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Nahuel Moreno

The Party



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1943

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Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Preface October 1944	4

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Julio 1943

Introduction	6
The problem of youth	8
Dialectic negation applied to the organisation of the movement.....	10
We are a group of propaganda and not agitation.....	11
Symbols and opportunist Quebracho.....	15
The newspaper as main and urgent task	17
Where and how we can act	22

Foreword

In Argentina, there has been Trotskyists since 1928-29. Since the 1930s, several intellectuals and some workers' leaders (the most important one was Mateo Fossa, of the timber workers union) defended the proposals of the Left Opposition and since 1938 the Fourth International.

There were different groups, trying to publish newspapers and brochures, all of them short-lived. The fundamental activity went through endless internal discussions, in a bohemian atmosphere and more typical of literary clubs. The emblematic place for those meetings was Café Tortoni, on Avenida de Mayo, right in the centre of Buenos Aires. The only Argentine who knew Trotsky was Mateo Fossa, who visited him in Mexico. No Argentine participated in the founding meeting of the Fourth International in September 1938.

In 1934, Liborio Justo (1902-2003) joined the Communist Party; among others, he used the pseudonym "Quebracho". He was the son of the first conservative president (1932-38) of the "infamous decade", General Agustín P. Justo. Quebracho had travelled to the United States in 1930 with a scholarship. In 1936 he resigned from the CP and the following year he joined Trotskyism.

In 1938, Quebracho founded his own group, the *Grupo Obrero Revolucionario* (GOR – Revolutionary Workers' Group), later the *Liga Obrera Revolucionaria* (LOR – Revolutionary Workers League), which in three or four years published ten pamphlets (seven by Justo and three with texts by Trotsky) and several newspapers, without continuity, of which thousands and thousands of copies were printed, financed directly by Justo. The GOR started a publication called *La Internacional* [The International] (a name previously used by Stalinism), of which a single issue was published. In April 1939, Quebracho published his pamphlet *Our political perspectives*. Divergences began to grow in the GOR. Several members withdrew.

At the beginning of 1940, the founding of a new group, the *Liga Obrera Socialista* (LOS – Socialist Workers' League) was announced. In the GOR, with Quebracho, there were five or six members left. But a month after Trotsky's murder in August 1940 they published a tribute newspaper with a circulation of 10,000 copies. One of the main discussions and divergences between the LOS and the GOR was on the subject of national liberation and its relation to the socialist revolution. The LOS rejected the GOR's proposal in defence of national liberation. In 1940 the GOR adopted the name of LOR (*Liga Obrera Revolucionaria* – Revolutionary Workers League).

In January 1941, a delegate of the leadership of the Fourth International visited Argentina and promoted the unity of all Trotskyists. For its part, the LOR, headed by Quebracho, published *La Nueva Internacional* (The New International), which was later replaced by a large-format newspaper, *Lucha Obrera*; four issues came out between July and December 1941, with a circulation of between 5,000 and 10,000 copies, distributed free of charge, according to Quebracho's wishes. In August of that year, negotiations towards unification began. The LOR raised the need to clearly discuss the political positions before joining.

In October 1941, an official report by the Fourth International's delegate stated that the LOR had 27 militants and the other groups 75 militants. Without Quebracho and the LOR, the founding of the *Partido Obrero de la Revolución Socialista* (PORS — Workers' Party

of the Socialist Revolution) was proclaimed and the publication of *Frente Obrero* [Workers' Front] began.

Between January and February 1942, Quebracho published two more leaflets arguing against the PORS. In July 1942, amid serious accusations and with a public letter, he broke with the Fourth International. Mateo Fossa did not accompany him. In April-May 1943, the PORS exploded and disappeared. Various leaders continued with other groups.

The young Hugo Bressano (1924-1987) was a high school student with many intellectual concerns, a student of Kant, of Hegel and with idealist conceptions. He frequented the clubs and meetings where he learned the environment of intellectual left politics, where militants and travelling companions of the Communist Party mixed with anti-Stalinists. In that medium, in 1939, at age 15, he made contact with Trotskyism, after which, through a fourth-year fellow student of Manuel Belgrano National College began to participate in a cultural association. At the end of 1941 he began to participate more actively in the Trotskyist meetings and he read the *Transitional Program*.

