly revolutionary position: they refused to join any sector of the workers’

21 Celestino Gelsi (1915-1990) was governor of Tucuman between 1958 and 1962.

or anti-imperialist movements to perform common tasks. Besides its connection with the trade union movement, the Communist Party links with leftist currents of the Socialist Party. Indeed, in the world not dominated by fascism, the danger of it and also the great French strikes and the Spanish revolution produced left-wing currents in all of world socialism. The same thing happened in Argentina: a powerful left current emerged. This current began to look at the Communist Party as its revolutionary possibility. At first, this current understood, although not clearly, it was necessary to unite all the workers' organisations to confront the reactionary government. This position collided with the ultra-leftism of the Communist Party. But shortly after — in 1936 — the communist parties, on the orders of Moscow, took a turn to the right and reached agreements with the parties, including of the bosses, provided they were not fascists. Hence, the drive of the socialist left-wings to structure a front for the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggle is capitalised by Stalinism which is oriented to the union with bosses' organisations or with parties including agents of imperialism.

The Communist Party by taking over the socialist left prevents it from becoming a genuine revolutionary party, diverting it towards class collaboration. It does the same with the trade union movement. That is, the two phenomena that tended to the structuring of a great revolutionary party, the socialist left, and the rising trade union movement are recruited by the Communist Party, which since 1936 directs them towards class collaboration with the bosses and Yankee imperialism. Codovilla used the prestige of the Communist Party and the Russian Revolution to divert to the right the revolutionary inclinations of the socialist and union vanguard. The Communist Party thus becomes the transmission belt of Yankee imperialism in the workers' movement. Codovilla and Ghioldi<sup>22</sup> were the greatest defenders of the Democratic Union in the service of the Yankees. And if this policy did not sink them immediately, it is because the workers hated the fraudulent oligarchy in power.

But, since the coup of 4 June 1943, the situation has changed in all aspects. A new industrial layer emerges that has not gone through the school of the workers' union movement of the 1930s, or through that of the communist left. At the same time, the government is no longer an oligarchic, anti-popular and fraudulent government but a government that resists the Yankee plans of colonisation and has a mass base. The Communist Party becomes the spearhead of the Democratic Union in the service of the Yankees and this liquidates it as a great party of the working class. Stalinism, far from understanding the phenomenon of Peronism, considers it fascist and labels the Peronist workers as thugs. Thus, the Communist Party disappears from the historical scene as a great party of the working class. The numerous twists and turns to date — even taking the picture of Eva Peron saying she was an anti-imperialist fighter — have not reinforced its situation.

Lately, Stalinism was unable to reach an agreement with Peronism in the fight against the coup d'état. It had a policy of abstention: the coup was bad and Peronism was fascism or corporatism. It did not say Peronism was bad but that the coup was worse; they did not point out its ultra-reactionary nature and they washed their hands. After the coup, they carried out a double policy: *Nuestra Palabra* attacked the government, while *Propositos* praised Rear Admiral Rojas and the reactionary government.

Faced with the strikes by the CGT, far from clarifying that, although they were against their leadership, they supported the strikes because although resolved by the directors they were in defence of the organisation, they sabotaged the strike of 2 November and they joined at the last minute the one on 15 November. Neither did they accept the majority of the workers on 17 October and scabbed the strike. All this action weakened, even more, its position before the workers. At present, they do not carry out a thorough struggle for the legality of the Peronist Party. History and the workers do not forgive "smart alec" actions like this one of being silent on the legality of Peronism attempting to inherit it. Peronist workers and activists will sooner or later recognise as theirs our party, which was the only one that defended their right to legality as an organisation.

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<sup>22</sup> **Americo Ghioldi** (1899-1984) was an educator, leader of the Democratic Socialist Party, and publisher of the newspaper *La Vanguardia*. During the dictatorship known as the Process of National Reorganisation (1976-1983) he was the ambassador in Portugal.

We must not tire of explaining to the vanguard workers the true cause of the Stalinist process — its dependence on the manoeuvres of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Argentina, it has sunk by serving the Yankees and they did it because at that time the Yankees were great friends of Russia. Instead of helping Russia by making the workers of our own country fight the Yankees, they served the friends of the sinister Moscow bureaucracy, although those friends were the mortal enemies of our peoples and our countries.

Since the cold war, Stalinism of the entire world and of our country has lost its way and does not know what to say or do. Despite its efforts, it does not find whom to serve. Imperialism has encircled Russia and demands leonine conditions for an agreement. Hence the policy of Codovilla and Ghioldi in Argentina: on the one hand they threaten the Yankees and, on the other, they offer their services. But there is no doubt the real goal of Russia is to reach an agreement with the Yankees, who are their real enemies.

Today the world crisis of Stalinism has reached a paroxysm. Russia no longer is the only country independent of imperialism; now there are others. Now Stalinism cannot impose the fetish that Russia is unique and its bureaucrats are the only ones, but there is also another problem — the rise of the masses within Russia itself and its sphere of influence. In 1953, two strikes rattled the Russian bureaucracy: the East German strike in East Berlin and the one in Vorkuta labour camp, this within Russia itself. There were others in Czechoslovakia and other Eastern European countries. The crisis has also been reflected in the strongest parties in Europe: the French CP and the Italian CP. Left currents have emerged in both. Furthermore and to make matters worse for the bureaucracy, the revolution today goes through countries not controlled by the Stalinists, such as Algeria, where the masses are led by an authentic revolutionary party that sympathises with the Fourth International.

The leaders of Moscow feel how the ground shakes even in their own sphere of influence: Europe.

The XX Congress of the Communist Party has had one fundamental goal: to make the modern Russian middle class to close ranks around the government to give it a base that allows it to face the pressure of the workers of Russia itself. Hence, the myth of Stalin and of the sole leader is liquidated and a collective leadership is imposed. But this attack against Stalin and his myth accelerates the crisis of Stalinism on a global scale since it raises serious doubts among the best Stalinist militants.

This is the aspect of the problem we must point out without falling into the game of the Russian bureaucracy. We have to consider the communist militant is one because of his anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist position but possessed by an honest and deep revolutionary faith.

In the face of the fall of the Stalin myth, his faith falters and we are the only ones who can give him an explanation and point the way.

Only an enormously privileged class sector could raise this colossal myth. Nowadays it is the same sector of the class that, when verifying the myth does not save them either, liquidates it. They throw it out to save themselves. The same Soviet bureaucrats who fabricated the myth are those who throw it out.

We must fully attack the Stalinist myth, its opportunism, and its collaboration with the bosses. But considering its human material is valuable and sincere. Our tone must be adjusted to their mentality and their development. We must link to these militants and contact them trying to win them, although without losing much time since the fundamental thing is not the work on the CP but the reorganisation of the CGT and the trade union movement.

Many of those militants, the best, will become part of our ranks; it will be the best way to avenge the international crimes committed by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

## 14. Down with the sects!

In the left movement of all countries sects swarm. They present, in their most varied forms, common characteristics. Their existence obeys to deep reasons: fundamentally to the permanent political, economic and cultural contradictions of current society. A modern man — he may be a worker or a student — can suffer tremendously when he sees misery, injustices or the servility of culture or art. This understanding can take him or his friends to a position of rebellion. Here, he has a problem: How to solve these contradictions?

If you seek the solution by linking, to fight, to large sectors of workers, students, etc., then you will go to a broad party or organisation, although it may later end up in opportunism. But if instead of taking that path, you and your group lock yourselves up, taking as a fundamental question, not the social practice but the internal life of that group, then we will be in the presence of a well-known disease: sectarianism. And of a not less known form of organisation: the sect. Its defining character is religious, even if they are atheists to the core; they have fixed meeting days, a special rite and a great “priest” who can be “the greatest anarchist or Marxist in the world” or “Pablo’s<sup>23</sup> trusted leader” or “the nicest Oscar<sup>24</sup> of Buenos Aires’ cafés”.

To form a sect, you do not need to take these characteristics to extremes: you can publish a newspaper like that of the Salvation Army or the Praxis Group<sup>25</sup> and be a revolutionary religious sect to the bone marrow. This newspaper will not be picketed nor verified by the activity of the working class or of its vanguard but it will be a minimum part of the works of the sect, whose main activity will continue being to fortify its internal action, to gain adepts, etcetera.

A sect of rebels is the opposite of a revolutionary party. This is, first, an organ of clear, precise action; it is the conscious organ of the unconscious process of the working class that fights against the exploitation to which it is subjected. In the life of a workers’ party, everything has a final goal, which is external rather than internal: to help the process of class struggle and the liberation of the working class. Therefore, the workers’ party is fundamentally a body of combat. To win new elements, the formation of new leaders, or a theoretical thesis, they all have only one goal: to strengthen its external action by strengthening the working class. The militants and leaders of that party link their own trajectory to that of the working class.

