

Nahuel Moreno

Argentina: A Triumphant Democratic Revolution



Nahuel Moreno

Argentina: A Triumphant Democratic Revolution

First Spanish Edition Spanish Edition: Internal document of PST, 1984

First Spanish Book Edition: Ediciones Crux, Buenos Aires, 1992

First English Internet Edition: Ediciones El Socialista, Buenos Aires, 2015

Cover and interior design: Daniel Iglesias

Cover Picture: Movilisation on 30 April 1982

www.nahuelmoreno.org

www.uit-ci.org

www.izquierdasocialista.org.ar

Contents

Foreword	1
Part I:	
A Triumphant Democratic Revolution	2
Part II	
The stages of the Argentine revolution	16
Part III	
Our party and its political line	29

Ediciones  *El Socialista*

Foreword

This work was published for the first time to the public in 1992 by *Ediciones Crux* in their Unpublished Collection as an appendix to *Party Cadres' School: Argentina 1984*, already published by www.nahuelmoreno.org.

We believe it is appropriate to publish it for the first time in English, although in many parts it is similar to *Revolutions of the XX Century* and *1982: The Revolution Begins*, because in the first chapter there are some definitions that do not appear in the first of these works, and in the third chapter the author presents a critique to the policy of the MAS (*Movimiento Al Socialismo – Movement To Socialism*, more developed than on the second one.

All notes are by the publishers.

The Editors, Buenos Aires, 2015

Argentina: A Triumphant Democratic Revolution

Report presented to the IEC of the IWL-FI¹, March 1983

PART I:

A Triumphant Democratic Revolution

Introduction

This report parts from a basic premise: that the Argentine democratic revolution had already triumphed with the fall of Galtieri² and the assumption of power by Bignone.³ The government of the latter means the acceptance by the Armed Forces of their defeat and the inauguration of the first democratic stage, broad and without further questioning, which has been open since 1930. For the future this means that the working class has two alternatives and only two from now on: to be defeated by a counter-revolutionary coup or to make the socialist revolution. Put another way: the democratic revolution is no longer posed for the working class as its main task and as “its revolution” until a new counter-revolutionary putsch has triumphed. Only then the great historic task the masses will face will be to overthrow again the dictatorship of the day, i.e., to make a new democratic revolution.

Nothing of what we have been saying means that democratic slogans lose importance in the new stage, only they register in a new context: the focus of our government policy is no longer to overthrow the dictatorial, counter-revolutionary government. In other words, the new content is marked by the move from the triumphant “democratic” revolution towards the socialist revolution without interruption. The next socialist revolution may have as its axis a democratic slogan or be prepared by a mobilisation against a counter-revolutionary putsch going against the democratic stage conquered; but these slogans or tasks— which are of enormous importance because they go against the attempt of the bourgeoisie to curb new democratic conquests—, will only be tactics within the great historic task of imposing a socialist revolution of an October type immediately, although this immediate may mean several years.

If our basic premise is correct, then so it is this report, even if it has errors in the analysis of some facts and in the periodization of the revolutionary course. Conversely, if that premise is not correct, the argument would be hopelessly false regardless of any partial successes it may have.

1 Following on Moreno's death in 1987, the International Workers League – Fourth International (IWL-FI) went into crisis and in 1990 it began to split. Currently, Moreno's followers in that organisation, and the keepers of the web page www.nahuelmoreno.org, are grouped in the International Workers Unity – Fourth International (IWU-FI), www.uit-ci.org.

2 General **Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri** (1926–2003) member of the third Military Junta of the Argentine dictatorship taking power in March 1976. In 1982 he initiated the occupation of the Malvinas Islands, which initiated the war with Great Britain. The revolutionary mobilisation in June 1982, repudiating his ignominious surrender led to the downfall of the dictatorship

3 General **Reynaldo Bignone** (b. 1928) was Galtieri's successor from 1 July 1982 to 10 December 1983. In 2010, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison for his role in the kidnappings, torture, and murders of the Dirty War.

1. The differences with other “democratic” stages

Many comrades will ask the reason why we have given the name of revolution to an event that apparently resembles what happened repeatedly in Argentina’s history of the last 50 years: the passage from a government not voted to another one that it is. The first was the transfer of the government of Uriburu’s⁴ dictatorship to the constitutional government of General Justo⁵: the Armed Forces drove Uriburu to give elections and for the Constitution to rule again, which, moreover, had not been repealed but only applied in a curtailed way. But this step to constitutional rule was conditioned by the military and the oligarchy for the elections to be fraudulent to ensure continuity of oligarchic rule and the influence of the Armed Forces, which the oligarchic regime itself called the “patriotic fraud”. The struggle for the right to vote and eliminate the fraud was the centre of politics in Argentina during the “infamous decade”⁶. This was proof that there had not been a democratic revolution in the change from the government of General Uriburu to General Justo. Indeed, the governments of the concordance of the “infamous decade” are the direct or indirect continuation of the *coup d’état* of 1930, which determined the new constitutional government through the “patriotic fraud”.

He was elected president on 8 November 1931, supported by the ruling military dictatorship and political sectors that would integrate shortly after Concordance, an alliance formed by the National Democratic Party, the Antipersonalist⁷ Radical Civic Union and the Independent Socialist Party. On the elections that confirmed him weighed charges of electoral fraud and he had during his government persistent opposition from the Yrigoyenista sectors of Radical Civic Union.

2. The election of Peron

In 1943 a military coup against the regime of fraud occurs, opening a harsh dictatorship that imposed a totalitarian control of the country but which does not repeal the Constitution either. This military regime is replaced, through an electoral process, by Peronism. Both the electoral process and the Peronist government were conditioned by the state control imposed by the dominant military sector supporting the candidacy of General Peron. There was no democratic revolution, but only a very significant realignment, with major changes, of the military government itself. That the most prominent figure of the same, vice president Peron, had become the new president is no coincidence; it shows that it was largely a continuation of the military dictatorship adapted to new historical circumstances. From here comes all the repressive and totalitarian legislation of Peronism, including the enactment of a new constitution to ensure the election of General Peron and the continuity of the repressive regime. Let us not forget that under Peron the unions, the press, the leftist parties were controlled in a totalitarian way.

4 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.

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

6 The **Infamous Decade** (Spanish, *Década Infame*) 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.

7 At the time the Radical Civic Union was split between those opposing the policies of Hipolito Yrigoyen (“**antipersonalists**”, followers of Marcelo Torcuato de Alvear) and those supporting them (“**Yrigoyenists**” or “personalists”).

3. From the coup of 1955 to the Cordobazo⁸

Since the *coup d'état* of 1955 all governments are conditioned by the illegality of Peronism, by the impositions of the military and the oligarchy. It is no coincidence that the only exception occurred after Cordobazo, which managed the legality of Peronism, i.e. broad democratic and electoral freedoms. With the semi-insurrection or semi-revolution the Cordobazo meant, the first major democratic opening we have ever known took place, with legality for all the left parties, for Peronism, as well as extensive formal democratic freedoms. In any case, the degree of crisis of the Armed Forces and government, as well as the popular and workers' mobilisation was weaker than the current, less massive. We lived, for example, with a relatively good economic situation which does not resemble anything like the current devastating crisis.

The same happened with regard to the military government. The latter, from the Cordobazo, remained much stronger as government and also as Armed Forces than the current government of Bignone. This manifested itself in the fact that since the Cordobazo until the elections we had Onganía⁹ falling, the rise and fall of Levingston,¹⁰ the government of Lanusse¹¹ and finally the elections. In total nearly four years to get from the Cordobazo to the election of a new government. The Armed Forces conditioned the elections to a very important point: the commanders in chief would be chosen among the senior officers in activity.

We will have to clarify whether the fall of Levingston or the assumption of Campora¹² did not also mean a revolutionary triumph, which would thus be related with what we are witnessing, as the revolution of 1905 to 1917 in Russia.

What makes us not to consider what came after the Cordobazo as a revolution as broad and categorical as the one we are currently experiencing is the fact that the military managed to dose the democratic opening, they gave it away gradually and morosely without suffering a crisis as the one we are currently living. What best shows their relative control of the situation is the fact they imposed on the new government a Constitution which had not been elaborated with any political current, although these may have been consulted. The government supported with all its strength, and conditioned the elections and the Constitution, in its attempt to impose the Radical party in government. They were therefore conditioned elections although they led to the triumph of Campora and not of the Radicals.

4. From the reactionary regimes to one counter-revolutionary

Our definition of all previous electoral democratic processes as that they were not the result of a triumphant revolution has to do with the character of the governments. All governments which conditioned or directly abolished the bourgeois right to choose the rulers were reactionary governments, which did not dare to eliminate the Constitution and its fundamental rights and they merely limited themselves to abridge or restrict these rights. Even the Onganía regime is qualitatively

8 **Cordobazo** refers to an important civil uprising which happened in Argentina on 29 May, 1969, in the city of Cordoba, one of the most important industrial cities of the country. Its most immediate consequence was the fall of the military dictatorship of Juan Carlos Onganía, and four years later, the return of democracy.

9 **Juan Carlos Onganía** (1914–1995), Chief of the Army, who headed the dictatorship from 29 June 1966 to 8 June 1970. He rose to power as military dictator after toppling Radical party President Arturo Illia in a *coup d'état* self-named *Revolución Argentina* (Argentine Revolution).

10 **Roberto Marcelo Levingston** (b. 1920) is a general in the Argentine Army followed Onganía as de facto President of Argentina on June 1970. He was forced to resign after the second Cordobazo.

11 **Alejandro Agustín Lanusse** (1918–1996), successor of Levingston, de facto President of Argentina from 22 March 1971. Great architect of the so-called Great National Agreement. On 25 May 1973 he handed the presidency to the Peronist candidate, Hector Campora.

12 **Hector Jose Campora** (1909–1980) was an Argentine politician. Peron chose him as his “personal delegate” in 1971. As such, he won the March 1973 election with 49.5% of the votes. Peron forced him and his vice president to resign on 13 July 1973, and the president of the Congress, Raul Lastiri became interim president. He called a new election and General Peron and his wife Maria Estela Martinez de Peron were elected President and Vice President in September 1972.

different to the one inaugurated by the putsch of 1976. The Onganía regime is reactionary, whereas the regime opened after 1976 is counter-revolutionary. The difference is that Onganía carried out a legal repression, within certain constitutional norms, enacting laws by decree within the bourgeois law, which are applied by normal institutions of the regime, i.e. by Justice. This regime, like the one of 1943, like the one of Uriburu and its continuation by Justo, is deeply reactionary, but is not counter-revolutionary. For us a counter-revolutionary regime is one that abruptly changes the methods of government to impose those of civil war or total repression, selective or massive, against the left movements and against the workers and mass movement. No government, with the formal exception of Uriburu's, used methods of civil war to suppress the workers' and mass movement, except the last regime.

This is one of the reasons why the regime consistently refused to authorise freedoms, of any kind, because they were incompatible with its existence. It could only give restricted freedoms and elections through a conditioning plan which would guarantee its survival and its heritage as counter-revolutionary Bonapartist regime, as in Spain or Brazil.

5. The current government is product of a democratic revolution

The current process is very different from the post-Cordobazo. It is not the product of a dosage or conditioning by the military government but rather of an abrupt, uncontrollable phenomenon, which occurred suddenly without being planned or desired by any sector of the ruling class. Nobody forecasted, within the bourgeois or bureaucratic officialdom, that in the short span of three months we would move from the most counter-revolutionary regime known in the country to a regime of just about unrestricted formal democratic freedoms and from a strong government as Galtieri's was to one that falls by itself. From total lack of the most minimal freedoms we went to very broad democratic freedoms, also almost absolute, and even many non-formal freedoms, such as house and land occupations, non-payment of taxes, police strikes, insults to high army officers at official events. We do not deny that there are still remnants of importance of the previous stage, such as censorship at certain levels, a few kidnappings and vigilante groups (it is a colossal task to fight more than ever against the paramilitary apparatuses), but they are framed in a context of very broad freedoms.

In this case, due to the revolution, to this abrupt step up in the situation, freedoms came from one day to the next and the elections come later. In this, it is also different from the Lanusse stage where freedoms were granted gradually. The generalisation and recognition of these freedoms, starting with the political freedoms, occurred with the advent of Bignone's government. We therefore believe that with his rise there was a colossal revolution with regard to democratic freedoms and in terms of the ultimate downfall of the military government. The triumphant revolution is objective, can be sensed with ears and eyes: legality for all political parties, free press, impotence and total crisis of the government and crisis of the Armed Forces. Whatever the name we give to this stage, we must recognise that is totally different from all democratic interregnums we have known before. This one is deeper, wider and almost without constraints; the military have hardly been able to raise any objection to the emergence of democratic freedoms.