Bressano made contact with the PORS at the beginning of 1942. His first contacts with workers date back to this time. He defined himself in those first steps as "Hegelian Trotskyist". In a few months he left the PORS. One of his main differences with the PORS was his support for Quebracho's positions regarding national liberation. He then connected, in June 1942, with the LOR. Quebracho gave the young Bressano a pseudonym which would last all his life: Nahuel Moreno. Just three months later Quebracho, in a habitual behaviour expelled him. By 1943 the LOR had only two members, Quebracho and another one.

In mid-1942, Nahuel Moreno and a handful of youths from Villa Crespo, had begun to read Lenin's *What is to be done?* and take the first steps to form a revolutionary group. In the May Day demonstration of 1943, five took part, shouting "Fourth, fourth!"

On June 4, a military coup overthrew the government of Ramón Castillo. On June 7, General Pablo Ramírez assumed the presidency, who quickly ordered repressive measures against the unions and the Communist Party.

In July 1943 Moreno finished writing *The Party*, which would give the orientation on which in that same year *Grupo Obrero Marxista* (GOM – Marxist Workers' Group), giving birth to what, in time, would become the "Morenist" current of Trotskyism.

This work would mark a before and after for that incipient native Trotskyism, since it marked a new path: to connect with the workers' movement, away from intellectual Trotskyism and coffee gatherings. Thus, Moreno and a handful of youths, mostly workers, began to take part in strikes, printing leaflets, and a letter-sized mimeographed newspaper. Those first steps took place simultaneously with the great changes the working class would experience. Peronism began to emerge, the bourgeois nationalist movement that for decades would gain the almost total support of Argentine workers.

At the beginning of 1945, after taking part in the important meatworkers strike, Moreno and other militants went to live in Villa Pobladora, in the heart of Avellaneda. In October 1946 the first newspaper, called *Frente Proletario* (Proletarian Front), began to be published.

In the context of the Second World War, the year 1943 was an inflexion point in the fight of the Allies against Hitler. In February, the Red Army drove the Nazi invaders out of Stalingrad, after a long siege. Thus began the Nazis expulsion from the "Russian front", and the decline of Hitler's military machine. Stalin, the USSR's dictator, sought alliances with the Allies, particularly the United States and Great Britain. In May 1943, to prove his complete renunciation to advance the world revolution, Stalin ordered the formal dissolution of the Third International, which had been languishing for years because of the policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its satellite parties. At the end of November 1943, Stalin met

in Tehran, the capital of Iran, with Churchill and Roosevelt, to negotiate the “spheres of influence” of the post-war period.

Mercedes Petit

About this edition

This is the first time that this work *The Party*, has been published since 1944. We have respected, as it were, its original wording, which shows a peculiar style, that can be explained by being of the first papers of a 19-year-old youth and also by the controversies of Trotskyism at a time when several of its main writers vindicated themselves as “Hegelians” and who were essentially intellectuals arguing with each other.

We hope to have covered the essential information about the main acronyms (GOR, LOR, LOS, PORS, etc.) of the groups and the names of their publications in this foreword. We include all the footnotes of the original edition, and we add a few ones we consider necessary to facilitate reading.

The Editors, December 2017

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Preface October 1944

A little over a year ago this booklet was made and the comrades stubbornly insist on its publication as it came to light, without further documentation and without the need to expand it.

Those who have been around me lately know full well the drawbacks I had in the transfer to block letters.

All the first half of the year 1943 I devoted myself entirely to studying the organisational aspect and the Fourth-Internationalist deficiencies.

Quebracho's pamphlet gave me in synthetic form all the positions of the different comrades, which I knew through oral presentations but it was impossible for me to find in documents.

The in-depth study of Lenin led me to the conclusion that misinterpreted, just as Quebracho did, he led to the most unbridled opportunism.

This is not, however, the reason for the work. We were in the preliminary stages of a discussion with the Liniers-Lanus group. Their representative insisted on the immediate publication of a newspaper promising us, given our refusal to discuss orally, a written work on the organisational position of his group.

I then committed to answering this comrade. I was enthusiastic about the possibility that the Lanus group, with many characteristics similar to ours, would understand our positions. I was encouraged by learning that the coordinating comrade of that group had disagreed with the publication of the newspaper.