A sect, on the other hand, does not reflect the class struggle in a real way but lives according to the contradictory essence of this society.

The sect tries to create, at the margin of this life, a pure test tube life, in the study of any professor of political philosophy, in the home of a Pabloite plenipotentiary, or in the UORist café of the day. Within sects, relationships are based on personal issues: they are appreciated, respected, or hated for issues that have nothing to do with class struggle. In a revolutionary party, personal relationships suffer the sway of the class struggle. A comrade who loosens in the class struggle is no longer respected; a leader who systematically leads strikes badly ceases to be a leader.

Our country is no exception: on the periphery of its left movement, countless revolutionary or pseudo-revolutionary sects swarm. The existence of these sects, as their relative importance, is encouraged by the tradition of revolutionary Marxism in our country; Argentina has never had a revolutionary Marxist mass party. The Marxist tradition in Latin America and in our country has been deplorable. Under Peronism the theoretical and political work of the organisations, although of enormous richness, was a true job of moles. This has favoured the life of the sects, which thus did not suffer the pressure of the theoretical and political struggle.

All this allowed the existence of a sect that took as its liturgy the only revolutionary program: that of the Fourth International. This sect is also composed of workers and invokes the Bolshevik

23 **Pablo**, main figure and leader of the “Pabloite” revisionist sect that emerged in 1952-53 in the ranks of the Fourth International, and whose liquidationist positions were fought to death by our party. NM

24 **Oscar**, leader of the Revolutionary Workers’ Union (UOR), a small sect that still exists in Argentina. NM

25 The **Praxis Group**, led by Silvio Frondizi, a tiny academic and professorial organisation that acts in some sectors of the Argentine student body. NM

form of organisation. It called itself *Grupo Cuarta Internacional* (Fourth International Group, GCI), it is currently called *Partido Obrero Revolucionario Trotskista* (Workers' Revolutionary Trotskyist Party, PORT) and it publishes *Voz Proletaria* [Proletarian Voice].

Shortly after GCI came out into the public arena, we made a prediction: either they overcome their sectarianism and, together with it, their theoretical and political opportunism or they will disappear from the process of class struggle. This has happened. CGI sect had a political success of undoubted transcendence: its internationalism; even if they were internationalists in the worst sense of the word. We, instead, have been nationalists in the best sense; which it did not stop being a defect. CGI claimed internationalism to live by translating what was said and done abroad. It thus eliminated all possibility of thinking and resolving on its own about the Latin American and country problems. The essentially correct principle that the international or the general determines the national was taken to the absurd by CGI, which from that moment neither did, nor thought, nor had any initiative on its own. When they decided to publish a theoretical magazine they did nothing but translate the French magazine of our International.

We made the reverse "mistake": we began at the national level trying to give us a program and to penetrate deeply into the working class of the country. We thus provided a program and an interpretation of the national and Latin American reality. From the Marxist analysis of the country, we reached the Latin American and from there to the world; we rode the reverse path, one that CGI has not travelled yet.

The sectarian internationalism of CGI based on our central program, not adapted to the national reality, was its downfall. Always attentive to the orders from above, they could not orient themselves when their orders did not arrive or were late.

When the Korean War broke out, few conscious workers were unable to understand its meaning; South Korea was a capitalist country and North Korea a workers' country. CGI, however, had to resolve the issue on its own and made a mistake: it supported South Korea. This only speaks of the sectarianism and lack of working class criteria of these people.

As of the Korean War, the cold war process accelerated enormously and, as a consequence, imperialism's threats to Russia; our international leadership then capitulates to Stalinism, instead of continuing to denounce it as the last resort servant of capitalism. The threats of war make it believe Stalinism has changed, that from that date it will have a leftist policy, and so on.

What seems an inexplicable question is quite simple: the international leadership of Trotskyism, like CGI here, could not apply the Trotskyist program, correct in general, to the new international situation; they defended and explained Trotsky better than anyone but they could not apply his program in a concrete way. Our international leadership, lacking experience of masses, was rather propagandist and more journalists than great leaders. The new era demanded Cannon-type leaders and not Germain-like journalists. After the war, there were two events of fundamental importance: the takeover of Eastern Europe by Russia and the liquidation of capitalism in that area and, also, in Asia the Chinese Revolution that liquidated the landlords, the strongest sectors of capitalism, and imperialism.

Initially, the leadership of our International ignored these two events because the Stalinists had led them. They forgot that Trotsky had argued both Stalinism and socialism, although they remained international agents of imperialism, could, under certain circumstances and in certain places, be able to fight against imperialism and capitalism. In the same way, a reformist trade union organisation under certain circumstances pressured by the workers' movement can break with the bosses and lead a strike. This happened in Europe and Eastern Europe; forced by the pressure of the masses and the tremendous crisis of capitalism in those countries, the Stalinists broke with the bosses and the imperialists.

When the International verified these facts, instead of defending the correctness of the Trotskyist analysis of the counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism, it struck a 180-degree turn and modified the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism. They interpreted this forced left-turn of Stalinism because of the pressure of the masses as a general change of Stalinism as a movement.

They carried this analysis to its ultimate consequences modifying the *raison d'être* of Trotskyism, which is the deeply counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism and reformism.

It was precisely the Trotskyist parties more closely linked to the workers' movement in their countries those which understood more readily the ideological smuggling of the international leadership. For an organisation really linked to the working class, the enormous possibilities of a Trotskyist work in the class are not a secret. The French, English, Ceylon and US Trotskyists strongly opposed the revisionist course of the international leadership and its leader Pablo. In Latin America, the Chilean POR and the Peruvian POR accompanied our organisation in opposition to this policy.

However, Pabloism not only capitulated to the Stalinist leadership but also to all the leaderships of the mass movement. It suggested all of them could be oriented in reality as "revolutionary" tendencies.

In Bolivia, Pablo and his servant Posadas carried out a suicidal policy by critically supporting the government of Paz Estenssoro. This policy is responsible for the crisis of the Bolivian POR, heroic vanguard of Latin American and world Trotskyism. In Chile, instead of working on the working class organised in their unions, Pablo and Posadas gave the line to enter the Popular Socialist Party and regretted not having entered to work on the Ibañista committees.

They carried out this task of revision and capitulation under the slogan "work where the masses are". But this is false: it is not just about working where the masses are but also about knowing with what policy. For the Pabloite international sect, it is unnecessary to fight to the bitter end the leaderships of the mass movement because they may become revolutionary: then what we must do is help them. For us, orthodox Trotskyists, what is at issue is to work where the masses are but to liquidate and fight their opportunist and counter-revolutionary leadership to give it a revolutionary leadership.

In Europe, they said the Stalinists, including their leadership, would go increasingly to the left. In Bolivia, they critically supported Paz Estenssoro; in Chile, they played the game of Ibañismo. But it is unnecessary to go far to prove the sectarian and opportunist politics of Pabloism; we have the most concrete example in the country. The fall of Peron was a historical fact; a revolutionary current that aspires to lead the working class must show its credentials. These cannot be other than forecasting each historic event of importance to the working class. Any trade union activist in danger of becoming dizzy with the international character of the Pabloite sect must ask: before 16 June, what were the revolutionary organisations that foresaw the fall of Peron and how to prevent the reactionary coup from being successful?

CGI — currently PORT, agent of Pabloism, and editor of *Voz Proletaria* — did not say a word about the possibility of a coup d'état and on how to prevent it.

This policy contrasts with ours, authentically revolutionary, which foresaw a year before 16 June the inevitability of the coup, as its victory, unless the masses were mobilised. We pointed out as a deadly danger the Peronist police methods, although we joined the Peronist workers in the campaign against clerical mobilisation. We were with our positions in the demonstration of 14 June and, in the first row, in the one on 16 June. Newspaper articles and flyers talk about our position. The Pabloite sect, instead, said nothing about it before 16 June. This is that we accuse of to the sect of Pablo and Posadas: they did not do, did not foresee, and did not say anything about the coup of 16 June.

Nowadays, the sectarianism of these people reaches the limit. On the one hand, they "forget" to state the fundamental thing is the reorganisation of the trade union movement. As a result, they embark on a criminal adventure at CARMA, the large metallurgical factory. They reject the proposal of the activists of the largest metallurgical factories of Avellaneda to reorganise the union on account that the fundamental thing was the political and not the union approach.

With this attitude, these sectarians sank the magnificent vanguard of CARMA, sending it to a movement with no support from the guild. But, as always, adventurism has another face:

opportunism. Yesterday CGI (PORT), editor of *Voz Proletaria*, capitulated before Peronism; today, it capitulates to Radicalism. Let's see.