6. Why is it a revolution and not a democratic reform?

So far, we have been satisfied with describing and defining the changes that have taken place historically in regard to democratic freedoms and the stages of the reaction and the counter-revolution. Now we want to scientifically define the democratic revolution. Thus we will demonstrate that what came before now were reforms, and what came with the fall of Galtieri was a revolution. First of all we must point out it is *a political revolution as far as the historic objectives achieved and the character of the government it imposes*. Any political revolution is an abrupt change, a fall of a retrograde regime and the emergence of a new regime more progressive in terms of democratic freedoms, just like the counter-revolution is the emergence, due to the defeat of a more progressive regime, of a regressive regime which sweeps off all democratic achievements of the previous regime.

The revolutions can be political (this is well known) where the power does not change class and can be social when the class in power changes. This social revolution can be political or, because of the law of uneven and combined development, it can be only economic. This social revolution can be political when the working class through democratic organisms and led by a revolutionary Marxist party, which has won the majority of the working class, manages to oust the bourgeoisie from government and begins to rule. In contrast to this revolution is that of the opportunist petty bourgeois parties that, from government, in a bureaucratic, dictatorial, and without workers' democracy way, go beyond what they want, what their program tells them, and are forced, as a defensive measure, to expropriate the bourgeoisie and to originate a workers' state. This variation is the one that has taken place throughout this postwar period. There is, finally, another variation, hypothetical, theoretical, which still has not been taken place: the government of opportunistic parties but based on democratic organisations of the working class, as the Soviets. This possibility was what led Lenin to pose that the opportunistic take power in Russia supported by the Soviets.

We call revolutionary the fall of Galtieri and the assumption of Bignone because, like any other democratic revolution, it defeats a counter-revolutionary or reactionary regime to impose a stage of broad democratic freedoms which opens the perspective of achieving the appointment of rulers through elections. But the important thing is the magnitude of democratic freedoms obtained by the mass movement in its confrontation to the counter-revolutionary regime. A characteristic of all democratic revolutions is not just the change of regime, but the fact that those who hold up the "revolutionary" government are bourgeois or petty-bourgeois parties controlling the mass movement. This makes them extremely weak, Kerenskyst governments. On account of the historical tasks accomplished and the parties they lead to power, they can be called bourgeois-democratic revolutions because their most important achievement is to overturn an undemocratic regime to impose a democratic regime that brings to power bourgeois or petty-bourgeois parties representing the mass movement. The Argentine revolution is democratic because it brought down a counter-revolutionary regime and managed to impose a regime of broad freedoms and, most importantly, the power source of General Bignone is due to the support given by the two bourgeois parties controlling the mass movement in Argentina— Peronism the proletariat, and Radicalism the middle class— along with the Peronist labour bureaucracy. Not to mention its tremendous Kerenskyst weakness.

7. The democratic revolution and senile Bismarkism

Many comrades will wonder whether what we call democratic revolution is not the same as what we have called senile Bismarkism, i.e. governments like Franco and King Juan Carlos or Geisel and Figueiredo¹³ in Brazil, which begin to grant increasing democratic freedoms to keep intact the strength of the counter-revolutionary institutions, in fact without touching at all the structure of the counter-revolutionary regime but appending, adding, democratic concessions. We do not believe that what happened with Galtieri's fall and Bignone's rise to power is a consequence of adding, appending democratic concessions to the military regime to keep it in power. What we have called senile Bismarkism is the policy of a counter-revolutionary Bonapartist regime to make democratic concessions, but in order to maintain the regime, not for it to fall abruptly. For example, the Spanish Constitution guarantees state control by the king. In this sense it is very different from the process that took place in Portugal where, as a result of the Carnation Revolution,¹⁴ the fascist regime fell abruptly and a stage of broad democratic freedoms opened. In Spain very important democratic

13 **Ernesto Geisel** (1907–1996) was a Brazilian military leader and politician, who was President of Brazil from 1974 to 1979, during the Brazilian military dictatorship.

Joao Baptista Figueiredo (1918–1999) was a Brazilian military leader and politician. He was chief of the Secret Service (SNI) during the term of his predecessor Ernesto Geisel. Figueiredo was chosen to be President of Brazil by General Ernesto Geisel. He was in office from 1979 to 1985.

14 The **Carnation Revolution** is the name given to the military uprising in Lisbon, Portugal on 25 April 1974 which caused the fall of the Salazarist dictatorship that ruled the country since 1926. The final crisis of the Portuguese empire would allow the Portuguese colonies in Africa and East Timor to achieve their independence after a long colonial war against the metropolis.

concessions have been made, but the Bonapartist monarchic structure planned by Franco, remains. Specifically, there is a monarchy, as Franco wanted, with huge weight and strength, heir of Francoist Bonapartism in a stage of crisis.

The same is true in Brazil: the regime continues unabated totally dominating the State with the same staff and with a completely reactionary constitution that guarantees the military regime its continuity. This does not mean this military regime, which dominates the fundamental structures of power and relies on an ultra-reactionary Constitution made in its image and likeness to ensure its continuity, has not given many democratic freedoms. Neither has the monarch fallen in Spain, nor the Brazilian military forces have been expelled from government, nor have they achieved broad democratic freedoms, mainly to choose the rulers through direct vote. No one votes for the king in Spain. In this sense it is the opposite of the Argentine democratic revolution, which has defeated the military regime and overnight opened the possible election of its rulers and broad freedoms. The military regime had not posed a year ago it would fall two or three months after starting the Malvinas War. Hence, it did not dose or prepare anything for this democratic stage: it was imposed by the crisis and by the mass movement, i.e. by a revolution.

8. The different historic content of the democratic revolutions

The democratic revolutions that characterised the last century or the beginning of this century were called bourgeois democratic by Marxism. They were revolutions that overthrew the feudal or feudal monarchic regime, to impose a democratic regime that would promote capitalist development; the power passed into the hands of sections of the bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie. It was not only a political revolution which inaugurated a new political regime but also a social revolution that removed the power from feudal monarchies to give it to the bourgeoisie.

This historic content of bourgeois-democratic revolutions has changed radically since the triumph of fascism in Italy. Totalitarian, antidemocratic, directly counter-revolutionary regimes, employing methods of civil war against the workers' movement, its parties and its trade unions emerge from this time on. These regimes are not the expression of feudalism but rather of the most advanced capitalism, of the monopolies. The struggle of the workers' movement takes on a deep democratic meaning, similar to the anti-feudal democratic revolutions of the last century but with a completely different content: of struggle against the bourgeois and not the feudal counter-revolution. As Trotsky already noted at the beginning of 1930, the democratic slogans, due to the emergence and triumph of fascism, acquired a new magnitude, an enormous importance. We would say more: the rise of fascism and the counter-revolutionary regimes raised the need for a truly democratic revolution made by the proletariat accompanied by the people. This democratic revolution, whose content is to overturn the bourgeois counter-revolutionary regime, thus becomes a task of the working class and the working people, even when after the defeat of the counter-revolutionary regime is achieved, those bourgeois, petty bourgeois or reformist parties are raised to the government. Precisely because of this, it is a political revolution, because it does not change the class character of the government despite the worker's and people's character of the revolution.

9. Democratic revolution and socialist revolution

The triumph of the Argentine democratic revolution heralded a period of contradictions and struggles ever more acute and explosive. This is due to a quite simple reason: this triumph raises a very serious, unresolved, contradiction that will sharpen increasingly in the stage after the triumph of the democratic revolution. For its immediate objective, apparently the democratic revolution is not anti-capitalist, but rather broad, popular, democratic. This fact also seems to be confirmed because the class parties that come to power as a result of this revolution are bourgeois or petty bourgeois pro-capitalist. Precisely the contradiction is that despite the "popular", broad character of the revolution and the parties it leads to power, it is already an anti-capitalist revolution for two reasons: it defeated a capitalist counter-revolutionary regime and it is carried out by the working people and not by the

bourgeoisie. There is no capitalist counter-revolutionary regime that has ever been overturned by the action of the bourgeoisie, to our knowledge. Sectors of the bourgeoisie may have criticised it; they even may have had— at a particular moment— unity of action with the people in their struggle against these counter-revolutionary regimes. But the social basis of the conflict has always been the people in general and the working class and its allies in particular. Therefore, any triumph of the democratic revolution is a triumph of the working people and never of the bourgeoisie, because it is the people who are faced resolutely, to death, to the counter-revolutionary bourgeois regime.

The serious contradiction that takes place after the democratic triumph is that it is a workers' and people's revolutionary triumph which is monopolised at government level by the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, who consider, moreover, that with their rise to government the revolutionary process is completed. For us it is the opposite. The revolutionary process is extended because this basic contradiction becomes the engine of very serious conflicts that have no solution in the stage opened by the revolutionary triumph, unless the working class takes power.

The Argentine democratic revolution proves this analysis, which is the analysis of the permanent revolution, is real, concrete. Those who have fought and hated the military government, as well as imperialism, have been the working class and the people. The bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy never faced the regime; at most they criticised or pressured it, and most of them collaborated with it. However, the triumph of the democratic revolution will inexorably lead to power Peronism, Radicalism and the union bureaucracy, who are not only bourgeois or reformist, but close friends of the military. This contradiction between the government of the parties (expressed indirectly through Bignone's government already at the present time) and the workers' and people's revolution has already begun to manifest itself: workers today consider the immediate solution of their problems, which are consequence of the capitalist system, and they are not satisfied with the military gone from government. For now they only fight against the effects of the system and not against the system itself, for lack of a revolutionary Marxist party leading the workers' movement. But the struggle is immediate and fundamentally against the evils of the system. We can say it is becoming the cornerstone of the new struggles of the workers' and people's movement.

Before the fall of the military dictatorship everything was crossed by the immediate struggle against it; but after its fall the axis of the struggle of the working class and the people begins to be against the evils of the capitalist and semi-colonial regime and not against its mere counter-revolutionary expression.

Today, the immediate and crucial problems that the workers and the working class face are: unemployment, workdays of 12 and 14 hours, starvation wages, the right to housing and land, as well as education, all of which have to do with the capitalist system. Also raised are fundamental democratic tasks such as destroying the repressive apparatus (the secret services and the Armed Forces) that is inherent to the bourgeois state, and the democratic rights of the soldiers, up to the Constituent Assembly. Of course, the same applies to the anti-imperialist struggle, which is renewed, it is fine-tuned, it becomes immediate after the fall of the counter-revolutionary regime, because it allows us to consider the possibility of not paying the debt, of breaking the covenants that bind us to imperialism and so on.

Almost all these slogans were raised in the previous stage, but we were all aware that it was impossible to consider immediately the struggle to accomplish these tasks if first the regime was not defeated, although these tasks were also raised to defeat it. But once the regime is defeated, a slab was pulled off that allows us to go outside and raise these tasks as immediate and fundamental. This first rate, immediate importance acquired by the anti-capitalist tasks and other democratic and anti-imperialist tasks, such as the struggle for national independence, makes the stage open after the triumph to be the stage of the socialist revolution.

But it is the stage of the socialist revolution not only for the tasks it faces, i.e. because the anticapitalistic tasks take on a much greater weight, but essentially due to the problem of power and government. It is the stage where to solve the problems it is no longer enough the fall of the counter-revolutionary regime, rather it is essential in the economic and social field to overturn the semicolonial capitalist system and— what is crucial, decisive, and characterises the stage— to defeat the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties that dominate power, to snatch it for the working class

and the revolutionary Marxist party. Therefore it is a socialist revolution, because it takes the power, not only social but political as well, from the bourgeoisie. It ceases to be a change of regime to be a change from one social system to another, a socialist revolution, as a result of the working class and the revolutionary party wresting power from the bourgeoisie.

Viewed from another angle, this socialist revolution overcomes the contradiction of a workers' and people's revolution that has defeated the most categorical and clear expression of the capitalist system (the counter-revolutionary political regime) but which brought to power bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, making the democratic revolution (which was already socialist) be completed, transforming this new political revolution into a social revolution.

10. A change in the slogans

The great task of the stage open in Argentina after the victory of the democratic revolution is to defeat any bourgeois and petty bourgeois government that may rise and to try to achieve the triumph of the working class and the revolutionary Marxist party. Therefore, if we take as a determinant of a stage our political line towards governments, we have to say that an inversion occurs in the sign of our fundamental slogans of government. In the stage of the democratic revolution our basic slogan—which does not mean we do not raise all the transitional democratic slogans— has a negative sign: *Down with the tsar, the king, the Kaiser, Somoza, Batista, Peru's, Bolivia's or Argentina's military dictatorship!* We want the fall, to bust and overcome the counter-revolutionary regime. But since the triumph of the democratic revolution, the slogans of power become positive. Without abandoning the negatives, like *Down with the capitalist regime!*, we put a premium now in raising slogans like *Dictatorship of the proletariat!*, or its realisation as *Power to the soviets, the workers' committees, the COB!* OR *For a workers' and people's government that breaks with the bourgeoisie!*, also in its specific expression— i.e. specifying which parties with mass influence we require of them to break with the bourgeoisie.