The promised work, contrary to what was said, was not delivered to us or was not done, for "why to waste time". However, the gauntlet had been thrown at us, asking us to give our position.

Given the urgency of which our work was needed and not to fall into what we criticised, not to discuss in writing, I took Quebracho's booklet, which everyone considered good, even comrades of my organisation, to answer him; without failing to see it served the proposed purpose because by refuting this one I was refuting all or most of the known Trotskyists.

For personal reasons, I did this work with the greatest discomfort, in the home of a friend and comrade.

Not even the first draft was corrected since I did not intend to publish it.

One of the first comrades to whom I read it was of the opinion it was necessary to expand it, to exemplify it with the experiences of other countries and thus to carry out a more universal work

I also am and was of the same opinion as this comrade — that a book could be made harmoniously developing the true central motive of this small work, the importance of the subjective factor in the revolutionary movement and the need for its careful training and preparation.

In this work of further reach for its extension, I could carefully attempt to elaborate Hegelian categories, somewhat forgotten lately by the writers who call themselves Marxists.

All our reasons were left aside mainly because our technical means do not allow us to publish a work of 100 or more pages and because everything is already given in what

is published, because I believe no facet of our movement is neglected of consideration, located, and the position we believe is adequate is given.

I think dialectical moments exist, quickly outlined given the size of the work and its contextual discussion, but given.

I leave to the readers the discrimination whether these dialectical moments are in the manner of Proudhon.

That is to say, with regard to content all I wanted to give is there. Greater formal clarity and universal generalisations would have meant a work impossible at present to publish.

All comrades in my organisation have been educated, poorly or well, for the national Fourth-Internationalist discussions through this work.

It is interesting, therefore, to know it as it was read constantly for a year.

There is another reason to respect it. It was promised just as it was made to other comrades who we know do not think like us.

Transforming it totally would mean giving ground to their political accusation: that we as organisation only hold propaganda as an activity.

Respecting the work in its general aspects will show that our line has been inflexible and clear: agitation and propaganda within reach of our possibilities, unity with other groups around the most elementary common tasks.

That our organisation has faithfully followed my work is something that flatters me.

Lately, we have achieved unity on our initiative in an elementary task, helping our prisoners. Through this work, we will prepare ourselves for the next common task, the joint publications.

But the urgent, the immediate task, today and yesterday is: **to approach the proletarian vanguard and reject as opportunistic any attempt to deviate from this line, although it may present as a possible task.**

The opportunists finally write their positions; they publish *Frente Obrero* [Workers' Front] again. In it, they disinter the theory of social-fascism; deny the socialist movement as opposition and solution to the contradictions of the bourgeoisie, and other niceties like that.

In the aspect that concerns us, they again fall into the confusion of rigour: "On all these aspects, of vital interest to the Argentine proletariat, *Frente Obrero* has something to say, some opinion to express, some solution to propose to the working masses. On the basis of this elaboration, our organ of debate raises the task of enlightening a vanguard workers' core, sure builder of the future revolutionary workers' party."

If "enlightening a vanguard workers' core" is a task, the same as building the party, it cannot be a possible task together with "something to say, some opinion to express, some solution to propose to the working masses". Addressing the working masses in general like this, proposing solutions, presupposes the party and therefore that it has already clarified the proletarian vanguard. Either one task or the other; one being a determinant of the other.

Let us leave these to follow them under another corporal form, that of Quebracho.

For this reason, my greatest joy would be that the appearance of this pamphlet coincided with the adoption by South American Fourth-Internationalists of the political and organisational line of our organisation, or in its absence the serious and Marxist criticism we lack.

Nahuel Moreno

The Party

NAHUEL MORENO

JULIO 1943

Introduction

Different groupings and comrades reply to the question “what must we do to build the party?” with varied answers, as it is logical to expect, in a whole according to their current political idiosyncrasy.

Most of the times they do not consider whether what is done is right or wrong; it is done and that is enough. They fall, therefore, in the same mistake as the Stalinist militants who believe to be revolutionary militants by the mere act of their militancy.