For Radicals and Stalinists, there is no more important task than the immediate call to elections or a constituent without Peronism. In the best of cases, it is the most this government can give. *Voz Proletaria* raises the same and it is no coincidence. The sectarians, who for being "so revolutionaries" don't give a hoot about the reorganisation of the trade union movement and who left a meeting in which this problem was discussed, forget, instead, the workers hate this government and the same thing happens with 70 per cent of the population. Therefore, it is not about achieving a call for elections or a call to the constituent without Peronism but to organise and shape the organisation of the Argentine proletariat to overturn the reactionary government supported by a tiny minority of the population.

Situations like this are repeated in all the countries of the world: while Orthodox Trotskyism acts and predicts correctly the Pabloite sect contracts and contradicts itself, and is ignored by reality as payment for its own ignorance of it. Everywhere Orthodox Trotskyism is strengthening and Pabloism disappearing.

If we have dealt so much with this sect, it is precisely because of its international character. The program and the form of organisation of our International are used by this sect to attract magnificent working class and student fighters. So have to unmask them widely since they are more dangerous because they use an effective tool to poison with their sectarianism magnificent elements: our International and the name of Leon Trotsky. But the antidote for every revolutionist is very easy: to demand proof they did not say Stalinism was going to have a more leftist policy every day; that they did not critically support Paz Estenssoro in the government; that they did not support South Korea against North Korea and, already on the national level, to show they warned against the coup d'état of 16 June 1955 and they held a consistent policy against it.

There are and there will continue to be other sects as long as there are serious contradictions in society and there are rebels who do not find the path of revolutionary action in the masses. There are those tragicomic ones like that of Professor Silvio Frondizi, who discovered capitalism and imperialism exist and the workers' revolution solves all problems. There are also those miserable, ruinous, who revolve around café gossip with men like the UOR. There are those commercial-revolutionary ones, such as *Indoamerica*. But they all have something in common: whether or not they have workers, none has anything to do with the working class, its activity, and its problems.

The sooner the new activists who approach them turn their backs much better for the working class as a whole. The sooner they get closer to our national and international organisation, proven by historical events, the more confident we will be of the victory of the Argentine and Latin American revolution.

## 15. Where are we going?

We have reached a point of our report in which it is necessary to recapitulate and synthesise the most important conclusions in order to answer two troubling questions: Where is the country going? Where is the working class going?

Our country has entered into a deep economic, political, and institutional crisis. The real reason for this crisis, the deepest of its history, is the country is being rapidly colonised, politically and economically, by Yankee imperialism. This colonisation raises the tremendous dilemma of our decline as Yankee semi-colony or the recovery and subsequent overcoming of the old levels of independence and progress. This last variant is only possible by joining our country to the rest of the Latin American countries and this process can only be conducted and crowned by the working class. And this, although today it is not clearly observed because of the systematic concealment of the "serious press" and because Yankee imperialism is not forced to show, for the moment, the iron fist, it will be clear to all in the short term.

A serious crisis of any kind for the Yankees will drag the whole of Latin America, including our country, into the abyss. Then, the tragedy of our situation as a Yankee political and economic semi-colony will emerge. Let us suppose the United States enters into war and by the OAS treaty we are forced to go to it; only then will it emerge with crystal clear clarity that the Aramburu-Rojas government sold to the Yankees, as cannon fodder, the Argentine youth. The same will happen with the national economy: a violent Yankee economic crisis and our national economy will go to the most complete ruin; the country will then realise the significance for the national economy of the adherence to the International Monetary Fund and the OAS Treaty. These are the perspectives of the country subjected to the Yankees by the pacts signed by the Aramburu-Rojas government. Only the working class can make this perspective unfruitful. It is the most homogenous and the only revolutionary class, as its action in the national and world scene tells us.

This is why the colonisation plan of the country is also accompanied by an attempt to weaken, divide, and castrate the Argentine workers. There cannot be a strong and united working class in a colonised Argentina, in decline. The dilemma, both for the workers and for Yankee imperialism—the two true contenders on the national, Latin American and world scene—is clear and definite. The Yankees, to colonise the country, must destroy the strength and unity of the Argentine workers. The Argentine workers, if they want to save their unity and strength, will have to defend the country; and if they want to save the country, they will have to defend its unity and strength.

That is why the country's fate today rests on saving the unity of the most primary organisation of the working class: the trade union organisation. The real struggle for the independence of the country and against the current government that alienates this independence goes through the union reorganisation with an authentic revolutionary leadership. But, what kind of development will this immense task have? Without sinning as fortune-tellers, we have the obligation to point out the general guidelines of the immediate prospects of the workers' movement.

The working class in recent years has learned what the unitary union organisation is and what the factory organisation is. This learning was not lost but, on the contrary, it was strengthened when the government managed to destroy the union organisations. The loss of union organisations has accelerated this learning. It does not matter that sectors of the working class move away from union life; this is inevitable if the State does not control the unions. Nor does it matter that factory organisations languish. The fundamental thing is the most enlightened sectors of the working class continue to need and want a single unitary union organisation for each industry and for all workers. This need and ambition of the most important and enlightened sectors of the workers will inevitably find its way into reality.

The very blows the government and the bosses strike on the workers, and the need to respond to these blows, will inevitably pose to the workers the need for the reorganisation of the union by industry. We do not know well how the unitary reorganisation of the working class will make its way but we have no doubt they will do so because it is already a conquest in the consciousness of the working class or its vanguard sectors. If it is not through the Emergency Board, it will be otherwise, but the reunification and union reorganisation of the Argentine working class will be in the short-term, in one to two years, this is an indisputable fact.

The same will happen, but possibly later, with the factory organisations. These will be more difficult to reorganise in all their fullness since they cover all the workers, the unionised and also the others, but they will also make their way. Precisely this factory reorganisation will take on a frankly revolutionary character since, without the Peronist state control, the factory internal commission raises the problem of who is the one who directs the factory, the commission or the boss.

Possibly, even before the factory internal commissions gain great importance again, serious struggles will break out between the government and the reorganised union movement. This struggle between the government and the reorganised union movement may lead to a general strike of an insurrectional nature.

We should not forget that, just as the best of the working class is for the defence of their unified trade union, the whole working class hates this reactionary government. This hatred can

and should be transformed into an insurrection to overturn the current government. To transform it into an insurrection, only the reorganisation of the workers' movement is needed. If the workers' movement is reorganised, it will be restructured, thus having a leadership recognised and accepted by the entire workers' movement; the struggle against the government will gain unity and an impregnable strength. This will be the moment when the hatred of the workers' movement will crystallise in an organised struggle against the government. This organised struggle can begin with a general strike, for accidental reasons, labour agreements, wage increases, the fight against unemployment, or on 17 October, but basically, it is the justified hatred of the current government what will give rise to this fight. This general strike can be transformed into an insurrection, i.e., there may be street fighting and confrontation between the government and the working class in a workers' revolution. Among the accidental causes that may mobilise the working class, we must consider the possibility of a military coup by the sectors of the Argentine bosses who do not want total capitulation to the Yankees. But the fundamental thing is that only the insurrectional mobilisation or the danger of insurrectional mobilisation of the workers' movement will lead to a total or partial defeat — depending on the leadership of the workers' movement — of the current reactionary government.

Specifically, we can say nowadays the offensive of imperialism against the country and of the bosses against the workers crystallises in the politics of the current oligarchic and reactionary government.

This offensive takes on its maximum and most concrete expression in the eagerness of the current government to destroy the unitary trade union organisation of the Argentine workers' movement. But this eagerness of the reactionary government is met with two hurdles impossible to cross, which are the degree of consciousness of the working class and its vanguard that wants and needs a unitary trade union organisation and that hates the current government. Despite this, the reactionary government has disorganised the trade union movement and remains in power. The pessimists, the union bureaucrats, reach a conclusion: the workers are useless. We, on the contrary, after the fabulous general strikes of the Argentine working class and the world experience, say: the workers' movement has failed so far because it suffers a crisis of leadership, a crisis that precisely the hard blows of the reaction force to overcome. Indeed, the reactionary offensive of the government puts the whole leadership of the workers' movement to the test, from the delegates to the leaders. Old leaders go home; others continue the struggle, new leaders emerge. This new leadership developing in the workers' movement is the one that will inevitably lead the union reorganisation and the confrontation with the reactionary government. Because the two tasks will inevitably be united.

The crisis of the country and the workers' movement lies in the workers' movement the crisis of leadership. But, if the coup and the reactionary government have had any virtue, it has been, precisely, to have put the previous leadership to the test and, by sinking it, to show its failure and to have also promoted a new leadership.