In Argentina today, this specifically means that we must raise the slogan *For a socialist Argentina and a socialist government!*, which can also be *For a workers' and socialist government!*, because there is yet no petty-bourgeois, reformist party with influence in the workers' movement that we can push by posing the need for a workers' and popular government. There are also no class organisations, institutions, which have power to allow us to pose that these organisations take power. So our formulation is relatively abstract.

This does not mean that we are done in Argentina with an essential struggle through democratic or anti-imperialist slogans, such as the struggle to win the final annihilation of vigilante gangs or the democratic slogan of *All against the counter-revolutionary putsch*, if it occurs, or *Non-payment of foreign debt*.

11. The revolutions of February and October

The experiences of the revolutionary triumphs in this postwar period have confirmed more than ever the theory of permanent revolution and at the same time they have completed and enriched it. Among theoretical innovations that enrich our conception there are two that the Argentine revolution has confirmed.

The old thesis of the permanent revolution insisted that revolutions which combined were the anti-feudal bourgeois-democratic with the national and international socialist. The emergence of a new kind of counter-revolutionary regime of bourgeois sign, like the fascists or semi-fascists, and the loss of weight of feudalism in the backward countries, has led to the emergence of a new type of democratic revolution, anti-capitalist anti-imperialist, not anti-feudal. It is a revolution against a political regime that is socially part of the capitalist system, not facing another pre-capitalist, feudal system.

We believe more than ever in the permanent revolution, in the combination of this new democratic revolution with the socialist revolution.

There is something else. All the great revolutions of this century, except for October, brought to power bourgeois or petty-bourgeois parties. These revolutions were the result of an objective action of the workers' and people's movement that was not conscious it could and should take power. The consciousness of the revolutionary masses was much more backward than the revolution they had carried out, as evidenced by the fact that they had handed power to the enemy class.

In this sense, these revolutions have been the opposite of the October Revolution. The latter was a totally conscious revolution, led by a revolutionary Marxist party that was based on massive support from the working class and the peasants through democratic organs of power, the soviets.

Thus we have a combination and development of the February revolution, unconscious, with the October Revolution, conscious, giving new clarity to the permanent revolution.

Many comrades will wonder what the difference is between the democratic revolution and that of February. We believe that there is one: any democratic revolution is a revolution of February, unconscious, but not all of February revolutions are democratic. Any democratic revolution leads to an abrupt change in the political regime, but this is not the case with all the revolutions of February. Within a democratic regime itself, can great February revolutions not led by revolutionary parties take place? We think so, that they will be inevitable.

This conception of the February Revolution as unconscious has been intuited by Trotsky. He analyses the Russian February and October Revolutions, the first as unconscious and the second as conscious. In this case the February revolution coincided with the democratic revolution.

This is why it is far more significant than the previous example, the great French general strike of 1936. Trotsky defined it as the February revolution. This great general strike was not an abrupt change of political regime but directly a stage of the socialist revolution within the existing, bourgeois-democratic, political regime.

12. The problem of the counter-revolution

Another way to demonstrate, but in the negative, that there has been a successful revolution, it is the policy of the counter-revolution, which will not rest until defeating the new democratic stage. If there had been a change of regime would not want defeat. As Perogrullo¹⁵ would say, a Pinochetist does not want to defeat Pinochet. The Chilean people want to overthrow Pinochet's government, not the Pinochetists. Once Pinochet falls, as for us the Argentine military regime fell, old and newly minted Pinochetists will try to return to power; but they will not be able to do so if they fail to crush by methods of civil war the new democratic regime that replaced Pinochet's and which is incompatible with the fascist or semi-fascist counter-revolution.

This does not mean that there is no bourgeois-democratic counter-revolution, but it will give an extremely unstable regime, which will only exasperate, in this revolutionary era, the revolution/counter-revolution confrontation. A bourgeois-democratic regime may have a permanent counter-revolutionary role, of channelling the workers' struggles, in a stage of stability of the bourgeoisie, of normal capitalist accumulation. In a crisis situation, of intensification of the class struggle, the bourgeois-democratic regime is an interlude to the socialist revolution or to the fascist counter-revolution. This counter-revolution would then be a stage of the bourgeois-democratic regime, which has to be followed by another stage that leads to a totalitarian regime.

13. Our first definition of the situation as revolutionary

We initially made a definition of the situation as revolutionary since the Malvinas War taking as a determining factor the objective, in particular the tremendous crisis of the regime. We leaned on Lenin's definition of revolutionary situation as one in which "*those above are unable and those below do not want to*". It was an objectivist definition. Shortly after we realised that we had ignored

¹⁵ **Perogrullo** is a mythical character in Spanish popular culture known for stating platitudes or truisms, something obvious and known by everyone, e.g. "it rains, the garden will get wet". [Translator's note].

an element that made our definition even deeper, which was the mass mobilisation that was taking place in the country.

At first, as there were no general strikes or mass expressions but only molecular signs of struggle of the working class, and because the same was happening with the mass movement, we concluded that there was an uneven development. The crises of the military regime, as well as of the capitalist system were infinitely more advanced than the workers' and people's mobilisation. After further study of Argentine reality, we saw this characterisation was totally wrong. From the Malvinas War a voluminous mass movement emerged around the massive support for the antiimperialist war, and when the war ended this movement had begun to challenge the military government, specifically Galtieri. How was it prevented this same revolutionary uprising from transforming into bloody clashes on the street? The military accepted they had been defeated and removed Galtieri. They accepted the triumph of the democratic revolution, but trying to control it and manage it, together with the political parties and the new presidential term.

This finding that there was a powerful mass movement, explains the molecular process we had seen and which was a consequence of the relative confusion that occurred in the mass movement when faced with a new situation, the revolutionary triumph. But very quickly this molecular mobilisation (much more intense, qualitatively superior to the molecular process prior to Malvinas, since it covered the whole country) led to the two great general strikes, which reaffirmed there was a revolutionary situation, as the working class was at the helm of the mass movement that had enabled this success. When we realised the revolutionary situation and the triumph of the democratic revolution had occurred as a result of the combination of a chronic and increasingly deeper crisis of the regime and of a colossal mass movement, our first definition based only in the crisis of the regime was completed.

14. The revolutionary situation

Believing to follow Trotsky, and perhaps misinterpreting him, we have always defined a revolutionary situation as one that, unlike the pre-revolutionary, is characterised by a fundamental axis which is the strength of the revolutionary party and even, at times, the existence of organs of workers' power. Trotsky defined the conditions for the triumph of the proletarian revolution as circumscribed to four: 1) the crisis of the capitalist regime, 2) a shift of the petty bourgeoisie to the left, to the revolutionary way out, 3) the revolutionary disposition of the working class, and 4) the existence of a mass revolutionary party and, sometimes, of organs of power. The first three characteristics originated, according to Trotsky, a pre-revolutionary situation. We have believed that the definition of Trotsky was not only of the conditions for the triumph of the proletarian revolution, but rather of the situation itself; we believed that a revolutionary situation opens only when the conditions are right for the revolutionary party to carry out the revolution.

For a long time, we took Lenin's definition only as a fortunate phrase, much simpler, with regards to the revolutionary situation: "*Those above are unable and those below do not want to*". We say all this referring to our specific definition of revolutionary situation by the weight of the objective factor. While Trotsky made this definition in 1940, in the early 1930s he had a definition of revolutionary situation very similar to ours, for objective reasons directly, noting that the total crisis of the English bourgeois regime, its tremendous economic crisis and the fact that the economic crisis led the working class and workers to an impasse, originated a revolutionary situation. In this sense it resembled the definition made by Lenin. These last two definitions, Lenin's and Trotsky's in the early 1930s, were those we took to define the current situation as revolutionary.

However, already since the triumph of the Cuban revolution, we had theorised about the revolutionary situation, thinking the four conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution raised by Trotsky had proved wrong in the Chinese revolution, the Cuban and other colonial revolutions, because they had not taken place either under the class hegemony of the proletariat, or having at its head a revolutionary Marxist party. We concluded then that we should formulate a new definition of revolutionary situation and the conditions for the revolutionary triumph to explain these new situations. Thus, we noted that the conditions for the revolutionary triumph, for

these specific revolutionary situations, were the first two: the crisis of the regime and the shift of the petty bourgeoisie to the left, towards the revolution. These two factors were sufficient to lead to a revolutionary situation if they turned into chronic, exasperating, of a tremendous objective weight. We continue to believe that the definition that we have made lately about revolutionary situation before the fall of Galtieri also fitted and still fits the characterisation we formulated after the Cuban revolution.

15. An advance in the definition of revolutionary situation

If our definition of revolutionary situation is accepted, just like Lenin's, with this we do not deny Trotsky's of the four conditions. Quite the opposite. The definition of Lenin and ours on the one hand and of Trotsky on the other hand, are correct in relation to two different situations. The definition of Lenin, like ours after the Cuban revolution, deals directly with the situations and conditions for the triumph of the democratic revolution, the revolution of February, the unconscious revolution. Instead, there is a qualitatively different revolutionary situation and with [different] conditions to succeed which is that of the October Socialist Revolution. For the triumph of this revolution it is essential the existence of democratic organs of workers' power and a revolutionary Marxist party conscious of the situation and leading the socialist revolution.

This fundamental difference between two clearly defined types of conditions for the triumph of the revolution is of great importance because it accurately defines a pre-February revolutionary situation, prior to the triumph of the February revolution, and another revolutionary situation qualitatively different, much richer, of post-February or pre-October.

16. The crisis and the revolutionary outbreak: the defeat of the Armed Forces of the regime

It is logical that some comrades pose, against everything we have been saying that our definition of democratic revolution is not accompanied by a precise definition of the revolutionary outbreak, essentially of the revolutionary crisis. For these comrades there is no triumph of any revolution, neither democratic nor a successful October, without a confrontation with the Armed Forces or a sector of the Armed Forces and the working people, if there was no armed struggle and if this armed struggle failed to lead to a deep crisis or directly to the dissolution of the Armed Forces of the regime.

As always, we have to try to agree on what we are discussing. If the definitions are made in relation to the political regimes, to the social systems, in relation to the great historic objectives without strictly minding the mechanism, the relations between classes and parties, and the struggles that achieve these historic objectives, our definition is correct. If the reference is whether there are bloody clashes or not in achieving these historic objectives, specifically whether it causes a collapse of the Armed Forces and whether there were physical struggles, as a condition to define as revolution the defeat the counter-revolutionary regime and the emergence a new democratic regime, then our definition is incorrect. For indeed the Argentine democratic revolution was not the result of a physical confrontation with the Armed Forces of the regime. The same goes with regard to the revolutionary crisis or revolutionary outbreak. For us the revolutionary crisis and the revolutionary outbreak may not be bloody. We insist that a revolution is when a historic objective is achieved, specifically the defeat of a counter-revolutionary regime and the emergence of a new democratic regime. If this new regime is the product of the total crisis of the first and of the frontal opposition of the mass movement, although it may be expressed in different ways and not in a violent manner with respect to the Armed Forces of the regime, then there is a crisis and an outbreak in fact revolutionary.

We do not want then a discussion on the label we attach to the Argentine, Peruvian and Bolivian phenomenon. For us, what should be noted is which the decisive fact is: that there have been no bloody battles in a few days or that the historical counter-revolutionary regime was liquidated and a new, dynamic regime opened until taking its final shape in an intensifying class struggle. If this

second fact is central to the definition, it does not mean we eliminate the other phenomena, which are also essential and which will be revealed as increasingly essential as the process unfolds.

It is very important if there have been violent clashes that have caused the stagnation of the Armed Forces, or even their total defeat as in 1952 in Bolivia and in 1959 in Cuba. They are democratic revolutions that destroy the Armed Forces, cornerstone of the state structure of the bourgeoisie. It is a revolution that we may call double, that by making the democratic revolution it demolishes the bourgeois institutions; not just the bourgeois counter-revolutionary regime, but far beyond, all bourgeois institutions of domination, mainly the Armed Forces. The reverse is also of great importance: a bourgeois, democratic revolution, which defeats a bourgeois counter-revolutionary regime, but which leaves intact the fundamental pillar of the state structure of the bourgeoisie, the Armed Forces, but with a major crisis which still does not carry them to stagnation, to a final crisis.

According to how the bourgeois democratic revolution occurs— with or without clashes or confrontations, with defeat or stagnation for the Armed Forces of the regime, to the state structure, or safeguarding the state structure— will be the immediate tasks confronting the course of the revolution after the regime change. But it does not cancel the fact that a regime change has already taken place. When the regime is defeated but its Armed Forces remain, the great task will be to move towards their destruction. If they do not exist, if one has been able to destroy them, the great task is to avoid by all means that they be reconstituted by the bourgeoisie, accelerating the seizure of power by the proletariat, which will thus institutionalise its own Armed Forces.

17. The problem of the organs of power

A position similar to that of the revolutionary crisis and outbreak and fighting in the streets to destroy the Armed Forces as a *sine qua non* condition for characterising a regime change as revolutionary, is the one pointing to the need for the revolutionary process to be categorically channelled by institutional organs of workers' power.