Logically, when all the hopes placed in this or that a project or group crumble, the comrades assume it is time to retreat to their winter lines, until the arrival of the new revolutionary spring, the rise of the workers’ movement claims them.

Nowadays they are grouped by their opinions in three currents; the older ones have been through all of them to fall into “not doing any action until the objective conditions allow it”.

Let us identify these three currents:

a) It is formed by the movement eldest militants. They are not united in an organisation, nor are they interested mostly in contact with the masses; their scarce activity is developed among intellectual elements.

They argue it is necessary to wait, as I have already said, for objective conditions to become favourable to develop an intensive intellectual training program.

They believe the disorganisation existing in our ranks is due to the era of revolutionary ebb, without wanting to understand that there is also much fault on our part.

They believe the same workers’ movement on the rise will take care of putting them at the forefront of the masses. We know the revolutionary tide will strike hard the door knocker of these gentlemen’s home, without them hearing it since they have left the contact and militancy at the beat of the proletariat for the so often called and misunderstood revolutionary tide.

b) Those who categorically hold that the publishing of a good-in-all-aspects revolutionary newspaper will be the panacea that will free us from all our ills. The immediate task is, therefore, the publication of a well-presented organ.

We are in full agreement that a perfect revolutionary Marxist sheet will attract the best of all classes and especially the proletariat.

We do not question the role of the newspaper, which we know is formidable, but whether it is possible to get that newspaper today and in our midst.

Everything existing is a result of certain objective conditions; once it exists it acts as cause and effect. The problem is not the role of the acting condition, but whether the objective conditions can give us this or that result.

Those of *Frente Obrero*, for example; we observe that their daily militancy is limited to what they consider to be paramount: the publishing of the newspaper. Most of the comrades' dues, and their energies, are used in it.

They believe and argue that they publish a truly revolutionary workers' newspaper. Although in their last issue they have been forced to recognise their own incapacity as editors of such a newspaper because they confess that "it is impossible for them to analyse all the social forces in Argentine political life". (Quoted from memory.)

Let Lenin say better than us about this incapacity: "But all aspects of the movement should be reflected in both the magazine and the newspaper, and we wish particularly to emphasise our opposition to the view that a workers' newspaper should devote its pages exclusively to matters that immediately and directly concern the spontaneous working-class movement, and leave everything pertaining to the theory of socialism, science, politics, questions of Party organisation, etc., to a periodical for the intelligentsia. On the contrary, it is necessary to combine all the concrete facts and manifestations of the working-class movement with the questions indicated; the light of theory must be cast upon every separate fact; propaganda on questions of politics and Party organisation must be carried on among the broad masses of the working class; and these questions must be dealt with in the work of agitation."¹

c) Falling into this category are the new comrades mostly isolated from the movement, both our own and the workers' movement.

They argue that at the present time the revolutionary function is fulfilled by carrying out a pedagogical action because until there is a fairly large number of "perfect militants" it is impossible to develop a consequent revolutionary action.

The perfect militant is one who has studied Marxism for at least 20 months.

We share in its entirety the position of the comrades who assure us that the theoretical training of the conscious workers, the sympathisers and the comrades are necessary to make a serious revolutionary action.

But from there to pretend that to grant the qualification of militant to a worker, it is necessary to subject him to an extremely long in months training, there is a good stretch of road.

We cannot base our judgments on personal subjectivity, since it is unknown to us and what is valid, as materialists we are, is objective activity — and quite objective.

Why would we close the doors of our organisations, however small or large, to a conscious worker who accepts our program? What is important is that the organisation be flexible enough to make the most of this worker's activity, and to educate this worker in every sense, in the theoretical and practical activity of every day.

Preventing the relatively new working class elements from bringing their life-giving power until they are trained, is to prevent by a sectarian principle the intimate contact and union with the most capable workers. It is to deny communism as a social movement.

Let us also observe, from a pedagogical angle, that a militant in order to have an absolute knowledge that enables him to act must necessarily have acted, have taken action. In order to learn to be revolutionary, it is necessary, as an active principle, to have been in multiple mass actions.

¹ VI Lenin, "Draft of a Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra and Zarya", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, digital reprint 2009, p. 326.

Now then, these comrades tell us very calmly “this experience you speak of, each worker can achieve it by himself; we will take care of giving him the theoretical training”. But, why, for the benefit of the whole movement, do we not get this particular experience be transformed into the general experience?