In a few words, we can say the country, under the joint control of the bosses and Yankee imperialism, has entered its period of decline. This perspective can only be stopped by the working class. But this one bears a terrible government offensive. This aims to disorganise and divide the workers. So far it has achieved its goal; it has totally disorganised the trade union movement. But this offensive has been successful thanks to the failure of the old leadership of the workers' movement. The workers still want the union organisation and hate the government. The overcoming of the leadership of the workers' movement is the key to crystallise its movements for the union reorganisation and to materialise its hatred against the government.

As we are sure the overcoming of the workers' leadership is already taking place, we take for granted that, sooner or later, the workers' movement will reorganise its single unions by industry and its factory internal commissions and, as a result, gigantic battles will be waged between the reorganised workers' movement and the reactionary government. From this battle, from its result, the luck of the country will depend.

## 16. Let us form a consistent anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist union tendency

The Argentine industrial bosses have a thousand friendly ties with the union bureaucracy. They need, therefore, a reorganisation of the workers' movement that will help it, that will not harm it, that guarantees it, on the one hand, a peaceful development of production and, on the other hand, allows it to use the workers' movement against its enemies of today, Yankee imperialism and the importers. These union chiefs do not agree with a country totally colonised by the Yankees, just as other sectors of the bosses; hence the division of the Argentine trade union movement.

When we supported and started *Tendencia*,<sup>26</sup> we did it with one goal: to achieve a united front with the currents of the majority workers' movement which were largely in defence of a more or less nationalist or Peronist CGT. Our position was to reorganise a front of union activists who agreed to defend the country and the workers' movement. Our utmost concern was that all the trade union leaders of the Peronist era, which most of the workers' movement and trade union activists reflected, would enter *Tendencia*. We never thought, nor wanted, that *Tendencia* was ours. This is why we proposed, everywhere, as leaders, comrades who had nothing to do with us politically. Specifically, *Tendencia* emerged as a united front of all those who were against COASI<sup>27</sup> and union takeovers and for the defence of the trade union movement and nationally organised.

But the leaders of the workers' movement did not come to *Tendencia* but formed their own movement: The Emergency Board of the GGT that claims the organisation of the CGT and claim to be an authentic union leadership of the whole country.

Although we did not know what *Tendencia* would do, we immediately declared our support for the Emergency Board since, although we disagree with the trajectory of these leaders, they reflect most of the CGT workers in their desire to restructure the trade union movement. *Tendencia* no longer has any reason to exist; the Emergency Board has taken as its own the task of fighting for the reorganisation of the movement and to confront the free trade unionists and comptrollers and this is much more representative than *Tendencia*. Creating union emergency boards everywhere is the big task today. It is also the great task of *Tendencia*.

But just as the trade union movement is divided into two or more tendencies, so the wing that resists colonisation is divided into two: one that struggles consistently against imperialism and the one that has the opportunist line of the union chiefs. The chiefs and many activists believe in negotiations and not in the action of the working class. We only trust the mobilisation of our class to defend the independence of the country and the interests of the working class. Those activists who share this position must join in a reorganisation movement that can play this role; to bring together activists who have a revolutionary class position. That is, *Tendencia* must cease to be the organ that reflects the general agreement of those who want to save the trade union organisation to become the organ of a tendency of activists who only trust in their class action and not in negotiations. This revolutionary tendency will have enormous perspectives; day by day the difference between the negotiating method of union leaders and the method of the mobilisation of our class will be seen more clearly. This does not mean the revolutionary tendency declares itself in favour of never negotiating but these negotiations will be complementary to the fundamental: the mobilisation of our class.

<sup>26</sup> *Tendencia*, organ of the trade union movement that emerged as consequence of the military takeover of CGT and the unions to save the trade union organisations. NM

<sup>27</sup> The Workers' Committee of Independent Trade Union Action (COASI) was part of the fascist groups that acted together with the "civil commandos" since 16 June 1955. It was formed by the gorilla wing of socialism (headed by Americo Ghioldi), while the Communists were on the Movement Pro Democratisation and Independence of Trade Unions. During the first two weeks these shock groups had forcibly occupied a considerable number of trade union premises. Among them were the premises of the Banking Association, the Printers Federation, the Confederation of Commerce Employees, Fraternity (Train Engineers Union), SUPE (State Oil Workers Union), Railway Union, among others. During the nights, they forcibly entered the premises, evicted the occupants and designated "provisional" authorities.

Neither does it mean that this tendency lays claim to the leadership of the trade union movement nor of the Emergency Board of the CGT but it will try to organise the Emergency Board to verify honestly which tendency has a majority in the workers' union movement.

We have highlighted there are three currents in the trade union movement: the "free" ones, who collaborate with Yankee colonisation; the Peronists or pseudo-Peronists, who collaborate with the bosses; and the revolutionists, who are against one and the other. Intermediate and parallel to this current, a new spontaneous tendency of trade union character is emerging in the workers' movement. This current, made up for the most part of great activists of the Peronist era, is extremely progressive. It reflects, in 90 per cent of the cases, a repudiation of the union activists to the politics of the bosses' parties and of trust in the strength of the working class. Any trade union activist who has verified the rottenness of their leaders transformed into agents of Peronist politics in their ranks believes that politics is generally to blame for this situation. In this activist, the repudiation of politics means the attempt to return to the primary class methods, the organisation of the class and only the class. But to these activists are added and will be added the union leaders at the service of the bosses who pose apparently the same: that activists should not get into politics. For these leaders, to not get involved in politics means to do nothing, not to worry about anything that happens to the country and the working class.

The anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist revolutionary trade union tendency must take into account the fellow activists who are now against politics. Most of them will be great militants of the tendency although they repudiate politics. If they truly are for class methods, they will be able to rise to a fight against capitalism and imperialism. Convincing them they will have to be part of the revolutionary union tendency will be the first great step for their overcoming.

## **17. The workers' movement must have an independent policy of its own**

The fall of Peronism closed one period and opened another. It closed the grey, calm, and peaceful period and opened one of exacerbated revolutionary struggles. At the present time, it is the bosses who take the offensive together with imperialism while the working class, through the experience of these defensive battles, begins to take a new political and union leadership. This stage, which will probably last for a long time, will give rise to another stage: that of the workers' offensive.

We, orthodox Trotskyists, revolutionary socialists, the only truly revolutionary current of the Argentine working class, have drawn a conclusion from the stage our class is going through, we have to reorganise the trade union movement in the first place; this is the most important thing, and what decides the issue. Else, the battle is lost before it is given.

But this is not all since the program of the working class must revolve around the following premise: the reorganised workers' movement must face all the problems affecting the working class and the country; the workers' movement must fully take part in national political life. This position will clash right now with opposition from many honest union activists who believe the workers' movement should not worry about the Prebisch plan, democratic rights, the OAS treaty, and other very serious problems. We will continue explaining to the working class that while it does not want to get involved in politics, the politics of the bosses and imperialism do mess with the working class.

These honest union activists who do not want to know anything about politics confuse two criteria. What they repudiate is the policy of the bosses' parties but hardly would they themselves accept that today the workers' movement fail to pronounce itself on a myriad of political issues. Today, to go against the decree that regulates wage increases — or against any other law or government measure that goes against the workers — is to do politics. In general, any workers' organisation or leader who cares about the fate of their class must consider not only the plans of their bosses but also the measures and plans of the government and its bosses' parties. The OAS

Treaty, which forces us to go to war in favour of the United States, should interest the workers, their organisations and their leaders as much or more than if they change their section in their factories.

At the present time, the working class has raised the political problem par excellence, that of the government. The workers do not want this government, they hate it, and they want to defeat it. This aspiration is political, whichever way you look at it, and, not only that, it is also fundamentally correct and absolutely necessary. The apolitical union activists also hate the government and want to defeat it but by reorganising the union movement. That is, they think the same as us. This is not a coincidence: what they call politics we call opportunistic and pro-bosses politics; what they say, that we should rely solely on the organisation and activity of our class, is what we call class politics and organisation.

The development of the struggle of our class will tell to what extent our differences with these activists are in the names or in the conception. As soon as those activists tell us they are not interested in what the government does and what happens to the country we know we are confronting a trade unionist who consciously or unconsciously plays into the bosses' policy, who does not want the workers to worry of the great problems of the working class and the country.

We do not propose the trade unions should give themselves the task of being trade unions and workers' parties at the same time. Although this seems a contradiction, it has its explanation. The working class, as such, must take part in national politics with its own policy but we cannot tell now how it should be done. The class will give itself a political tool. The working class uses for its economic struggles the unions; for its political struggles, its political party; and for its mass revolutionary actions, soviets, factory committees, etc. However, as the working class is one, it combines at each moment these different tools of struggle. A struggle for wage increases can turn into a political struggle against the government; in the same way, when the time comes, a union can become the political leader of the working class, as is the case of the Central Obrera Boliviana [Bolivian Workers' Centre], which even led an armed insurrection. In this sense, the historical process is highly contradictory and dynamic; it would seem as if it likes to combine the different forms. This forces us to be doubly cautious.