We also disagree whether this condition is essential to be able to define a regime change; i.e., to accept as a revolution a defeat of a counter-revolutionary regime and the emergence of a democratic regime only when there are institutional organs of power, i.e. workers' organisations wielding power. We believe that, just like the issue of the destruction of the Armed Forces, it is a condition that inflates the character of the triumph, makes it even more powerful; but, like the destruction of the Armed Forces, it can take place in the journey from democratic revolution to socialist revolution; it does not have to be prior to the triumph of the democratic revolution. Then we do not agree with the institutional and working class character of the democratic revolution.

18. Some analogies

Historic analogies and these discussions, theoretical and political— not just about our country—, will have broad and important theoretical implications. For us, the triumph of the Argentine “democratic” revolution is similar in historic scale to the Russian revolutions of 1905 and of February, to the German that overthrew the Kaiser, to the Spanish in 1931 when the king resigned. In these cases the anti-bourgeois content was mixed with the fight against feudal remnants— especially in the case of Russia— and absolute monarchies. In the case of the Kaiser and the Spanish king the task was anticapitalistic already, because they were not essentially feudal monarchies, although they dragged forms and remnants of feudalism of totally secondary nature.

But the Argentine democratic revolution in this historic moment we are living has the same meaning as the Sandinista revolution that overturned Somoza, as that which overturned the Peruvian generals which actually annihilated the military regime, and as that of the general strike that overturned definitely the regime of Garcia Meza¹⁶ in Bolivia. All these were democratic revolutions.

16 **Luis García Meza Tejada** (b. 1929), led the fascist *coup d'état* on 17 July 1980 defeating the Interim Constitutional President Lidia Gueiler Tejada, days before Dr. Hernan Siles Suazo assumed government after having won the presidential elections. In 1995 he was condemned to 30 years prison for the serious human rights violations committed by his regime.

Of these revolutions, only the Sandinista managed to destroy the Armed Forces. On a global scale, the triumph of the Argentine democratic revolution, the revolution of February, looks like the year 1952 in Bolivia and the Cuban revolution, in addition to those already mentioned. Although the last two resemble the Nicaraguan revolution as far as the destruction of the Armed Forces, the Cuban has been the only one which advanced towards the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and imperialism; hence we can say that it is the only free country in the Americas. Therefore it remains to be clarified at the scale of our continent, whether in Ecuador and Santo Domingo there were not also, in fact, triumphs of the democratic revolution, which in the case of Santo Domingo was crushed by a directly imperialist counter-revolution. Apparently the invasion is explained by the triumph of the revolution which had to be confronted by an armed counter-revolution. We confirm thus our premise that all democratic revolutions can only be pushed back with a counter-revolutionary victory by violent means.

We also need to specify that these great Latin American revolutionary triumphs are part of the great triumphs of the colonial revolution, like China, Vietnam, Korea, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, and also with certain similarities with the Portuguese revolution, despite this one being metropolitan. All these revolutions have in common that they are product of a crisis of the counter-revolutionary regime and the capitalist system and of the mobilisation of the masses that demolished the counter-revolutionary regimes and opened a new type of regime.

19. Trotsky' position

From these analogies it becomes clear that Trotsky had at least a conception similar to ours about the change of regime. He even wrote that you cannot go from one regime to another without a commotion, without giving it the name of revolution. There is a classic example that guides our conception.

Trotsky defined the fall of the King of Spain as a democratic revolution in the process towards a socialist revolution, as part of the permanent revolution, and yet the King of Spain fell following an electoral struggle, a defeat that led to his resignation, without any clashes in the streets between the Armed Forces and the mass movement. The crisis of the monarchy was combined with a general repudiation by all the Spanish people and, precisely to save the Armed Forces, the monarchical regime admitted defeat and thus opened the triumph of the democratic revolution. In this sense, the Spanish revolution is the historical analogy most appropriate to the Peruvian, Bolivian and Argentine revolutions. Both in that and these there was no real clash, nor a revolutionary outbreak— in the sense of military struggles in the streets—, nor a bloody revolutionary crisis, and yet, the Spanish was considered by Trotsky as a triumphant democratic revolution. In the Spanish revolution there were no workers' and people's organisations prior to the seizure of power. The workers' and people's power at a given time exists, but it may be fragmented, atomized, neither organised nor institutional. Always, when the existing power and regime come into crisis, it is no man's land and there are in fact two powers.

20. Formal criticism

In the Argentine case, to our definition that there has been a successful revolution, two objections are raised, of a formal nature, but which can be impressive. These two objections are: first, that a general appointed by the Army, or rather by the leading members of the Army (because it is unknown whether he had the general support of the officers) is who runs the government. The other objection is that this military government elected by the Army will cease to exist as such only when the elections are carried out, a year and a half after the assumption of General Bignone.

Reality is responsible to dispel those two objections of a formal nature. That a general, as Bignone, appointed by the Armed Forces, rules should not blind us to several facts: first and foremost, that the military Junta which ruled when Bignone was elected, disappeared, went into crisis, it stopped working; second, that the true support of Bignone ceased to be the military Junta in

total crisis and went on to be all the recognised political parties in Argentina, especially those of the Multiparty and the major parties, Peronism and Radicalism, along with trade union bureaucracy. The source of government power changed, from the military to the political parties with mass influence. This is a significant fact.

The other objection, which is that this government only disappears with the elections, ignores that we are experiencing a period of incredible democratic freedoms when compared with the situation prior to the Malvinas War and, moreover, the government itself has set a fixed date for its disappearance; which means it already fell, that what is being administered is its fall, trying to make it in slow motion in accordance with the whole bourgeoisie. Who have prevented this fall from being violent are the bourgeois political parties and the bureaucracy who support this government, not the military, who disappeared as Junta of Commanders in Chief at the time of his appointment. That the bourgeoisie has given the current government a grace period to not crash into the ground, that it has managed to get it to fall slowly, does not mean that the fall has not occurred. Never mind the speed of the fall; what matters is that the fall has already occurred and it goes straight to smash against the ground.

21. A radical change of policy and slogan

Nothing shows better than these two formal objections, like all others of content, are false and that there has been a democratic revolution, than the fate of our central slogan during all the military government of *Down with the dictatorship!* Although we have renovated it and spruced it to update it by raising *Government by the Congress elected in 1976!* and *Leave now!*, it has already ceased being the axis, our fundamental slogan for the whole mass movement and for our own party which has transformed it into a propaganda slogan, as a matter of fact of secondary importance.

22. A dangerous method

There have been comrades who, based on careful observation of reality, when seeing the extent of democratic freedoms achieved, pointed out that there had been a change of regime from counter-revolutionary to bourgeois democratic. As today we agree with this statement that once we fought, it is necessary to dwell on the reasons that led us not to accept, at the time, this definition.

For us the definition that a new bourgeois democratic regime had emerged and that the counter-revolutionary regime was defeated, is reformist— and, what is equally or more serious than reformist, dangerously wrong as method— if it does not go accompanied by the proposition that there was a revolutionary crisis, a defeat of the counter-revolutionary regime and a triumph of the democratic revolution. If we do not say that the bourgeois democratic revolution triumphed, any attempt to say that the military regime became bourgeois-democratic is doing reformism; it is to believe that without a revolution a military regime can be transformed, can be defeated and go to an antagonistic regime. It would ultimately prove right the Communist Party, which always bet on the democratic military who were going to lead us to a democratic regime that would overcome, by the action of these same generals and the civilian-military convergence, the counter-revolutionary regime without need to make a revolution to achieve this.

Only if our method is accepted, our premise that there has been a triumphant democratic revolution, we can then accept the characterisation that the old regime was defeated and a new one arose. §

PART II

The stages of the Argentine revolution

The Malvinas War, the military defeat and the fall of Galtieri, but mainly the taking of office by Bignone, divided in two the history of the military dictatorship and the country in the short time of about three months. Thus, we can define four stages in the revolutionary process and its background.

The **first stage** is before the Malvinas War. It is characterised because, although the situation remains counter-revolutionary and the government relatively solid, the crisis of the military government and the semi-colonial capitalist system begins, along with the resistance of the mass movement.

The **second stage** begins with the Malvinas War. The situation transforms from counter-revolutionary directly into revolutionary as a result of the combination of mass mobilisations supporting the reconquest of the islands, with the worsening of the crisis.

The **third stage** opens with the military defeat, continues with the resignation of Galtieri and culminates with the government of Bignone which means the triumph of the democratic revolution. This is the stage of the revolutionary crisis and its culmination in the revolutionary triumph.

The **fourth stage** is following the inauguration by Bignone and which we have to define as a *new* revolutionary situation far superior than before the rise of Bignone, because the source of government power cease to be essentially the Armed Forces to be the bourgeois political parties and the union bureaucracy.

The stage of the Cordobazo and the current stage

In general, the sequences we have pointed out echo the experiences of the workers' and mass movement of the previous uprising stage, caused by the semi insurrection of the mass movement that was the Cordobazo and whose ripples spread across the country, forcing the military regime to open a democratic stage. This revolutionary upsurge shook the military dictatorship but without becoming, in our opinion, a true democratic revolution, since the Armed Forces were able to manage its fall and stability, i.e. they prevented a much larger crisis of the military regime and its precipitous decline with revolutionary characteristics, as it happened now.

What we have witnessed from the Malvinas War is the famous *Argentinazo* that we had been advocating.

The Malvinas War originated a revolutionary movement of national and popular characteristics. In contrast to this, the Cordobazo led to a very serious deviation by an important sector of the vanguard, who faced an artificial civil war, caused by the Montoneros and the ERP¹ guerrillas, cutting the experience of the workers' and mass movement.

1 **Montoneros** was the main Peronist guerrilla organisation in Argentina. It was born encouraged by Peron himself. They became known in 1970 with the kidnapping and later execution of former President Genera Aramburu, one of the main leaders of the coup in 1975 against Peron. In 1973 it supported the brief government of Hector Jose Campora, who was quickly overthrown by Peron. On 1 May 1974 Peron drove them out from the massive rally of the day. It was primarily composed of young men and women of the middle class.

Today it seems that the threads re-join, the workers' and people's movement takes up the experience of all previous struggles and leads them to a higher plane.

The crisis of the military regime inaugurated by Onganía is qualitatively different, in all aspects, to the crisis the current regime had and has, starting with the economic field and continuing with the own crisis of the Armed Forces. These, throughout the Lanusse period, were monolithic, very strong, well-structured, i.e., totally different from the current situation.

Lanusse's stage seems a weak dress rehearsal of the stage we have entered now.

The crisis of the government and the system

Although the character of the regime and of the situation as counter-revolutionary did not change, the stage prior to the Malvinas War is the beginning, deepening and extension of the crisis of the military government and semi-colonial capitalist system. It begins in early 1981 with the most serious economic crisis that the country has had in this postwar period. More than a crisis, we should speak of a collapse of the national capitalist economy, thus culminating the process of degradation and decline in recent decades. From here, begins to change the relationships between classes and their different sectors among themselves, and of all of them with the government.

Of these changes, the most important was that of the middle class. This, which wandered as tourists around the whole world thanks to the crumbs the financial fatherland¹ would throw to them from the over exploitation of the workers, broke violently with the dictatorship, ceasing to be its popular support. Thereafter the middle class, without losing its instability and cowardice, placed itself on the side of workers and the working class which were already facing the regime since its inception. The result was that all the people began to confront the military dictatorship, to resist it even if only in molecular form, not joined into a giant movement, since it had no clear political axis. The struggles, the resistance, took shape as economic problems in a factory and regional issues, the general hatred against the economic policy of Martínez de Hoz² and against other ministers who followed him. The resistance was rather for the immediate problems and did not have a single axis.

The demonstrations and the call to a general strike by the CGT-Brasil,³ as well as the demonstrations of the Mothers,⁴ were not, in 1981, more than weak signs of the profound change in the mentality and attitude of the mass movement, which had begun its active resistance to the regime.

The crisis, which began as economic, spread and deepened at all levels: the bourgeois political parties, mainly Radicalism and Peronism, began to split into public factions; different bosses sectors

The **ERP** (*Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* — People's Revolutionary Army) was a guerrilla group, the military branch of the PRT-EC (*Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores – El Combatiente – Workers' Revolutionary Party – The Fighter*) led by Mario Roberto Santucho in Argentina during the 1970s. It emerged after the split of the PRT between the sector led by Moreno, the *PRT-La Verdad* [The Truth], and Santucho's group, which was encouraged to guerrillism by the majority faction led by Mandel of the Fourth International.