To these pedagogues of revolutionary Marxism (the title was awarded by themselves alone, without interference on our part) we have to remind them that the first pedagogical notion gained when teaching, it is completing theoretical lessons with the practical application of what is taught.

As you can see, at first sight, there is a similarity between groups (a) and (c). It is the stages of propaganda that do not strive to reach the proletariat, as it would be the duty of true revolutionaries, but rather to wait for the proletariat to approach them.

There is, however, a fundamental difference. On the one hand, young people have a desire to be active, while on the other hand the old are down and feel no need to do so. When the young people become active, they will pass to group b) following the opportunist trajectory in the way to address the problems.²

The problem of youth

The only pamphlet that claims to refer “to the immediate action, organisation and perspective of the Fourth-Internationalist movement in Argentina” is that of Quebracho: *Our Political Perspectives*.

Quebracho in this pamphlet as in his article three years later (Internal Bulletin of the *Liga Obrera Revolucionaria* [Revolutionary Workers’ League], No. 4) perfectly reflects all the contradictions existing between the different positions delineated above. Therefore, his writings reflect, as we shall see below, irreconcilable ideas and positions, making an eclectic whole of his pamphlet.

When a problem is posed, those who wish to solve it develop arguments that seek to show the truth of the hypotheses held. Bringing up a discussion of ultra-known truths sounds like incapacity unless polemising with or writing for people unaware of those truths. This happens to us when polemising with Quebracho.

When he assures us “that in the young generation and in the new elements there is the hope of the movement”, a truth so general is manifested that of so much asserting it asserts nothing.

If the reader of Mr Quebracho’s pamphlet believes he, with the title shown above, raises the very serious problem of how to attract youth in general and especially the worker’s youth to our movement, the reader will be sadly disappointed. If the reader wants to feel completely deceived he may continue reading his booklet, which is nothing more than the wrong approach to problems that are not solved or are wrongly resolved.

Youth has been and is the hope of every authentic revolutionary movement. We, being an authentic, just, and scientific revolutionary movement, have placed our hopes in youth. Today, as in 1939, as in any other year, what has been fundamental is to approach as a theoretical movement the youth of the working class; or, more categorically and exactly expressed, the proletarian vanguard. That has been and is the open stage we have not known how to or could not meet.

Mr Quebracho does not tell us anything on this. Not even something that we would be very interested to know — how and where we can act to attract “the youth, hope of our movement”. And something much more important for him personally, what we could do to get the young people who come to him not to walk away from him astonished by his doctrinal and personal issues.

² Group c) has joined group b) and currently publish Frente Obrero [Workers’ Front]. (NM, 30 October 1944)

We, with little fanfare, because we know nothing more than to recall something ultra-known, due to the inability of Mr Quebracho to say it, we assert that the working class youth can be attracted by us mixing with and approaching it, its clubs and its organisations. And this is fundamental, today as yesterday. Every authentic militant or Fourth-Internationalist organisation must understand it this way, forcing themselves to act in some workers' organism, in preference of youth, such as clubs, libraries, SP [Socialist Party], CO, and even in communist youths.

All Trotskyists start out talking about youth, to go on in their practical activity to the collection of all the old elements at hand, making an organisational "cocktail" with no political line. The motive of this activity is always an external event, the Nazi-Stalinist pact [in August 1939], etc. We should not be surprised, therefore, that the gentleman of "the youth, hope of our movement" pitifully contradicts himself.

We see that in the chapter "Ultimately, where we should go" it says: "from the beginning, we should not have many expectations about the results of our immediate action. Rather than gathering, our function is to sow and sow the good seed, whose results are not to be seen very soon. Let us not forget that we are going through a period of revolutionary ebb and that many that have become sceptical and indifferent due to the failure of the Third International. We will not get them out of their waiting position. Others have broken or lost faith in Stalinism but will not come to our ranks either due to the absence of an external impulse to move them".

Each new age has its new men; this is true for leaders³ as for entire generations. It is logical, therefore, that we, new revolutionary era, should hope for new men or, as Mr Quebracho says, "We must attract to our ranks the young, not to the old".