Faced with the most important political problems, the workers' organisations must take part with their own policies; that's the right thing to do. But this does not mean the political organ of the working class is always its union organisation. On the contrary, it would be better if it were not the unions but a specific organisation of the workers — their political party — that gave them their political expression.

The slogan of workers' party based on the unions is a tactical slogan for certain situations: when in a country there are immense workers' organisations but workers politically give their support to bourgeois parties. It is a matter of raising their political consciousness quickly, making their own trade unions organisations become a workers' party. But this is not the current case; the union organisations are not in the hands of the workers but they have to be rebuilt and reconquered. We do not know the time this task of organisation and reconquest will take. It can be very long. We do not know whether at this time a workers' party, although opportunist, will not drag the broader layers of the workers. The slogan of the workers' party based on the unions, in the current moment when the unions do not exist, poses the problem of which leadership this party will have. Perhaps the military comptrollers?

The same applies to the government. We know the organised workers' movement should be the essential basis of the future government but we cannot say now what other organisms will take part in its composition. The same happens in the United States; we can raise that there be a workers' party based on the unions but we cannot say now that there be a workers' government. In Argentina, the same thing happens: the fundamental thing now is to restructure the trade union movement for immediate action and for the next big action of overturning the government. At the same time, we have to convince the working class it needs an independent political line, just like the reorganised workers' movement to take part in political problems with its own solutions. But nothing more: to propose now that the workers' party must be built based on the trade unions is to

confuse the problems since we should not say the union has to become a workers' party because it is much better if the workers, apart from their unions, have a mass workers' party.

Moreover, the slogan that the CGT become a political party to take part in national elections gives an opportunistic goal to the trade union movement in the process of reorganisation in the solution of its problems. It proposes the solution will come only through the electoral path instead of relying solely on the mobilisation of the class and its fight against the government.

## **18. The new leadership of the workers' movement connects with our future as a revolutionary party**

The working class begins to take new leadership. Repression has severely tested the union and political leadership of our class. From this test, the best comrades, the most courageous and capable union activists, come out enormously strengthened. In an eminently presidentialist country like ours, the fall of the government means an event of importance and modifies the general relations of the classes with each other and with imperialism. So far, these changes have broken all the workers' leaderships: the fall of Yrigoyen broke anarchism; the end of the infamous decade and the rise of Peronism liquidated the Stalinist leadership; the fall of Peronism liquidated the old Peronist union leadership and is giving rise to the emergence of a new one, even if it is also Peronist. It is no coincidence that old leaders disappear from the textile industry and instead new ones emerge. The latter go beyond themselves, learn to work in the new conditions, and become the new great leaders.

One thing is that the working class is birthing a new leadership and quite another is the form this leadership will take on. This new leadership can become opportunistic or revolutionary. It is precisely our task that this leadership be revolutionary, or rather, that the revolutionary leadership should lead the working class.

Our party fulfils the same function in the general field of the working class life as the revolutionary trade union tendency: it fights against the sectors of the working class that want to collaborate, to negotiate permanently, with the bosses and imperialism. We want to change this exploitation regime to inaugurate another that liquidates the exploitation of class. Our biggest struggle is with our comrades to sweep away the cobwebs of education at the service of the bosses they received from childhood. We have our own national and international organisation precisely because we have to fight in the bosom of our own class against the conscious agents of the bosses and imperialism.

In the workers' movement, there is a sector, the chieftains and their friends, who believe the workers' movement should not fight against this exploitation regime to liquidate it. The workers' ranks mostly follow those chieftains and their positions. This is why we are organised outwardly like iron and democratically inwardly, to fight against the government, the other parties, and the union leaders with possibilities of success.

Our program has withstood the hard test of facts. In the international arena, the theory of the Permanent Revolution —the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Trotskyism — has been confirmed by all the facts. The revolutionary process has an international character, from problem to problem and from country to country, and only the working class can carry forward this revolutionary process. Trotskyism is the only one that foresaw this situation and prepared itself as a world party to confront it. Lately, the revolutionary Trotskyists reaffirmed the counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism and its current protégés, the pro-bosses socialists. The French Communist Party supported the patriotic socialist Mollet,<sup>28</sup> whose government — to save its decadent empire — massacred the Algerian people, the vanguard of the workers of the entire world. Only the Fourth International supports Algeria with all its strength and for this reason, its members are persecuted and its press is closed in the very heart of France, for its courageous solidarity campaign with the

<sup>28</sup> **Guy Mollet** (1905–1975) was a French politician. He led the socialist French Section of the Second International from 1946 to 1969 and was the French Prime Minister from 1956 to 1957.

Algerian revolutionaries. The Fourth International supports Algeria, just as it supported North Korea yesterday; in the same way that tomorrow it will support all the struggles of the working class — led by whoever may lead them — against imperialism and the bosses.

The Fourth International, in vindicating the most important teaching of the workers' movement in the last 100 years — its international and revolutionary character — has remained alone as the only international and revolutionary organisation of the world working class. Hence the famous “Workers of the world unite!” is materialised today in a single theory, in a single program and organisation, in the Trotskyist Fourth International. Our international organisation reflects the consciousness of the current world revolutionary process.

In Latin America, our movement is the only one that has provided a fundamental programmatic solution by proposing, as a central task in this part of the world, the unification of Latin American countries as the only way to solve the most urgent and primary democratic tasks. But what characterises us is not only having proposed the Latin American unification but the way to achieve the unification: through a Federation of Latin American Workers' States. We have known how to join this general approach, an also general and correct analysis of the greatest Latin American revolution: the Bolivian Revolution.

By insisting that only a workers' government would solve the problems of Bolivia, its workers, and peasants and that we had to totally oppose the government of Paz Estenssoro, we have given the general guidelines of a policy that not only is revolutionary but it has been fundamentally correct. Add to this another conquest of our party: to battle the years old theory for the fight for the official language in Bolivia to be the one the inhabitants of that country, mostly Indians, resolve. This approach is the only one truly democratic to the end.

In our country, our party was the first to work in the Peronist unions and was also the only one who did rallies in the working class neighbourhoods in homage to Leon Trotsky and who faced the elections with intense public activity. Our militants have led or had a leading role in many of the greatest struggles of the Argentine working class, such as in the meatworkers strike of 1945, the textile strike of 1947, and so on.

Lately, we have fought shoulder to shoulder with the Peronists against the reactionary coup d'état. Furthermore, we have said the victory of the coup was inevitable unless the Peronist policy that facilitated it was changed. Without ceasing to harshly criticise the Peronist leadership, we took part fully in all the Peronist demonstrations and mobilisations against the coup that was looming.

From the fall of Peronism, when the working class begins to overcome its leadership or takes part in the big strikes, our organisation also participates fully in all the Peronist demonstrations and mobilisations. At the present time, we are the only ones who believe the fundamental task is to reorganise the workers' movement, in the unions and factories, and that only this organisation will be able to sweep out the government and provide solutions to the problems of the workers' movement and the country. We agree with Peronism about the need to sweep away the current government but we disagree completely with it in the way we do it.

Our organisation, for its trajectory, has the right to pretend to lead and recruit the best of the working class. We have fought to apply the revolutionary program to the national reality for 15 years; also to join it to the vanguard of the working class and to the Latin American reality. Thus GOM (Marxist Worker Group) emerged, which immediately went to the working class neighbourhoods and factories. Our organisation was against the Democratic Union to the bitter end and penetrated deeply into the Peronist unions; it even founded some of them and led them.

The 1945 meatworkers strikes speak for themselves of our activity. We tried by all means to achieve legality, and when our program and our workers' cadres took us to a certain point, we formed the *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* (Workers' Revolutionary Party, POR). We took that name because our sister parties in Latin America had the same.

Unable to get legality because the Peronist government methodically denied it to us, we reached an agreement with the Socialist Party of the National Revolution (PSRN). We interpreted

the creation of such a party by Peronism as an attempt by it to channel the radicalisation of the working class by the left, fundamentally of its vanguard. We thought it convenient to help this leftist course of the workers' movement with our revolutionary positions and then we reached an agreement with the PSRN. They admitted us with absolute freedom to raise our revolutionary positions with our methods before the bulk of the working class.

This was how we clarified it in *Lucha Obrera*<sup>29</sup> [Workers' Struggle], the first organ of our tendency. We never capitulated to Peronism; we used legality to defend uncompromisingly our revolutionary policy before the whole of the working class. The revolutionary virgins, the inveterate sectarians, they believe that having reached thousands and thousands of workers with our positions, during and after the elections of 1954, in our legal work, does not matter. For us, however, it was of enormous value. It was this experience what allowed us to picket in the fabulous way we are doing it. And it was this apprenticeship what allowed us to call the peaceful general strike on 17 October 1955.