- 1 **Financial fatherland** (Spanish: *Patria financiera*) refers to the of economic sector formed by finance speculators and large lending banks that since 1976 have accumulated huge sums of money from the total guarantee of the Nation for all obligations issued, without limit; warranty covering both principal and interest. In practice, the amount of wealth they would accrue would be limited only by their audacity. The consequences are still being paid today with the largest proportion of Argentina's foreign debt due to conversion by successive government efforts of repeated liquidations and nationalisation of private debt, added to enormous subsidies and systemic corruption.
- 2 **Jose Alfredo Martínez de Hoz** (1925–2013) was an Argentine executive and policy maker. He served as Minister of the Economy under the military dictatorship of Jorge Rafael Videla, between 1976 and 1981. He is considered a representative of economic liberalism at any cost, and intimately linked to the “financial fatherland” and international financial agencies and centres.
- 3 In 1979 the **General Confederation of Labour** (CGT) split itself in two sectors. The sector supporting the military dictatorship and with the approval of the latter kept the traditional headquarters in Azopardo Street, while the sector more in opposition to the dictatorship had headquarters in Brasil Street. They became then known as CGT-Azopardo and CGT-Brasil.
- 4 The **Mothers of Plaza de Mayo** (Spanish: *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*), began to march in 1977 at the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, in front of the *Casa Rosada* presidential palace, in public defiance of the government's state terrorism policy intended to silence all opposition. Because of their courage and heroism they earned massive support in the country and the rest of the world. Their main slogan was “for the appearance alive of the disappeared”.

faced each other regarding the response to give to the economic crisis and their relations with the government; the trade union movement crystallised its division into two confederations and several factions with their own discipline.

Nothing illustrates the deepening of the crisis than what took place at government level when Viola¹ was replaced by Galtieri. Viola had lasted just six months as against five years of President Videla, and his replacement was traumatic, full of doubts and crises, which led finally to General Galtieri's government.

A revolutionary situation

With the Malvinas War the leap from a counter-revolutionary to a revolutionary situation took place. The initiation of the war was precisely a diversionary manoeuvre by the most outcast and reactionary proxies perched on Galtieri's Government. There are testimonies allowing us to say that the plan of Galtieri and the Junta was to declare a jingoist, -non anti-imperialist war, as they were sure they would win it due to the support of US imperialism, their brotherly partner and ally in suppressing the mass movement in Argentina and Central America. Thanks to the hypothetical triumph they thought they would remain at least another six years in power and, what was more important, they believed they could so divert against England the growing hatred of the workers toward the government, making them forget the economic crisis and the regime's crimes. Instead of averting the crisis, they opened a clear revolutionary situation.

Several miscalculations were fatal to the dictatorship. The first was with respect to US imperialism: not only did it not support the regime but fully supported British imperialism, just like all other imperialist countries. The second and decisive mistake was the attempt to manipulate the mass movement to support "their war". This attempt led to the outbreak of the first unitary and anti-imperialist revolutionary mobilisation of the Argentine mass movement since the taking of government by the military. The mass movement transformed this insane military adventure began by the dictatorial government into a revolutionary mobilisation at national and Latin American level, which not only faced British imperialism but also its Yankee partner and all other imperialist countries. The war and the mobilisations it originated managed to impose a front of the Argentine nation with all imperialist movements in the world and the Latin American countries, also shaken by imperialist aggression and the economic crisis. And, more importantly than that, it managed to weld, with a firm revolutionary will, the working class and all other exploited sectors into a single mass mobilisation. As a result, the workers finally overcame the stage of fragmented and defensive struggles that characterised all confrontations of the working class and the people against the regime before the Malvinas War.

This mass mobilisation began against British imperialism continued against Yankee imperialism, strengthened ties with the workers of the Latin American countries and, finally, ended up facing Galtieri himself and his government, for inept and treacherous in the conduct of the war, as it happened when the mass movement began to boo Galtieri in a popular rally in Plaza de Mayo.

Finally, the third major miscalculation of the military dictatorship was to believe that with the war it would overcome the government crisis. On the contrary, the military adventure brought out, like every war, all the ills and contradictions of the regime of the murderous dictatorship and also those of the semi-colonial capitalist system itself. As from the war the economic, social and political crisis accelerated to unprecedented limits.

Of all the errors committed by the military dictatorship, the decisive one will be to have called the masses to support the Malvinas War, because it enabled the anti-imperialist revolutionary emergence of these. Galtieri himself confessed that he wanted to negotiate the end of the war, but had to abandon the project because the other commanders told him it was impossible because it would clash with the popular mobilisation.

This entirely new situation which opens with the Malvinas War has been defined by us as a revolutionary situation. It was caused by the intensification of the crisis, with the revolutionary

¹ General **Roberto Eduardo Viola** (1924–1994) succeeded General Videla as de facto president of Argentina from 29 March to 11 December 1981.

emergence of the workers' movement. This emergence and revolutionary unity of the working people to confront imperialism was the opposite by the vertex to the general policy of the whole Argentine bourgeoisie which, except for tiny sectors, did not want to break, let alone face British and Yankee imperialisms. The Malvinas War not only resulted in a revolutionary situation and a great mass movement but caused a radical distinction between the whole bourgeoisie and the people. Those who mobilised to support the war and gave it an anti-imperialist character were the people and not the bourgeoisie, which had a defeatist position.

The Pope came to the country to reinforce this defeatist attitude of the bourgeoisie. Thus, the same day as the Pope called his Mass, the final struggle by the British to occupy Puerto Argentino had already begun. The Pope has to be seen, in this case, as the mobiliser of the petty bourgeois and bourgeois masses to impose the capitulation to British imperialism. Setting aside whether or not it was appropriate to negotiate the end of hostilities due to the correlation of military forces— which is a problem of another king and not political— the Pope came to serve the policy of imperialism and the Argentine bourgeoisie.

Crisis and revolutionary triumph

The defeat in the war transformed the revolutionary situation directly into a revolutionary crisis, if we define as such the fact that the crisis of the system and the rise of the mass movement create a situation in which power is suspended in the air and the institutions that ruled us fail to do so.

The defeat in the war was a new leap in the general crisis of the system and the military government, which took it to unsuspected limits. We have to insist that it was not only a crisis of the military government but of the entire Argentine capitalism. Thus, as a result of the defeat, Galtieri was dismissed, with a palace coup, but without being able for days to appoint a replacement. As a consequence of the revolutionary crisis the country is left without governing institutions, as the military Junta is dissolved given the impossibility of the various Forces part of it agreeing among them to appoint a president. The crisis of the Junta of Commanders in Chief is the fundamental crux of the revolutionary crisis, because it was the fundamental institution supporting the military regime. Each armed force was left thus ruling a sector of the government on its own account and risk, without being accountable to any institution of central and national type. It is what political commentators aptly called "military feudalism". In the end, the army tried to overcome on its own account this total crisis of the military regime and the capitalist system, naming Bignone president.

What is important is not the Army has appointed Bignone, but when and by what circumstances it appointed him. Bignone, before taking office and to do so, asks for the support of all political parties and the trade union bureaucracy, mainly of Peronism and the Radical Party. At the meeting with them, Bignone says he does not know whether he will take office and how many days he will last if the parties do not support him. And the political parties controlling the mass movement— mainly Peronism and its trade union bureaucracy the workers' movement and the Radicals the middle class— give him their full support to come to power. Thus they become his most solid institutional support, because the other two armed forces do not do it, and probably even important sectors of the Army either.

This capitulation of the Army, this cry for help to the political parties, is not a gracious attitude of high ranking Army officers; rather it is caused by the total crisis of power existing in the country. That is, it is caused because in fact there is a revolution, or by the fear of the violent outbreak of a revolution, which leads to the emergence of a government that rises not only due to the support of political parties, but based on a clear program, which is the total liquidation from the institutional point of view of the military government; a government that is committed to broader political, democratic freedoms and elections after a fixed term; it rises not only supported by the parties, but by accepting to immediately open an absolutely democratic stage to, through elections, totally change the regime.

The character of the Bignone government

The Bignone government, which we define as the product of a revolution, also from a formal point of view, strictly of the institutions, can be defined as a co-government of the Armed Forces and the Multiparty, as a government of the Army backed by the Multiparty— by Peronism and Radicalism. And today, with the reconstitution of the military Junta, [it could also be defined] as the old government of Videla or of Galtieri supported, nurtured and agreed to by the political parties. We believe it is not so, although we could accept the formula “co-government of the Army with the parties”. We believe that one of the great tasks given to the Bignone government is to achieve the urgent unity of the three armed forces, pillar of the bourgeois state. They recognise that there is a total crisis of revolutionary type that it is prolonged, and that they have to restructure the Junta. But this restructuring is completely formal; it fails to achieve a viable and strong military Junta, nor does it manage to strengthen the Bignone government. The latter, however, is an extremely weak government, with virtually no strength, already liquidated, which prolongs its agony, it has survival but it's already dead; therefore, we believe it is a Kerenskyst or semi-Kerenskyst government.

A new revolutionary situation

Precisely the extreme weakness of the government is for us a symptom that it is a government after the triumph of a revolution, which is also reflected in the organisations in which it rests, which are the political parties and the union bureaucracy. Four factors characterise the stage open after Bignone. The first is the inexorable move to national elections. The second is the extraordinarily broad democratic and legal opening, the broadest the country has ever known. The third is the intensification of the crisis of the semicolonial capitalist system and, as part of this crisis, of the government and the bourgeois institutions, which become extremely weak. The fourth is the extension of mass mobilisations, particularly the emergence of the working class, with its traditional methods, strikes and demonstrations, as the main undisputed leader of the workers. The ultimate expression of this phenomenon is the general strikes.

Of these four factors, the bourgeoisie is trying to use in its favour primarily the first two, contrasting them with the other two, to curb the total crisis, both economic as well as political. of the bourgeois regime and also to stifle the revolutionary mobilisation of the mass movement. Specifically, the bourgeoisie wants the masses to stop mobilising and that the Armed Forces and the government gain ground through the call to elections, with the legal democratic opening. These attempts have failed so far because, on the contrary, the democratic freedoms have helped the masses to lose fear and to be released in waves to fight. This policy of the bourgeoisie can be fortified (and we do not deny the possibility of this happening) and even materialised for a short interregnum of one or two years, through the play of bourgeois democratic institutions: what we have called bourgeois democratic counter-revolution.

The stage opened with Bignone is characterised because the unitary, revolutionary, mass mobilisation against imperialism during the Malvinas War has become a huge mobilisation against the Armed Forces, against the most terrible expressions of the military government and the national capitalist system. This is expressed with great mobilisations against taxes, against the landowners— occupying lands and fighting against evictions and indexation in the cities—, with insubordination and public protest against high-ranking officers of the Armed Forces, with regional mobilisations against government economic policy that condemns the provinces to hopeless crises, with the marches of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo against genocide and for democratic freedoms, with the chain of police strikes for salary increases with soup kitchens, and primarily with increasing partial strikes of the workers' movement and the two general strikes that paralysed the country. This last fact is the most important, without diminishing the massive and popular character of the struggle against the government.

Parallel to this rising massive mobilisation the crisis of the entire system has worsened. Thus, despite the reconstitution of the military Junta, the different Armed Forces continue facing each other publicly, agreeing only on the need for elections in a fixed term. In the Armed Forces the

sharpest expression of this crisis is manifested in the police conflicts, although it has other spectacular expressions as was revealed at the ceremony to honour the fallen in the war.¹

The bourgeois and imperialist counter offensive

The great manoeuvre by the government, the political parties and the union bureaucracy is to divert the mass mobilisation to the internal elections of the major parties first, and then to the national election, to finally end with a bourgeois-democratic regime to stabilise and overcome the crisis the bourgeois system. Part of this plan goes is about overcoming and reorganising as quickly as possible the major national bourgeois parties, which are also shocked and in crisis following the triumph of the democratic revolution.

Nothing illustrates better this policy of trying to overcome the crisis with progress towards a bourgeois-democratic regime that the contradiction occurred between the Multiparty and the two general strikes. The march and rally of the Multiparty at the end of last year had a precise and essential goal: to prevent the general strike shaking the government and the bourgeois political parties. With this funeral counter-revolutionary march towards bourgeois democracy, at the same time it was trying to kill two birds with one stone, trying to gain prestige and be placed at centre stage as opposition to the government, wrenching this place from the working class and the trade unions.

But it is also true that the rally of the Multiparty aimed to clinch the deal with the government to ensure a course towards bourgeois democracy without constraints on the part of the latter, forcing it to concede defeat and its dependence on the parties of the Multiparty primarily. This rally was to reinforce the widespread rejection of the compact proposed by the Armed Forces at the time, and which was rejected by the political parties because it was an attempt to condition future bourgeois democratic institutions and future room for manoeuvre of the bourgeois parties to channel and control the rising mass movement amid a total economic and institutional crisis of the bourgeoisie. The Multiparty, with the march and rally and the rejection to the compact the military government wanted to impose, showed it was still the key factor of government support, precisely because power is in the streets and it would already be in the hands of the working class and the people if these parties did not support the government, if they had not given it the power that would have to be theirs to this unstable and weak government.

The Multiparty mobilisation had then this other side as well, which was to remind the government it had its full support, but only if the project of suicide of the military government and the establishment of a bourgeois-democratic regime continued.