He complains and warns us firstly of the little success we will have because as the old elements are tired, we have to wait for the external stimulus to move them. But we do not know how we can regret this little success if we strive to "attract to our ranks the young, not the old".

In other words, on the one hand, he assures us we must not have any faith in the old elements and, on the other hand, that as these old elements due to the sad experience are far removed from the revolutionary movement there are no signs at the moment this one will improve. If this is the case, hope lies not in youth but rather in the old, and we have to wait for an "external stimulus to move them".

Understand it, O great Almighty God of imbeciles; we quit.

The problem of the old militants is not, as Mr Quebracho asserts, "that revolutionary activity is like a good engine; as soon as it stops working a little and is left abandoned, it is no longer useful and it is difficult to re-start it. It is very rare for an active militant to abandon action and after some time return to it with the same enthusiasm and effectiveness as before".

Undoubtedly, the physical and mental vigour of a young man is superior to that of an old man, but from there to assume authentic revolutionaries because they "stop working a little" or "are left abandoned" are "no longer useful" there is a difference.

That the enthusiasm for the task, like the strength to confront daily activity, weakens over the years is a very important factor we young people must consider, precisely so as not to demand tasks higher than their current strength to old revolutionaries who have not been active for a long time. There are currently many more old militants than young ones. It is true that these old militants are not active in the true sense of the word, but neither are or were the current youth except in a few exceptions.

To deserve the name of political movement, our organisations, if they wish to do something they have the duty of trying to use in all senses, either the capacity or the energy of all those old militants, looking for youth work in the places where it can be developed.

3 The word "leaders" is in English in the Spanish original. [Translator]v

To attract the youth we can and must use the old, one thing conditions the other. What we know is that those in charge of using the old elements will be the young revolutionists close to our movement, given the incapacity of old people to do it, and among them, mainly Quebracho. He promised us the best Havana cigar, giving us, as we can see today, tobacco of the worst cultivated in Salta.

Dialectic negation applied to the organisation of the movement

Without explaining or showing how to attract youth, Mr Quebracho emphatically asserts that the stage that his group begins is “a new phase of objective action and a true setting of the foundations of the Fourth International party in the country”. As it can be seen, only by the art of enchantment we will attract the youth and by applying the same art we will later found the party. But while Mr Quebracho does not tell us anything about youth, on the contrary, he tells us too much about the new “phase”. Let us see: “The construction of our movement and our current action, we must establish it on the analysis and experience of that first stage and constitute its most absolute negation in every sense”.

We certainly do not understand how Mr Quebracho can deny absolutely a stage and at the same time analyse its experience. We understand that in a sense he affirms it, that of the need to “settle on the analysis of that first stage”.

Since no one has the obligation to undo the messes in his brain, we leave to Quebracho the solution of the problem — to deny in all sense this stage and at the same time to settle the new stage as “absolute negation” of the old one on the analysis and the experience of the latter. What happens is Mr Quebracho applies dialectical negation better than Marx himself; he has surpassed him in everything.

We do not doubt that if one of our complacent readers meets Mr Quebracho, to our assertion he will outline a smile and assure us “he does not dialectically deny anyone, not even his family”. But to avoid long questions, we present the facts. Here they are:

“In a recent pamphlet, says on page 2 of the pamphlet, in which I analysed that period of our movement that we might well call intrauterine, I took stock of its results to arrive at the conclusion I could have been pessimistic.

“The fact is in this balance I addressed the negation of that stage and it was precisely to make that denial more emphatic that I consciously ignored (do you also consciously think like a madman, Mr Quebracho?) any mention of the positive part that evidently existed in the movement.”

To deny the bourgeoisie as the vanguard of society, Marx and Engels explained it as it was, with the advances made by it, which have been the most formidable that history knows, and its setbacks and the inevitability of its disappearance from the historical scene, replaced by another class, the proletariat.

But Karl Marx was the son of a lawyer and our hero is the son of a former president and he, therefore, allows himself to “deny dialectically”, completely silencing the virtues of a stage he is identifying and denying.

If we assume an impossibility for an opportunist, that Quebracho be consistent in all his acts with his reasoning, when he edits the Communist Manifesto he will modernise it in its entirety with his “Marxist criterion”, deleting the first chapter of the book, performing what Marx could not do — to consciously silence the virtues of the bourgeoisie in order to deny it completely.