Nowadays, when the best union activists are confronted with the problem of giving themselves a new leadership, they see our program and our cadres are the only real guarantee to achieve such a goal.

The need for legal action has prevented us so far, given the fluidity of the national situation, to accurately specify the label of our organisation. However, on this mare magnum of names, two facts stand out with all precision. Before the great masses, we are the left wing of the Socialist Party for the National Revolution (PSRN) that publishes *La Verdad*; For certain vanguard sectors of the proletariat, we are the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR), the Orthodox Trotskyist organisation. We can and must vindicate both. Indeed, we are the orthodox Trotskyist wing within the PSRN. In other words, our organisation must reflect its activity on its name: on an international scale, to be part of orthodox Trotskyism; and, on a national scale, to have formed the anti-reactionary front with Peronism and to have been the extreme left of that front, relentlessly anti-bosses and anti-imperialist, against the trade union and political leadership of Peronism itself.

We, orthodox Trotskyists, socialist revolutionaries, PORists, will thus capitalise on our success: to have acted in a bold, revolutionary, and correct manner in the attempts to form a workers' party, revolutionary Marxist and with mass perspectives. We will thus emerge from this crisis of leadership of the Argentine workers' movement as its authentic revolutionary leadership.

## Appendix

(The work *After Peron What?* was finished by April of this year [1956]. The publishing difficulties that always accompany all revolutionary organisations, for which large presses are not available, have delayed until now the publishing of the work. The important events produced in the meantime require the inclusion of this appendix).<sup>30</sup>

### 19. A tragic adventure: the Peronist coup

The country, the reactionary government, and the working class have suffered the direct or indirect consequences of the first Peronist coup d'état. Analysing its consequences is an obligation for us, the revolutionary socialist vanguard of the working class.

The coup d'état was carried out in a general situation characterised by:

a) In the plane of class struggle, we find the working class began to overcome the defeat and disorganisation and slowly rearmed to face the bosses-government-imperialist offensive. The best

<sup>29</sup> *Lucha Obrera*, (For a Workers' Party, for an Anti-capitalist and Anti-imperialist Workers' Program) edited by the Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution, Avellaneda 1 to 7 April 1954. NM

<sup>30</sup> In June 1956 there was an unsuccessful attempt of Peronist uprising against the dictatorship, led by General Juan Jose Valle. The repression was ruthless. Valle and other soldiers were taken by force. A group of workers were summarily detained and shot in a landfill by Jose Leon Suárez.

example of this was the reorganisation of the Meatworkers Federation, on the one hand, and the struggle for the collective bargaining carried out in Rosario by the local CGT, on the other. But if this was the fundamental characteristic in the field of the struggle between the workers and their enemies, a phenomenon of great importance was beginning to take place in the field of the petty bourgeoisie, which was divided into two wings: one which continued to support the government and one which was beginning to break up with it. This phenomenon was reflected in the student problem. Parallel to these events, important sectors of the bourgeoisie began to oppose or were openly opposed to the government. Summing up, we can say the coup took place when the working class began to reorganise itself and raise its head when a sector of the petty bourgeoisie broke with the government, and sectors of the bourgeoisie were doing the same. That is, the coup took place when the crisis elements of the current regime began to emerge and not when they had reached maturity.

b) In the political aspect, the coup d'état took place when the government was manoeuvring to politically and economically bind the country in a definitive way to the carriage of Yankee imperialism and for this purpose it tried to achieve a "popular" formula of continuity that would guarantee this political course. This popular formula revolved around two axes: to guarantee elections allowing the victory of a man of the Democratic Union, or that any Radical wins but the parliamentary regime is controlled by the very same Democratic Union.

c) In the trade union arena, the government modified its line of handing over the trade union movement to the free unionists and opened a course of freedom to divide and manoeuvre with the workers' movement.

The coup has taken place at the least appropriate time to weaken and overthrow the government. Objectively, it happened after the defeat of the workers' movement and when it had not yet definitively recovered from it and before, perhaps long before, the elements of decomposition of the regime had reached maturity.

These two facts conditioned the immediate failure of the coup and its deeply adventurous, putschist character. But, like any social phenomenon, it has revealed, although in distorted form, the essential characteristics of the current reality. For the revolutionary Marxists, the characteristics outlined in the coup are more important to point out than the indisputable fact of the bourgeois and adventurous character of the putsch. The outstanding performance of non-commissioned officers, the call in some places to the armament of civilians and workers (albeit with tremendous party limitations), calling the general strike in Lanus, these clearly show that however minimal, sporadic, and partial these measures have been, that even the bourgeois defence of national independence, that even the bourgeois struggle against the reactionary and colonising government imply an overcoming and revolution of the bourgeois norms, above the subjective intentions of the leaders and their authors. In other words, even if they do not want it, they must resort to plebeian methods and to the working class to some extent. The Peronist "subversion" of the established, which at all times aimed at elements of dual power, is sharpening and will sharpen in any attempt to overthrow the government. This is exactly what the bourgeois opposition to the government understood by unconditionally supporting it: they wanted to avoid those elements of dual power.

The putsch showed, among other things, how easy it is to defeat the government with a revolutionary mobilisation of the working class. A coup d'état of a few hundred was enough to shake the entire regime. We have only to imagine what a general strike against the government would mean with pickets of armed workers and determined to everything. Under these conditions the fall of the government would be a decree, whole regiments would go in full to the revolutionary movement. This perspective must be recorded in all the revolutionary militants because it is the historical perspective.

The result of the putsch has been to accelerate and further define all government plans on the one hand, and the process of class struggle on the other. This means in general terms:

– That the rise and reorganisation of the working class continue its course. For the working class, the putsch meant a reminder that its great enemy, the government, can and should be fought. That is, it strengthened its political opposition to the government.

– That the petty bourgeoisie will continue to divide. Now it is divided around the executions and the danger of the class struggle, although the true division will be caused by an economic reason: the crisis and the Yankee colonisation.

– That the government will manoeuvre more than ever in favour of the Democratic Union, to guarantee the government by the executive or legislative path.

– That in the union arena, when verifying the non-participation in the putsch of the workers' movement, the government will keep its policy of letting do so the workers' movement ends up dividing itself into a thousand pieces.

The fight against the government continues to be carried out politically by Peronism and us and socially by the working class. These facts make Peronism to continue having a political future as the bourgeois current that collaborates with the working class to defend an outline of national independence. Although, we know only the working class can defeat the government. This does not mean the defeat of the government would lead to the government to the working class. On the contrary, the working class with its passive opposition to the government will eventually defeat it; but if a revolutionary vanguard does not lead it, the victory of the working class over the government, with the support of the middle class, may mean a further defeat of the working class, a new Peron-like bosses' government or a petty bourgeois government like Frondizi.

This last variation, as a consequence of the workers' opposition to the government, is worthy of being considered. The Peronist regime is the most the bourgeoisie has been able to give and do as a defence of national independence. Frondizism is the most the petty bourgeoisie could give. It is possible the historical process will test Frondizism, i.e., the petty bourgeoisie, before discarding it. As it is also possible it will test again Peronism as a popular bosses-petty-bourgeois-workers front based on the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class before it is discarded forever.

The least expensive outcome for the working class depends on us and our audacity if we understand we are already the revolutionary leadership of the working class.

This general perspective of the country and the workers' movement takes place in a situation that is materialised in the matter of the government. The current reactionary government will do everything possible to corral the working class within parliamentary cretinism like in Chile, Uruguay, or Ecuador. That is, the government will attempt by all means to find a legal solution useful to Yankee imperialism and which contains the working class. A government of power, dictatorial, is extremely dangerous for Yankee imperialism and for the bosses themselves. A legal government within bourgeois democracy not accepted by important sectors of the national bourgeoisie and with the repudiation of the working class is also dangerous.

From this contradiction arises a political plan of the government to proclaim as its political goal the democratisation of the country and, at the same time, ensure the continuity of the Democratic Union, via Radical Unionism. That is, within the plans of the government is to give elections and a Constituent Assembly. This is the immediate political perspective for the working class. The working class cannot expect from Peronism any more than another attempt at a putsch.

We must, therefore, adjust our policy to these two perspectives. First: the election. The fact the government has the same policy as them shows the ridiculousness of the approach by communists' and other currents. Our policy is a massive confrontation between the working class and the government. This does not mean we should set aside the possibility of presenting ourselves to elections.

The presentation to elections must have only one goal — to show the general repudiation of the government and the revolutionary will to overturn it. It cannot have another goal. Given our weakness, it is best to achieve some form of presentation to the elections to make an intense

revolutionary Trotskyist propaganda. That is, use the elections to strengthen and create a revolutionary political current in the class.