This true, but partial and unilateral element of the policy of the bourgeois parties, especially the rally of the Multiparty, was taken in the context of the general policy of the Multiparty of confrontation with the working class and of agreement with the government, to be used by Stalinism and opportunistic centrism to call the masses to attend the rally of the Multiparty. They forgot that the Multiparty was, is and will be, until the new-democratic government comes, the mainstay of Bignone's government, as long as the latter continues to meet, as it is doing, the plan drawn up in common of going to a bourgeois democracy.

Beware of false optimism

Everything we are saying should not lead us to confusion: to believe the bourgeois plan has fallen in a vacuum, that its manoeuvre to divert the revolutionary mobilisation to the electoral process, to the reorganisation of parties, has no success. On the contrary, it has achieved, in good measure, to postpone the big showdowns against the capitalist system. It has managed to make us forget, to some extent, the exploitation and massive economic crisis of the regime and system. It has managed seemingly to overcome the crisis of the major parties and push away the possibility of a general strike to face the regime in a total, complete way until its fall. In the current stage the bourgeoisie is content

¹ In this ceremony the high command military officers were insulted by the relatives of the dead soldiers.

to overcome this crisis of the bourgeois political parties as a prerequisite to achieve a solid bourgeois democracy, strongly structured in the next stage of constitutional government.

As all manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie in this period of crisis and revolutionary upsurge, it has short flight; they are ephemeral successes, but dangerous successes if they continue to accumulate. While apparently it has managed to overcome the crisis of the bourgeois parties, the level of affiliation of these has been truly impressive— 30 percent of voters— and this has aroused political passions among the workers as we had never observed in spite of the Argentine being people so politicised. This political concern explains the number of affiliations and the intensity with which they were carried out. This explains the success of the Workers Party (PO) and ours. It is necessary to draw revolutionary conclusions from this fact, new due to its magnitude, which is most important to take into account in our immediate policy.

Towards the outbreak of the political and trade union Peronist slab

Nothing will be the same in our country since the triumph of the democratic revolution against the dictatorship. Everything will be subverted, challenged and overcome. Everything old will enter into crisis. Of these crises, the most important, the one which will have a historic value will be the crisis of Peronism. Despite its huge affiliation, or precisely because of it, it has entered a new stage in his agony, although it may seem otherwise. This crisis will cause a real mental revolution throughout the workers' and masses movement, monopolised almost absolutely for over 40 years, politically and in the trade unions, by Peronism.

In what follows we will try to show why Peronism has entered its historic, definitive crisis.

Peron's government and the workers' movement

Because of the colossal betrayals of Argentine communism and socialism, which supported the Yankee colonisation of the country while politically controlled the working class, Peronism not only managed to displace these traitor workers' parties but also, which was a real tragedy for the workers' movement, to degenerate its ideology and class consciousness. From Peronism, the workers' movement believes in a good, paternal government, which grants concessions them from above.

We are not hiding the socioeconomic background of the rise of Peronism. Argentina was the world's most advanced semi-colonial country, the richest, which for decades had been the Saudi Arabia of the imperialist regime: fifth in world trade for over 50 years. Moreover, this semi-colony could, during World War II, accumulate large amounts of foreign exchange and an even stronger, privileged economic position. To this juncture situation, it is added a great previous capitalist accumulation and European and North American culture and consumption patterns. Peron's government, in an effort to resist US imperialism without losing its reactionary features, could make tremendous concessions to the workers' movement thanks to the new wealth accumulated by Argentine capitalism, added to those already inherited.

A serious contradiction

The other side of these concessions to the workers' movement was the trade union organisation and the internal commissions and delegate committees.¹ Under Peronism, Argentine unions have organised more than 90 percent of the working class, which in turn organised in internal commissions and delegate committees. This union organisation was accompanied and product, at the same time, of great struggles of the workers and not just mere state protection of the Peronist government. The great union strikes, as well as general strikes, were dozens and dozens in Argentina. The Argentine trade union movement on the one hand had the reactionary, pro-capitalist control of their unions by the state, and on the other hand, contrary to this, had a powerful grassroots and also union organisations.

¹ In Argentinian labour legislation since the time of Peron, enterprise or workplace committees are called **INTERNAL COMMISSIONS**. In enterprises with large amount of workers, the workers elect their delegates and these form the **delegates committee**; then the **DELEGATES COMMITTEE** elect a smaller **internal commission**.

This union militancy and organisation came into conflict, in the consciousness and militancy of the Argentine proletariat, with its political consciousness. The concessions Peron's government had granted led the workers' movement to believe that all its political perspective was to have a good, paternal government, with a State which also granted concessions to the workers' movement. This conception, profoundly bourgeois and Bonapartist, retrograde, of the Argentine working class, has caused this insurmountable contradiction for 40 years. The peculiar thing is that after all these years the working class has been unable to overcome this contradiction between its ultra-capitalist and, let's be clear, ultra-reactionary consciousness, looking backwards, back to a government to make it concessions, paternalistic and Bonapartist, without minding whether it is reactionary or not, and its tremendous fighting spirit and union organisation. This contradiction is now expressed in the crisis of Peronism and it will have its historical resolution.

Peronism in opposition

Peronism was a political party and a union movement originated and protected by the bourgeois State and its Bonapartist government. The fall of the Peronist government, contrary to what one might think, did not change its nature of organisation with Bonapartist characteristics and seeking state protection. General Peron on the plain had as much or more strength than when he was in government to impose his will on his party and to continue to maintain the support of the workers' and mass movement. His tremendous strength came from the political horizon of the workers' movement, which wanted to reclaim its paternal government, to recover the old government rather than to move towards a workers' government. Thanks to this, Peron and his union bureaucracy could manipulate the workers directly against their historical interests, making them vote a pro-imperialist government like Frondizi,¹ or support with all their might Onganía's *coup d'état* without the working class entering into crisis with Peronism and its sinister union bureaucracy. Without a Bonaparte to impose solutions to conflicts between different wings of the movement and in general between the labour movement and the trade union bureaucracy, without the perspective of a government to protect unions and bureaucracy from the bourgeois state, Peronism could not have survived, it would have disappeared.

The socio-economic basis of Peronism survival has to do with its emergence: Argentina, despite its decline, started from an ultra-privileged situation, as the richest semicolonial country within the imperialist regime. This allowed it to continue the substitution of imports, an industrial development based essentially on a strong domestic market (if we take into account the colonial and semicolonial countries), to continue the pattern of European and North American consumption, and reinforcing these trends with a massive inflow of imperialist capital, mainly since the governments of Aramburu² and Frondizi. This relatively slow decline (although the Peronist government was not in power), made it possible to maintain the Peronist union leaders in government through a dual relationship: of collaboration and protection of each of the governments and each of state apparatuses, at the same time combined with political protection or negotiations with the Peronist movement and General Peron himself.

Peronism remains as a structure essentially because of the union structure, which on one hand retains a Peronist ideology— which means seeking agreement with the military and the protection of the State, regardless of who is in the State— and on the other hand rests politically on Peron in order not to break with the mass movement which was and remains Peronist, which seeks the return of General Peron so he, from there, can grant them concessions. This makes the bureaucracy to have so perfidious, so reactionary role throughout this stage. It is the bureaucracy who makes a pact with

1 **Arturo Frondizi** (1908–1995) was an Argentinian lawyer, journalist and politician who was elected President of Argentina between 1 May 1958, and 29 March 1962, for the Intransigent Radical Civic Union (a splinter group from the Radical Civic Union). Under his program of “Developmentalism”, he encouraged increased foreign investment. He was overthrown by a military coup d'état lead by Juan Carlos Onganía..

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

Fronzizi, negotiates with Illia,¹ later is part of the coup with Onganía and ultimately negotiates, fully cooperates with the military regime, the one which had overthrown Peronism. This possibility of agreement of the Peronist bureaucracy with various bourgeois governments in power has been a constant of its performance, with some exceptions: the first year or year and a half of Aramburu's government and to some extent the Illia stage. But the ultimate reason for this possibility, that the union bureaucracy survives and in turn is an advocate of Peronism, is also given by the legacy of the huge accumulated wealth of Argentine capitalism, which always allowed for no unemployment, for wages to be negotiated, i.e., that it could carry out at least, when no new concessions could be achieved, a reformist policy of not giving up conquests but to negotiate them giving up only small setbacks.

But this phenomenon changes completely when the great economic crisis of capitalism and world imperialism and its reflection in Argentina begins, which means a qualitative change in the policy of the bourgeoisie in relation to the workers' movement and the unions themselves. This phenomenon occurs from 1974-1975 as a national expression of the first great crisis of capitalism [in the postwar period]. This situation will prevent any reformist politics by the bourgeoisie in relation to the workers' movement and will force it to carry a total offense against it.

The government of Isabel

The government of Isabel, as the military government which replaces her, already reflects the profound contradiction of the Peronist movement: the inability to make any concessions, not even to respect or trim the conquests of the workers' movement, but having to directly suppress them from every point of view. This causes the confrontation of the workers' movement against the government of Isabel through the general strike against Rodrigo.² The expulsion from the country of Lopez Rega³ is part of this colossal strike of the Argentine proletariat against the Peronist government. [This contradiction] is expressed [also] in the breaking of the Montoneros with the government.

If this process did not go ahead, if this clarification of the working class with respect to the deeply reactionary character of Peronism did not advance, it was due just to the elitist, criminal political line of Montoneros, which led the workers' and students' vanguard to a physical fight with the regime, making a pocket civil war against it, taking them away from contact with the mass movement to get this to break with the reactionary government of Isabel and with Peronism.

With the military government the whole policy applied by Isabel intensifies, the offensive against the labour movement and the workers is taken to the end, taking away all the gains and concessions which Peronism had granted— measures the government of Isabel had not managed to achieve. The economic and social stage that allowed leaving in the hands of the working class great conquests was thus definitively cut. Nothing illustrates better the crisis of Peronism than its division

1 **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.

2 **Celestino Rodrigo** (1915-1987) was an Argentine engineer and politician, who served as Minister of Economy of Argentina during the government of María Estela (Isabel) Martínez de Perón. He is remembered for having applied a policy of strong adjustment: a devaluation of 60 percent of the value of the currency and a sharp price increase of fuels and energy. He was forced to resign by the workers' mobilisation against his measures, popularly known as *Rodrigazo*.

3 **Jose Lopez Rega** (1916-1989) was a politician and Argentine minister, known for his influence on Juan Domingo Perón and María Estela (Isabel) Martínez de Perón and for organising, from the position of Minister of Social Welfare, the Triple A, a paramilitary right-wing terrorist group that practiced selected bombings and assassinations to combat the influence of the left and of organisations opponents of the government. His influence increased rapidly since 1973, especially after Perón's death in mid-1974, becoming the virtual prime minister because of his influence on Isabel Perón, to the point that almost all the cabinet was made up of men of his trust, promoted by him. The workers' mobilisation known as *Rodrigazo* caused his fall.

into two unions, and today into two “62 Organisations”¹. The current led by Triaca² is accepting the new situation and wants a new kind of unionism to emerge, one that does not get into politics, which is strictly professional and of direct collaboration with companies, as opposed to the unionism of Miguel,³ who wants a new compact with the military to see whether he achieves some concessions to the workers’ movement and especially to the union bureaucracy.

Peronism in crisis

The impact of the triumph of the democratic revolution has already hit Peronism heavily; it is a blow much more terrible than what at the time the counter-revolution had given it. The consequence of this democratic revolution is that the Bonapartist, top-down character of Peronism has been shaken, to enter into a process of democratic and non Bonapartist party reorganisation. The existence of several dozen factions in Buenos Aires Province is a clear demonstration of this. The rabid top-down current, which make a point of principle for the Bonapartist, undemocratic structure to subsist, will have to fight in in the primaries, as any other anti-top-down current, to win them.

It seems impossible that, even if the ultra-top-down current wins, they will be able to avoid the final collapse. Let’s look at the reasons. The open democratic stage will cause that, in the short term, the top-down and the anti-top-down, as well as the various factions of each of these great currents, will not be able to coexist within the same organisation, as they all have different political projects, antagonistic: one, Bonapartist, the top-down; the other bourgeois-democratic, the anti-top-down. But worse than this struggle between political projects is that they are crossed by the plight of the class struggle and the economic crisis which do not allow Peronism to make any concessions. This is so because, otherwise, we would fall into formalism, because the two projects can coexist in a party with movement characteristics for a longer or shorter period. This situation will mean a quick break of the workers’ and masses movement with Peronism, possibly after taking constitutional government, which will also cause a deep crisis in Peronism, which will combine with the two political projects to blow Peronism into smithereens.

If Peronism wins the elections, it will be forced to be the spearhead of a brutal offensive against the workers’ living standards, rather than making them concessions. The working class will then see that Peronism is not the old paternalistic and good government, which gave them everything they asked for, but quite the opposite, a murderous, exploiter government.