Let's leave this part of the gibberish to move on to another much more interesting. Quebracho asserts that the movement will be organised denying all the stages previous to him.

If he understands the stage before him as the stage where there are many personal issues, where the reality of the country is not studied, where the workers' movement is not understood nor is there an attempt to approach it through a systematically organised work on the objective conditions, we are in full agreement with Quebracho.

Just in case, we vouch we do not confuse a stage like the one we are dealing with, with the personal virtues and flaws of the comrades, I would almost say, unfortunately, who were active with him at the time. We blame them, indeed, for having denied Stalinism in form and not in substance or for not knowing how to act fairly, but we would not insult or denigrate them personally as Quebracho does.

If we were to do this, we would have to apply to the author of the booklet we are studying the foulest insults, as he is the greatest representative of this opportunist stage, and to "how to get out of the swamp" we would have to add what no doubt would be its best chapter: **Liborio Justo Bernal**.

We are a group of propaganda and not agitation

We move on to something "so obvious that it does not need to be demonstrated". In spite of it, Quebracho demonstrates or tries to demonstrate the so obvious. Let us see: "Our task is not at the moment to preach revolutionary action, which we are not in a position to make effective, but to create a revolutionary party and to form its leading cadres".

Let Mr Quebracho resolve on his own the way to create a revolutionary party and "form its leading cadres", not without preaching but without carrying out revolutionary actions.

We inquire from Mr Quebracho with the modesty of the pupil to the teacher, what he understands by revolutionary action. Whether the action a class carries out — in this case, the proletariat to take power—, or, in a broader and just sense, he understands by revolutionary action any that puts face to face the two classes antagonistic today.

We frankly believe the exact answer is the second; for the revolution is a long development with a few outstanding actions and countless small skirmishes, which are, by the way, very important for the revolution.

However, we will not be ungrateful to Mr Quebracho leaving him in the sad situation of being misunderstood. We will strive to see the accuracy of his reasoning.

Let us suppose the author understood by revolutionary action only that decisive action engraved by a chisel in history, which is a party invitation to the proletariat to take power, as the Russian Bolshevik party did.

There is a very important but: such a revolutionary action does not arise from the numerical and organisational strength of the revolutionary party, although this is the subjective factor so important to achieve the end, but from the objective conditions that are the determining factor of that revolutionary action.

Therefore, if we are not in a position to carry out such an action, it is not primarily due to our incapacity, but to the correlation of social forces unfavourable to the proletariat.

What indeed we can demand or could have demanded from any Fourth-Internationalist group and among them the GOR is that while this revolutionary effervescence arrives, we should not remain sitting on our posteriors, "creating the party and its leading cadres", because the only way to create the party and its leading cadres is to begin by melding our movement with the workers' movement.

We believe we will be excused if, falling into a tautology, we insist that we will meld with the workers' movement, acting as far as our forces allow within the proletariat, approaching

and penetrating in the organisations where it is and that this is the fundamental task for the moment, above any other.

We will be told that in the Stalinist unions or organisations we are expelled. First, we must look for ways for this not to happen, either by hiding most of our positions until having formed a small group with which to be able to act fully or by limiting ourselves to carry out among the more capable workers little Leninist formation courses. We know if this is carried out intelligently we will attract those elements. Also, like Lenin, we repeat “never say I cannot but I do not want to”.

The group, apart from this individual action of its members, has the duty, if it wants to be revolutionary and not a literary circle, to take part in all those class disputes close to their range of action and where their voice can be heard.

It would have been worthier for our movement, in the past or current times, a strike picket in the cork factories and not an issue of *Lucha Obrera* [Workers’ Struggle], even though one thing does not prevent the other.

Faced with of a strike like that of the cork factories, of little importance in relation to the workers’ movement but of much importance for us, it would have been formidable that LOR deployed all its energies, that, we know it would have benefitted the own LOR, because we surely would have counted on an autonomous Trotskyist union of 300 people. The anarchists of *Avanzada* [Forwards] understood this and loudly evicted from the coast the Stalinist Moors, who truly were plenty.