We say this because under ideal conditions if that current and that revolutionary party were already an important part existing within the class, the correct policy could be a general agreement with Peronism, a political vote of repudiation of the government or a boycott to the elections.

This vote of repudiation or this boycott would, in fact, be the united front with Peronism to go against the reactionary government. That would be the right thing in ideal conditions. But those ideal conditions (Party and revolutionary and strong current in the class) do not exist. We must then use these elections as we use the others, to intensively develop our positions, to make ourselves known in a much-differentiated form from Peronism, even if we ideally fall into a sectarian position.

Second: we do not rule out the Peronist or neo-Peronist putsch alternative. The general discontent and especially of different sectors of the bourgeoisie opens this possibility. Our tactics in the face of elections derive to a large extent from our general strategy against Peronism. In fact, today we clearly distinguish ourselves from Peronism: they favour the putsch; we favour the reorganisation of the trade union movement. We do not rule out the Bolivian variant that a putsch be transformed into a revolution when it merges with the workers' mobilisation, only then will we enter into this revolutionary process.

For the time being, government stability is great and the workers' movement has not recovered from its defeats; there are no possibilities of this last variant.

The important thing is that Peronism will abstain from the elections. We, whether we boycott or make a political vote, in fact, appear before the class as the fifth wheel of the Peronist wagon. This would be very dangerous, as dangerous as that now we be confused as putschists. If we were already well known, we could distinguish ourselves from Peronism by the program of the united front even if we had the same tactics before the elections. But this is not the situation and, therefore, we must divert the tactics somewhat to subordinate it to the strategic end — from the point of view of our struggle to be the recognised leadership of the proletariat — which is to clearly delimit ourselves from the bosses politics of Peronism and avoid that, for a tactical reason, our programs and strategies be confused. But this must be achieved in the course of the struggle for the primary goal of all our activity, which is to overthrow the oligarchic government. That is why the axis and basic theme of our electoral campaign will be: “These elections are the most undemocratic ones that have been seen. They are a farce and we are against them. Our program is to reach government to call elections with the participation of all parties and all persons, whatever they are called, even if the judges of the oligarchy have declared them ‘dissolved’ or ‘delinquents’ and then to leave the government.”

This is more necessary than ever after the putsch and before the elections and future putschs. We want to be within the anti-government front the clear and precise current for its consistent workers and revolutionary anti-Peronism. In fact, the united front with Peronism against the oligarchic government forces us to highlight differences and not hide them. This example must be taken to all levels of our activity. It is the only way to achieve structuring a true class current in the workers' movement.

## **20. The trade union elections force us to fight for new leadership**

With the government's decree calling for elections in all the unions and their regulations, the stage of total and absolute clandestinity of the Argentine trade union movement is closed. A stage of relative freedom and legality is now opening.

### **So far the main task was to save the union organisation and unity**

Under the “deposed regime” some important unions were taken over and their members, put in clandestinity, had no freedom or legality to meet or to solve the problems that affected them. This

happened in some unions, such as printers or FOTIA [Workers' Federation of the Sugar Industry of Tucuman], but not in all.

On the contrary, since the advent of this government that proclaims freedom and democracy as its primary objectives, the situation has changed radically. They took over not just some unions but all of them and the CGT itself. Specifically, the new government sent the entire workers' movement underground, from the CGT to the factory internal commissions.

Faced with this new situation, we thought it necessary, first, to save union unity and organisation as a minimum. Our criterion was clear: although the union organisations are taken over they must continue to subsist. In other words, in the face of the asphyxia of the trade union organisation caused by the takeovers, it was essential the unions continue living. We believed that to achieve this it was necessary to fulfil two conditions: first, to appeal to the democratically expressed initiative of the union activists; and second, to have a provisional Board of Directors or Emergency Board of the CGT and of each union. We held that the Emergency Board, in order to avoid sterile divisions, should be made up by the leadership that was at the head of the union when it was taken over; only in the case this leadership refuses to fight for survival and the reorganisation of the union, we should appeal to another provisional leadership.

In the harsh circumstances the workers' movement was going through, only the fulfilment of these two conditions could save the unitary trade union organisation.

Many trade union activists have criticised us for this line, which they thought was a capitulation to the old union leadership. But we have not done anything other than be consistent with our position that the fundamental thing was to defend the union organisation and its unity. The illegality in which the "liberating revolution" plunged the working class posed the urgent need to show a leadership that guaranteed the minimum unity of each union. Of course, each tendency considered itself the appropriate one and this accelerated the division of the trade union movement. To avoid this, we then argued the most logical thing and what would save the unity of the union in this difficult situation was to recognise the previous union leadership, whether we liked it or not, without diminishing or mitigating the criticisms their past or present performance deserved from us. We said: "in these moments of clandestinity there can be no other leadership if we want the union to continue existing". This speaks better than a thousand oaths of our respect for the union organisation. We, who for 10 years were enemies to the bitter end of the Peronist trade union bureaucracy because it allowed state control of the unions, because it did not call for democratic and sovereign personnel meetings, because it persecuted in the union and in the factory the workers who opposed them, we were the first and the only ones to defend the freedom of those leaders, refusing to accept they were replaced or judged by the military. And we were also the first and the only ones to say: "We do not want to win unions at the expense of the union division. As long as the union remains united, we vindicate as a temporary leadership the one in place when the unions were taken over and while the unions are reorganising in clandestinity."

Unfortunately, we were not fully listened to. Trade union activists of important unions recognised the need for reorganisation and for critically accepting the old union leadership until the reorganised union adopted another one. But the highest leaderships of the Argentine trade union movement, after the progressive step they took to make up the Emergency Board of the CGT, did absolutely nothing to establish a democratic contact with the activists. This messed up the efforts of the activists, who found and find themselves disoriented seeing the resounding failure of what until yesterday were their leaderships.

The elections force us to fight now, in the first place, for new, honest, democratic and combative union leaderships.

What neither the Peronist union leaderships nor other tendencies achieved was achieved spontaneously by the workers' movement and union activists, defeating the first union plan of the government. This plan aimed to control the unions through the "free unionists". But the total repudiation of the workers for the "free", reflected among other opportunities in the rally of Luna Park stadium, forced the government to back down and change plans. It no longer tries to give

the union leadership to the “free unionists” but to anarchise and divide the union movement. And the decree of the government calling to union elections obeys this plan. The elections create the possibility of an agreement between many Peronist union leaders and the government since those leaders prefer to deal with the devil before losing their positions and perks altogether. The decree on union elections stimulates the appetites and collusions of the leaders and tends to divide the unions internally (in factions, with struggles between leaders and chieftains) and externally (by creating new unions).

The trade union movement has left or is in the process of leaving clandestinity. This should merit the attention of all union activists. Today, the defence of union unity and organisation goes to a new plane: choosing in each union the best leadership, the most honest, the most democratic and combative. That is, having elections automatically guarantees union unity if all union tendencies commit to respecting what the majority of the workers of each union resolves. The fundamental thing, then, is to achieve a majority, or at least an important minority, for the most combative comrades. That is, it is about winning new and combative union leaderships in the elections.

### Out “free unionists” and scabs of the trade union leaderships

We say the new leaderships have to be won because it is an obvious fact the known leaderships of the trade union movement are useless.

Two well-known leaderships are those disputing, at this time, the trade union leaderships: the “free unionist” and the Peronist or neo-Peronist.

Of the “free unionist” leadership, the best we can say is we are ashamed to consider these people have something to do with the workers’ movement. Happily, 99 per cent of the workers repudiate it. The “free unionists” are those who have been firmly with the military takeovers in the unions; those who agree with the Prebisch Plan; those who are against the sacrosanct trade union principle that militants and union leaders should only be judged by the workers; those who are, in short, for the country to pass completely to the sphere of influence of Yankee imperialism. This leadership, despite the deserved repudiation of the workers’ movement, has some possibilities in certain unions, thanks to its agreement with former Peronist union leaders who want to accommodate themselves to this current.

### The high Peronist leaderships are not good either; delegates and factory leaders are

The Peronist union leadership is not essentially different, in terms of methods, from the “free unionists”. Just as the latter, they have accepted, when they reigned, the takeover of the State in the unions and to suppress all democratic rights in the workers’ movement.

Under Peron, the Peronist union leaders gave no greater freedom than the “free unionists” give today. And when Peron fell, they got under the bed, they asked for “order” and they called to scab on 17 October. This does not mean there are not deep differences between the Peronist union leaderships and the “free unionist” ones. One of those differences, and not the least important, is the Peronists reflect in all the unions a majority or an important minority. Another is that unlike the “free unionists”, the Peronists are, in a more or less conscious way, for relative independence of the country from Yankee imperialism.