But even not winning the elections, it won’t be able to avoid its crisis given that Radicalism in power will negotiate with a sector of Peronism, both political and trade union, to divide it, forcing it to answer the following question: For or against the offensive against the living standards of the masses and against their own country to colonise it? This proposal of Radicalism and the bourgeoisie will inevitably divide Peronism, making the vast majority of the union bureaucracy and the political sector to be inclined to support sectors of Radicalism in the political offensive against the mass movement. This may result in left currents (we should not have many illusions without observing the process) within Peronism itself or, what is more likely, it will cause molecular processes towards the left that will lead to its final crisis.

The electoral process and the next constitutional government in the short term can avoid, and so far they have avoided, the break out of a total, definitive crisis of Peronism. We say that “possibly” until the next constitutional government this crisis will not break out, because it is still unclear what the intentions are of the Bonaparte in skirts [Isabel Peron] regarding the Peronist party: whether to

- 1 The **62 Organisations** were born as part of the resistance of the Peronist workers’ movement against Aramburu’s dictatorship, who had to convene a normalisation congress of the CGT in August 1957 to elect the authorities who would replace the military comptroller. Later on the name “62 Organisations” was kept to designate the unions dominated by the Peronist bureaucracy.
- 2 **Jorge Alberto Triaca** (1941 -2008) was an Argentine trade union bureaucrat. He was Assistant Secretary of the Plastic Workers Union and Secretary General of the CGT–Azopardo.
- 3 **Lorenzo Miguel** (1927-2002) was one of the historic chiefs of the Peronist trade union bureaucracy. Head of the powerful metalworkers union (UOM) since 1970. During the government of Isabel Peron he linked with Jose Lopez Rega to give birth to the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance or Triple-A a death squad that appeared on the scene in 1973. After the coup against Isabel Peron he was sent to prison, but his close relationship with Junta member Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera protected him.

become involved in full, even up to proposing herself as a candidate, or to refrain. Either attitude will inevitably lead to a crisis for the two reasons already mentioned: the different political projects within its bosom, and the economic crisis and the bourgeois and imperialist offensive of the future government against the mass movement. But it is clear that the electoral process has caused a centripetal phenomenon, of unity of all Peronist tendencies to achieve the triumph of Peronism, a categorical, absolute triumph, of getting about 50 percent of the vote and postpone the struggles of all tendencies for after the elections. This policy of united electoral front to win the elections cannot hide, once they are carried out, the deep antagonisms of class sectors, mainly the proletariat supporting Peronism, with the bureaucratic and bourgeois leadership who runs it, but also of individual projects in their midst.

On the contrary, after the elections, the existence of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, the elected bodies, will bring into the light of day and in the collegiate bodies themselves the deep differences within Peronism. And, what is even more important, these differences will be expressed in the streets, in all the demonstrations that the workers' movement has against the Peronist government if elected, or against the Radical government in alliance with Peronist sectors if Radicalism wins.

Peronism is already in crisis; its public factions prove it. The only thing that has not happened yet is the outbreak of the same. That this crisis already exists in relation to the workers' and people's movement is reflected in the lack of militancy, in the scepticism of the workers, in the distrust in the leadership, mainly in Isabel and the union bureaucracy. The great affiliation by weight of inertia should not make us forget these profound phenomena, because they are the ones which will come to the surface, surprising those who make an electoral and superficial analysis of the situation of Peronism. Peronism is, possibly, a few months away from taking power again. But this will mean the last sizzle of this sinister political organisation, undertaker of all the struggles of the Argentine proletariat, partner of all reactionary governments we have suffered in the last 40 years.

Only when this stage of open and not hidden crisis of Peronism bursts out, the stage of transformation of our party into a party with influence, of majority or very important minority, in the workers' movement will open. Then it will acquire all its historical importance the opening in the working-class neighbourhoods of 500 or more local party premises. We do not need much of an imagination to guess what will happen in these neighbourhoods, with their factories and workshops, when the workers are no longer Peronists. A substantial part of them can be won; we think it will be won, inevitably, by us. It is about whether we will win the majority or a significant minority, but it is inevitable we will win.

This political crisis of Peronism does not have to be mechanically accompanied by the crisis of the Peronist trade union movement. By this we mean that they need not follow the same rhythm or an inevitable sequence beginning with a political crisis and later the union crisis. Now there is a large crisis between the CGT-Brasil and the CGT-Azopardo; but there is another much deeper crisis which is the crisis of the union rank and file with its leadership. No leadership is followed with enthusiasm by the workers' and trade union rank and file. They all are repudiated by the rank and file. Even if a process similar to the national elections takes place, where for lack of leadership or of new alternative, of vanguard, of class, this or that bureaucrat is again voted in union elections, it will be an election that conceals the widespread repudiation. But we do not know at what point the triumphant democratic revolution will reflect within the workers' movement and specifically in the union movement. It may be after the political crisis of Peronism, during this crisis or, we do not rule it out, before this open crisis, as a result of internal union elections or major struggles that will give rise at the level of delegates and internal commissions of a new leadership of the Argentine workers' and trade union movement. This is why it is so important to check, at the level of the workers rank and file, whether the opening of elections in the unions is reflected at the bottom and can be used to promote a new leadership at this level. This grassroots process will have a decisive influence on the annihilation of the union bureaucracy, which would mean total political crisis of Peronism.

This annihilation of the union bureaucracy massively across the country would be an extension and continuation of the heroic Sitrac-Sitram.¹ §

¹ **SITRAC-SITRAM** are acronyms for two unions associated with the companies ConCord Materfer, subsidiaries of the Italian automotive multinational Fiat, in the city of Cordoba in Argentina. They are strongly linked to trade union disputes surrounding the Cordobazo of 1969, milestone in the history of Argentine workers' movement. In 1971 they were repressed by the military dictatorship.

PART III

Our party and its political line

Our party had a correct political line during all the years prior to the Malvinas War, which was a result of its correct analyses. The basis of the party analysis was that this was a short-term regime, which in the short term would inevitably end up in a total and also revolutionary crisis. For us, the working class was defeated, but it had not suffered a historic defeat: in a few years the working class would rekindle its counteroffensive. The essential slogan of this entire stage is *Down with the military government!*; this is the basis of the central agitation of our party and we link all slogans to this historic task.

The crisis which began in the year 1981 makes us to take to a higher than ever agitational level the need to overturn the military regime. We guide all disputes to denounce the government and to pose the historical need to overturn it. In this we had a diametrically opposite policy to PO, which self-limited to an economist line, to develop partial struggles, and to a democratist policy without focusing it on the problem of the government, in that we had to struggle to overturn the government and denounce it in all activities, to point all batteries to achieving this fundamental, immediate task of annihilating the military regime. The correctness of this party line allowed us to face the stage opened with the Malvinas War with a correct policy, which was a real success.

The Malvinas War

The party caught quickly, although it took a few days, maybe a week, the meaning of the Malvinas War. The party realised that in the new stage the main task had ceased to be denouncing the government, and was going to be total support for the war, the confrontation to British imperialism and inserting ourselves in the inevitable anti-imperialist and revolutionary rise of the masses it would originate, in our opinion, the Malvinas War. The denunciation of the government remained an essential task of the party, but its character changed, recognising the axis went through the war and confrontation to British imperialism and its partner, Yankee imperialism. The slogans of defence of the standard of living of workers and defence of the sectors oppressed and repressed by the military government were combined with an attack to the government for its inability to bring the war to end, for its inability to attack imperialism fully and completely. That is, we denounced the government for being unable to consistently be anti-imperialist and we called to replace it to impose a government to take the war against imperialism in all fields, relying on the mobilisation of the people.

We believe this was a historic success by the party and was accompanied by all the IWL, although, like all lines, with some difficulties in its implementation for the delay in understanding the new phenomenon. The fact is that the party changes the whole structure of its program and policy to make it turn around the Malvinas War. This success was reflected immediately in the situation of the party, which bonded to the mass movement, began to take part in the legality that was opened with the war, it began to immerse itself into mass groups and organisations supporting the war, and this allowed it, in one or two months, to expand its membership to approximately double, and to open up the prospect of further recruiting more and more, to achieve a very large growth greatly expanding its sphere of influence. This went on until the war ended and the revolutionary crisis opened.

One of the great successes of the party during this stage— although tactical, decisive— was to denounce the Pope's visit and call not to attend his Mass, against all opportunist parties, including PO, which together with all the ultra-reaction, the Church and all the bourgeois sectors which were against fighting imperialism, called *en masse* to attend the Mass whose only goal was to prepare for defeat. Ours was the only party which, based on a correct analysis of the Malvinas War, was opposed to this counter-revolutionary mass mobilisation called by the Church and the Pope in the service of the triumph of imperialism.

A dangerous confusion

Once the Malvinas War finished, we were unable to make an analysis of the open stage with the war and the situation we were living after the defeat, the fall of Galtieri and Bignone's rise to government.

As the days passed this confusion was increasing. The party did not understand a revolutionary crisis had opened in which power was up in the air and in the reach of the workers' and mass movement. We did not know how to make a correct analysis of the consequences of the defeat and primarily of the fall of Galtieri and Bignone's rise. We did not understand that, since power was suspended in the air, we had to raise a proposal of power immediately, urgently, as a solution to the crisis. In reality it was impossible to achieve it, but possible to achieve in the consciousness of the workers' movement; there was a need to raise a clear proposal of power given the crisis of power. We continued with an abstract proposition of *Down with the dictatorship!* or something like that, without saying precisely there was no power and we proposed one. We believe at that time would have been the right thing— we say this as a lesson for the future— to raise *All power to the Congress of 1976*. More precisely, we should have raised the slogan of *Down with Galtieri!* and *Government by the Congress of 1976!* as soon as the war was lost. We believe this was a serious political mistake that had quite a significant impact on the future of the party.

The confusion is compounded

After Bignone's rise to government and as the weeks passed, this initial confusion was increased. Thus, a clear and categorical definition of the stage was not given, nor political or organisational conclusions regarding this definition were reached. There were doubts about how to define the situation, and even whether a stage of democratic freedoms and legal political activity had opened. Due to the lack of a clear theoretical and political definition of the stage opened, there were ample sectors of the party that had entered a stage of practically total legality, and were asking for money for the party to door knock house to house; contradictorily, other sectors of the party and essentially the leadership considered the stage of the Malvinas War, of revolutionary mass upsurge and the granting by the dictatorship of democratic freedoms, was closed by the culmination of the war and we were entering again a counter-revolutionary stage, of total clandestinity, or a stage of transition, very short, towards an inevitable counter-revolutionary coup, and that the working class would be defeated if this coup took place. As we see, there could be no more confusion between what the working class rank and file in general carried out and did and what the leadership thought and did. This confusion and lack of clarity had dire consequences because it started to hurt the achievements made and led the party to the brink of a very serious crisis.

One of the tragicomic expressions of this confusion took place because the leadership had stepped up its clandestinity measures at the moment at which the democratic freedoms were blooming in the country.

The premises, the paper and the definition of revolutionary situation

The confusion begins to be overcome when, to bring more clarity to the discussion, to the theoretical-political analysis and mainly to the orientation of the party, a categorical conclusion is

formulated: we are inevitably going to elections and the granting of democratic freedoms that will increasingly expand.

From this categorical conclusion a new policy emerges: we had to be prepared to become fully involved in the legality and, using the growing democratic freedoms, to orient ourselves to take part in the elections. These theoretical and political conclusions led us to further clarify the tasks and slogans that we had to meet in the organisational field, but which acquired a deep political content. We launched the slogan of opening 200 party premises in 180 days and to publish a legal newspaper to achieve a sale of thousands and thousands.

This new analysis and partisan orientation was resisted, or regarded with scepticism, by important sectors of the party; not so by the party leadership which quickly considered we actually were on the verge of a serious crisis due to the previous confusion and this simple and categorical, although unilateral, analysis allowed us to begin to reverse the crisis.

Moreover, the premises and newspapers were linked as activities, because for us the premises became the main party centre for the essential task which was to distribute the newspaper. Along with this analysis, let's call it unilateral and overly immediatist of the political perspectives and the tasks of the party, we began to discuss the situation, the definition of the stage we were going through. We reached the conclusion it was a revolutionary stage because of the objective crisis of the regime and not because there was a fabulous mass revolutionary upsurge; on the contrary, at first we thought that the revolutionary situation was characterised only by the crisis, combined with a molecular mobilisation.

This characterisation was quickly exceeded when we realised that, after the Malvinas War, a united, revolutionary mass mobilisation had begun, and the molecular stage which we had seen is the typical stage after a great peak of an uprising, which was what had followed post Malvinas, but it was inevitable the entry of the working class and the struggles would become increasingly widespread. Thus we arrived at a second definition of the Argentine revolutionary situation. With this we began to round out our political line and our overall analysis of the reality of Argentina.

The slogan of government

With regard to the slogan of government, at this stage there was also a process of approximation by the party which, unlike the response given with respect to the prospects and specific policies and with respect to the definition of the situation, was not resolved by the party properly.

The leadership and the party began to try to adjust the government slogan to the new revolutionary situation. We were conscious that the slogan *Down with the dictatorship!* had lost agitational currency, it was not the core, what was felt by the mass movement, which did not respond, then, to the strength of the mass movement.

Shortly after, very late (because for us it was right for the previous stage) we launched the slogan *Leave now!* and *For the Congress of 1976 to take government!*, assimilating, but adapting it to the country, the great experience of the Bolivian Revolution.

Nowadays, doing the analysis according to this document, we reached the conclusion we did not give a correct answer to this problem. We believe that to deliver power to Congress was a slogan we could have raised when the revolutionary crisis occurred. But after Bignone rises to power, the electoral perspective comes up and it is pointed out it will keep the 1853 Constitution, we have not denounced the character of democratic counter-revolution the old Constitution means today. The other side of not denouncing the government manoeuvre has been that we have not taken up as key slogan of power, to be able to counter pose it to the 1853 Constitution, the slogan of *Constituent Assembly* (we believe we are in default with respect to this issue, with a tremendous lag of a year) as the party's main slogan of power to oppose the democratic counter-revolution, against the presidential election based on a reactionary constitution with an omnipotent Senate, elected in their vast majority by the less populated, less proletarian provinces. Against the attempt of the bourgeoisie and the military to rebuild the bourgeois power to overcome the crisis of the military apparatus through the Constitution of 1853, we oppose the slogan of *Constituent Assembly*. We hope

that this Central Committee will discuss thoroughly this fundamental problem, which has to do with our immediate prospects.

Some comrades will be surprised at our current frontal assault on the Constitution of 1853, when [before] we opposed its freedoms to the governments of Isabel and especially the military. This surprise is a result of precisely not understanding the revolutionary change we have experienced. The freedoms of the Constitution, the only ones we vindicated, were very progressive in relation to the Institutional Proceedings of the dictatorship, which abrogated them. Today the Constitution has become the fundamental slogan of the democratic counter-revolution, and it is not as before an anti-dictatorial slogan.

The problem of government

As we have already seen, we managed to clarify the immediate tasks of the party, to orient it, locate it and simultaneously we defined the situation as revolutionary. If the conclusion of this report on the importance for the whole stage held by the key slogan of *Constituent Assembly* is accepted, we will have rounded out our program to face Bignone's government.

Something similar happened to us with the slogan of government. Nowadays, by stipulating the slogan of *Constituent Assembly*, we should not throw away everything we have advanced with respect to this problem. It all started with the discussion of what political perspective we opened the premises for. Opening premises could not be a perspective in itself. We had to make a hypothetical analysis of electoral and partisan perspectives, coming to the conclusion that our hypothetical slogans were three: either a workers' party, or a socialist party with mass influence, or the legal formation of a party which was directly ours, at another stage.

These hypotheses led us to some practical conclusions, but essentially they raised the need to discuss what type of republic and of government we wanted at this stage.

The discussion of the political prospects and our slogans led us to the conclusion that at this stage we do not see another alternative of government and republic than the socialist. The current reality gives no concrete prospect of raising a republic or a workers' and people's government. We may raise this slogan as a tactical variant of *Republic* or *Socialist government*. But what we cannot pose or say as real [is workers' and people's government] because we see no reformist party or mass trade union movement independent of the bourgeoisie, even if reformist, allowing us to raise a workers' and people's government of them. For example, "government of the CGT" or variations of the sort, with a Peronist CGT which legally does not exist, with military controllers and divided in two. We believe that, precisely because of the Peronist slab and the low level of the working class, ironically, what we need to do propagandistically is to point out the need for socialism and a socialist government. We have now added the Constituent Assembly.

What kind of party we want

We didn't and don't see in this election phase the possibility for a labour party to emerge with some mass influence, not even that it manage to express an important core of activists of the trade union movement. Nor do we see that there is a sector of the union leadership, even bureaucratic, leaning towards the formation of a labour party as happened in Brazil. We should not forget that the political line of the party in the previous elections, the line of a *Workers' and Socialist Pole*, had as its aim to win during the elections, as candidates, the large vanguard originated by the Cordobazo and which generally followed the Sitrac-Sitram. At this stage that immediate possibility does not exist, although we are not closed that within the process itself of legal opening and of elections or of workers' struggles, to reach a point where this possibility opens, of a new trade union vanguard, more or less massive, or the triumph of independent union leaders, even reformists, who accept these perspectives. But we do not believe this is the situation or the outlook today. Hence, we do not see— for the elections, let it be well-understood— the possibility of building a party with these characteristics.

Precisely because it is propagandistic there is no reason to leave to the PO the slogan of *Workers Party*, i.e., that the working class needs its own party and to go the government.

Although *Workers Party* is much more propagandistic, because it does not even touch a vanguard of some importance, anyway we need not abandon our old slogan of *Workers' and Socialist Pole* or *Workers' and Socialist Party*, namely that we are the workers' and socialist party. We say we should use this algebraic formula precisely because we do not know through what channels the inevitable tendency to class independence and government will be expressed. This does not mean we agree with the evolutionary analysis of PO that Argentina working class must inevitably go through a stage, the stage of the workers' party, to then get to the socialist party.

The socialist alternative

The infeasibility of Workers Party in the immediate period led us to consider the other two possibilities, which are not contradictory: to call the formation of a socialist party. One of the possibilities of this slogan was that some minor sectors of student youth and the workers' movement, and groups claiming to be of socialism, accepted to put forth, with us, slates and an independent socialist presidential candidate. We considered and still consider that if this variation were to take place, it would be a great progress because it could have an important echo that would be capitalised for the most part by us. We continue to believe that this perspective had some chance and, if it had happened, it would have been a breakthrough for our party, for the development of a revolutionary party in the country. It did not matter whether this meant an agreement with centrist or opportunist currents: the campaign for a socialist Argentina and for class independence, socialist, was by itself progressive.

Several facts show it was a likely hypothesis. As opposed to individuals or non-existent sectors to support a workers' party, all socialist currents had been strengthening. This process is not sufficiently strong and massive for our line of unitary socialist slates to have won, but it exists. The axis of our campaign began to be the slogan *For a Socialist Argentina*. This slogan was tactically useful to see if a Socialist Front was formed for the elections and pointed out a weak but real prospect— as opposed to the ureal one of Workers Party— which did not obviate the strategic line of building our party, but rather made it forthcoming. Our party was the most consistently socialist because it posed a socialist slate in opposition to all the bourgeois parties, and that Argentina would surpass its crisis only if it had a socialist government and began to build socialism, and this was our key strategic focus for all the stage that opened after the Malvinas War.

Only our party

The third alternative, that there was only our party, did not clash with the tactic of calling to a front for socialist unity. This third option was to build a legal socialist organisation to allow our party to take part in the elections, together with those sectors that agreed in the electoral tactics of a socialist front separate from all bourgeois and populist alternatives. It must be borne in mind that, at the time the idea of this front, of this legal party, was launched it was not well known what would be the attitude of the government and government-controlled justice in relation to legal recognition of parties. The premise of socialist unity, this electoral tactic was useful to us, then, for a deeper problem: the direct legal electoral involvement of our party.

The fight against the Multiparty

A third crucial issue, in which the party had an accurate class policy, has been our policy of systematic denunciation of the Multiparty, as well as the democratic counter-revolution that is intended to be consummated with the call to elections to impose a strong constitutional government settled in the bourgeois democratic constitution. Thus we denounced the rally of the Multiparty and all agreements between it and the government, stressing the Multiparty in fact co-ruled. Today when we

have deepened this analysis, we believe it a correct choice, when integrating it to the characterisation that there was a triumphant revolution. As a result of this triumphant revolution the Multiparty is the true support of the government. Nothing shows this better than the informal statement from a leader of the CGT-Azopardo that it is not worth doing any new general strike because, without support from the Multiparty, it has no chance of success.

This systematic criticism and this denunciation of the Multiparty we made it concrete in the call not to attend its rally, because it aimed to deprive the workers' movement the banner of struggle against the dictatorship, but stating the plan they had developed together to hold elections by year-end. The intent was to save the government from the onslaught of the general strike, diverting the mass movement to its rally, which was designed to confirm the agreement reached with the government to hold elections by year-end and at the same time, to strengthen the bourgeois political parties against the workers' and mass movement.

The second independence

This proposal for a *Socialist Argentina*, of denunciation of the Multiparty, opportunism and the parties which claim to be of the working class, mainly the CP, caused a serious workerist type deviation, of primarily focusing our denunciation on the national bourgeoisie.

This deviation took place within a structure of slogans wherein there was one of anti-imperialist character which was the *Non-payment of the debt*, a great theoretical and political achievement of the party. But the rallies allowed us to corroborate the existence of this deviation and overcome it with the approval of the document that identifies the general outlines of the Argentine Revolution, the combination of its fundamental tasks and slogans, which have to start from the struggle against imperialism, materialised in the struggle for a second independence. The level of indebtedness of the country and control of it by imperialism has led to a first theoretical and political level the task of achieving national independence.

This new analysis has managed to give a precise and clear axis to our whole program and our policy.

The crisis is overcome

We had a truly important success, both with the premises and with the newspaper. In reference to the premises, we reached 300 and not 200 in the first six months of existence of the new party. The newspaper quickly managed to sell systematically between 25,000 and 30,000 copies with the registers.

These two great successes were accompanied by another one extremely important, which was to have made 53,000 affiliations, possibly to date 55,000 or a bit more. These affiliations, unlike 1973, are deeply political: they are blue and white collar workers, women and youth who are for our party, for socialism.

These great successes have posed serious problems of orientation— towards which sectors we orient our work— and organisational— how we manage to cover and reach this small band, large for us, which opens up for us in the workers' and people's movement. We believe that the success of the affiliations, the sale of the newspaper and the premises is because there is a powerful band of political vanguard leaning to be recruited by us, for two reasons: because they repudiate the bourgeois political parties and the union bureaucracy or because they sympathise with socialism, or both. The party is currently leaping to another stage where these serious problems will have to be solved in order to go to the achievement of 600 premises and at least 40,000 newspapers, which will mean a concentrated attention of the affiliated members and of the register of sold newspapers. In this issue come into play multitude of factors making it very complicated to provide a solution.

When we opened the premises, one of the strongest objections made to us was we were leaving the old union and workers' path of the party. We, on the other hand, thought the opening of premises changed quantitatively and qualitatively our ties with the workers' movement. It allowed us to expand

by 50 or 100 times our ties with the working class. And this would mean more union ties, not less, as argued by the comrades. The premises allowed us to establish a political link in the working class, in their neighbourhood, which would inevitably lead us to the trade union movement, through our members, of our new members and new supporters added to the old. This dialectical conception of the penetration in the union movement has been fully confirmed by the facts. The party is considering the possibility of achieving around 1500 union leaders (a proposed slogan is for 2000) in the next elections at the level of delegates, internal committees and leaders of the governing bodies of the unions. Today there is no union where we do not have dozens and dozens of members or supporters, instead of units as previously, if we except banking and some other middle-class unions. But what is most important is not only that we see dozens of militants but we recruited many of them in the neighbourhoods and they are already union leaders. Leaving aside that by systematically publishing a newspaper its own sale enters the workplaces.

The party now manages two registers, one by neighbourhood and another by workplace, led by the very reality of our work. We have to produce a third, of workplaces in our area.

A serious error of method

The great successes of the party, the fact that today we have between 1,000 and 2,000 middle cadres (there are discrepancies in the analysis of the leadership comrades regarding the figures, but these are the extremes accepted by all), may hide a serious error of method our party has had throughout this stage of successes— we are not talking of the critical and confusion stages. All successes were achieved through an approximation path, of empirical and analytical type. The party has not had the correct, Marxist method of beginning by thoroughly discussing the stages, its fundamental slogans and, from here, deriving all its other findings. On the contrary, it has had a method that, given the gravity of the crisis has been very useful because it allowed us to give more or less correct answers to almost every problem, but with considerable delay, a consequence of not being able to make an overall analysis at the right time, to give us general answers regarding the character of the stage. We had very slow reflexes, but what is more serious is the empirical method. Thus, we did not begin by defining the stage as revolutionary situation or by specifying the central slogan of government for the stage. We began by defining an aspect of the stage: we were going to elections and there was going to be increasing democracy, and a fundamental, essential aspect of the stage open, that there was going to be democratic freedoms, to guide us to open premises and the newspaper. We were able to adopt a correct policy, of organisational type, but we were totally unable to equip ourselves with the slogan of *Constituent Assembly* to combat the democratic counter-revolution, which was gradually advancing as compliance with the Constitution of 1853 was nearing. We were unable to understand this march, this counter-revolutionary course to oppose to it a suitable slogan. In fact we have capitulated to the counter-revolutionary course by not unmasking it. The same applies to all other successes. And these empirical errors also explain the deep workerist deviation occurred. We say this because the worst thing that could come out of this report, culminating in the achievement of such colossal success, is that the leadership at any stage has fallen short of events. §w