However, despite all that, what conclusively shows this high Peronist leadership is no good is its performance in 1955. It could not stop the reactionary coups, could not stand for the ideals it claimed to hold. Coward, without initiative, clientelist, cliquey, it let the most important events pass by doing absolutely nothing. Among many others, 16 June, 16 September and 17 October 1955 are three dates which show the cowardice of this Peronist leadership and its inability to stand for what it should consider sacred. But its complete failure was not being able to reorganise the union movement in clandestinity.

## The need for a new leadership

The Peronists and the “free unionists” are the two best known leaderships of the trade union movement. We do not mention the communists because they do not matter. But there is another leadership, ignored by the big press in the hands of the bosses. It is the anonymous leadership, which every day lends a hand to the union or factory without taking anything — neither cars, nor travel or salaries, or honours. They are the great activists of the working class, many of them factory leaders, who in these moments of illegality maintain the union or factory organisation within their possibilities. Although they themselves have not yet realised what they are, this extraordinary leadership must be the one to defeat the arrogant, bureaucratic leaderships that will be contested by the union leaders in the next elections.

To clientelism, to the leaders who subordinate everything to their and their clique position, this rank-and-file leadership of the trade union movement must oppose the principle that there is nothing superior to the union and the comrades. For this heroic and anonymous leadership, it will not be any sacrifice to impose ultra-democratic norms on the trade union movement. Accustomed to appealing every day to the opinion of the section or factory workmates, these leaders, unknown to the big press, will easily be able to establish a personnel assembly every month.

For them, who have nothing to hide, doing what the union comrades ask will be the easiest. The same as facing the bosses and the government since they have done so at all times, before and after 16 September.

## Organising activists in union groups that contest elections

This historic crossroads of the Argentine workers’ movement will have a positive outcome for the workers if a new leadership for the organised workers’ movement emerges from it. This leadership will have a simple program: everything will be done consulting day by day the interests of the workmates and appealing to their initiative; there will be no resolutions without personnel assemblies; there will be no personnel assemblies which are not sovereign; there will be monthly meetings at all levels of union life; our class will be promoted so it takes up its rightful place in national life. Only a new leadership of the workers’ movement can apply this simple program. And this new leadership already exists in the sections and in the factories. For this leadership to get to lead the unions, it is only necessary it be organised to crush the cliques and manoeuvres of the old directorates. We must prevent the cliques from defeating this new leadership. The only way to crush the cliques of the old leaders, who are experts in cliques, is to organise this basic leadership to achieve a program, a slate and a united action of all the activists. This organisation will be democratic inwardly, but it will have an ironclad discipline to act outside, to prevent the cliques of the union leaders from defeating it.

Only then these activists, thoroughly tested in recent months, which have been worth years of experience, can reach the leadership of the unions. Only if these new leaders reach the leadership of the unions, the workers’ movement and the country will be saved.

## 21. The political plan of the government must be opposed by an independent policy

The government has informed — at last! — what its political plans are: elections for the end of next year; the study of the possibility of calling a constituent assembly and the forthcoming enactment of a Statute of Political Parties.

The workers’ vanguard must study the meaning of the step taken by the government. This does not mean, as the Radicals believe, the government’s political plan gives the basis for understanding its entire plan. On the contrary, union activists know the real plan of the government has been long formulated and is being applied: it is the Presbisch Plan. This is the true governmental plan,

with which it thinks to change all the relations of the country with imperialism, of the bosses with the workers, and between the different sectors of the bosses. The Prebisch plan, already in process of execution, will serve to establish the domination of the country by the Yankees and of the workers by the bosses and displace the most independent sectors of the bosses, the cattle raisers, industrialists and merchants linked to them.

The extraordinary discussion around the government's political plan has served precisely to hide from the eyes of the workers that the true political-economic plan of the government continues to be applied inexorably.

Precisely the most important aspect of the Aramburu government's political plan is that there is enough time to implement the Prebisch plan to the end. If there are elections only at the end of next year, this means the government will change only in mid-1958. The government will have almost three years to carry out the Prebisch plan against the country and the workers. Meanwhile, any opposition to the Prebisch plan will be diverted with the argument that the democratically elected new government would ultimately resolve. But this will be another lie; the disasters that Prebisch causes to the country and to the workers will be more than difficult to amend. Leaving aside that in these two years the government will manoeuvre as much as possible to achieve a worthy successor that guarantees the status imposed by Prebisch on the country and the workers.

This is the essence of the government's political plan. It does not mean there are no other problems in the plan.

### The struggle of Radical Intransigence with the other political parties

Around the political plan of the government was repeated the struggle that divided the radical intransigence of the other parties.

The Radical Intransigence disputes with the other parties on two institutional issues of great importance: whether the Constituent Assembly or national elections should be first and whether there should be a presidential or a parliamentary regime. The workers' vanguard must know what lies behind this apparent theoretical discussion. Around the Constituent Assembly and the parliamentary system are grouped the sectors directly or indirectly linked to the colonisation of the country by Yankee imperialism. Through a Constituent Assembly and an all-powerful parliament (the parliament and not the president is in charge), with 20 parties present with even forces, imperialism can manoeuvre much better. The presidential system does not divide the Argentine bosses into 20 or 30 sectors but, on the contrary, unifies all the Argentine bosses to put pressure on one man, the President of the Republic. This pressure is much more likely to succeed with the presidential regime. It is not a coincidence the parliamentary regime rules in those countries that suffer the most undisguised Yankee colonisation such as Chile and Uruguay. In the name of democracy, an attempt is being made to establish a parliamentary regime useful for imperialist intrigues and a magnificent circus for workers to fight bitterly whether brothels should be opened or whether there should be religious teaching, forgetting, like in Chile and Uruguay, the bilateral treaty has been signed.

Radical Intransigence, by opposing the call to the Constituent Assembly and the parliamentary system, shows it defends, with its usual hypocrisy and cowardice, the relative independence of the country from Yankee colonisation. Intransigence does not want the government or the country to weaken against the Yankees. This feeling reflects the will of sectors of the middle class who want an independent course in the country, that the country be increasingly stronger.

### The division among the Radicals

The clash between the Radical Intransigents and the other parties is reflected within the Radical Party itself in the division between Unionists and Intransigents. Although, logically, there are some differences caused by the change of environment.

For the pro-Yankee parties, it is a matter of weakening the Radical party led by the Intransigents. For Unionism the question is somehow different: it is a matter of strengthening and not weakening Radicalism and for them to take over the leadership of the party. This is why there was a difference of importance between Unionism and the other parties, fundamentally the Christian Democrat and the Socialist parties, despite responding all to the same brand made in the USA,<sup>31</sup> like nylon. Unionists want the statute of political parties and elections. With the statute of the parties, they intend to take over the national leadership of the party and the candidacy for the presidency of the Nation.

The government, by promising a statute for political parties, responds to the plan of Radical Unionism to take over its party. But in general, with its overall plan, it has killed several birds with the same stone: it has guaranteed, first, the application of the Prebisch Plan; it has reassured the parties it considers the Radical a majority party; it has brought some hope to large sectors of workers that a certain constitutional normalisation will come; it has taken the necessary steps to guarantee that Radical Unionists will take over the Radical party and finally guarantee their government action legally. But the manoeuvres of the government do not end there. Supported by all the parties, except for ours, it has outlawed certain parties and is preparing to draw up a statute or regulation which will prevent certain citizens, for different reasons, from forming parties and being candidates. We believe this would be one of the most scandalous frauds in our political history. In an authentic democracy, there are no distinctions between citizens: everyone has the right to form parties and to be candidates.

An election that takes place with the illegality of certain political groupings is a scandalous fraud. The Argentine working class will not allow it.

The working class cannot remain silent or quiet; it needs to have an independent policy

A sector of the army, along with the nationalists, has the possibility of winning the will of the Argentine working class. Radical Intransigence thinks the same. We believe the time has come for the Argentine working class to stop supporting lawyers and military or the policy of the bosses or imperialism and to take its own men and its own politics to the government.

The experience of the previous regime is instructive in this regard. Despite having been the one which granted the workers their greatest conquests, the fact of being a government of the military, lawyers, and bosses resulted in these conquests to be lost one by one. The Argentine working class needs a workers' political course carried out by a political organ that groups the class as a whole or, at least, its most enlightened representatives, the union activists. This must be the great experience of recent years: the workers must lead the country to carry out a policy of true social justice, economic independence, and political sovereignty. The workers cannot and should not put trust in other cadres or in other programs than those of the workers.

All classes have been tested in the national government. Only one has not gone through this test: the working class, despite being the only class capable of consistently applying a policy for the sole and exclusive benefit of the country. To defeat the government's political plan, all that is required of the Argentine working class is it must have its own political line to oppose it to those of the bosses parties and Yankee imperialism. §

31 **Made in the USA:** in English in the Spanish original.