As we see from both front and back, the Quebracho enunciation is meaningless. We will, however, make one last attempt for the author’s peace of mind, so he sees that at least someone tries to understand him.

Mr Quebracho must understand by revolutionary action the action a genuine workers’ party carries out; today, for example, a general strike for the freedom of social prisoners.

As our readers see, our demands for terminological precision towards the criticised author are next to nothing, but we have reached the lowest point since there is no reason for Quebracho to find an almost absolute or total equivalence between revolutionary action and the agitation of a revolutionary party. For although agitation is revolutionary action, the latter is much broader in meaning because it involves the agitation of this party without identifying itself with it; for example, the strike of the Bolivian miners is a revolutionary action or would have been one even if there was a serious organisation that ignored it.

We say, that revolutionary action is every action that puts, even in a primary way, the two antagonistic classes face to face.

Therefore, a strike like the one we were talking about earlier is, just like any other strike, a revolutionary action because it puts in the battlefield the workers with the bosses.

If for revolutionary action is understood, as seems to happen with Mr Quebracho for what has been said, the agitation of a party, then we agree that a group cannot do it. A group of 10, 20 or 50 people will never be able to direct a CGT [General Confederation of Labour], nor can it take part in all the actions of the proletariat, nor lead a serious opposition to the government.

The point is, precisely, that if it is a group as the title of the chapter says [i.e., a group of propaganda], we do not know how Mr Quebracho can claim as a discovery that this group cannot do party agitation. If this is what he meant, he would have the merit of having dismally lurked on the serious danger of wanting to do party agitation by being a group. Truly, not even the GOR and especially our hero were saved from the danger, and that even today many comrades despite the time elapsed insist on the same thing.

In order not to find everything bad, we have assumed Quebracho expresses himself badly and joins his reasoning poorly, logically falling into contradictions, but that the content is fair because he meant “do not preach an action of a revolutionary party that we are incapable of doing”.

We have seen the barbarities that come out of the development of Quebrachian expressions but arranged in the aforesaid manner, we observe that he has wanted to wield a powerful and valid argument that for the comrades is worth remembering.

In spite of our eagerness to find things well and our search in the strangest phrases Quebracho's secret thinking, we stumbled with an outburst that does not pass through censorship despite the good will.

"In the first place, we must not forget that we are still a group of propaganda and not of agitation (it is known Plekhanov's sentence, which defines propaganda as giving many ideas to a small group of people and agitation as giving a single idea to many people)."

We have sent to the author the rescue boat (that he expresses himself badly) but the waves he raises prevent him from reaching it.

Because although the supposed Quebrachian thought as expressed by us, "a group cannot do party agitation", we think and thought of as fair, it is a horrible thing that a group cannot even do the agitation within its reach.

Propaganda is of primary importance, as he well quotes Lenin, in this stage of attracting the proletarian vanguard, because what is essential is to attract new workers to the common ranks. For that, we have no other means than propaganda, which explains the inevitability of the contradictions of bourgeois society through theoretical study, in general and in particular practical, of each daily fact. But propaganda, in particular this kind of propaganda through circles, does not prevent, but rather conditions, a kind of agitation. To assert, to make matters worse leaning on Lenin, that it is "a group of propaganda and not of agitation" is to tie our hands deliberately as we shall see in what follows.

The specific characteristic of groups is that their work is generally carried out, due to lack of material means, in a personal way, from a militant or sympathiser to his acquaintance. Propaganda and agitation can also be developed in that personal way.

Let us suppose that the problem of the high cost of living and the solution given by [de facto president Pedro Pablo] Ramirez arise in the GOR.

All those close to the group deal with it, it is shown how the measures adopted by the conspiracy of sabre and cassock are characteristic of Bonapartist demagogues, it is identified what Bonapartism is, how social forces are balanced and counterbalanced to support this government. How little or no reductions in the cost of living are accompanied by great propaganda, especially among the petty bourgeoisie, and how, on the other hand, workers' and constitutional rights are cut off. Many ideas have been given to few people.

At once or later, comrades who work mainly in workshops, factories, clubs and workers' libraries, and in other establishments, propose to all the personnel or members in a uniform way: that in the face of measures taken by the government that have little effective result and are accompanied in practice by a total violation of civil liberties, the need for a strike for the release of social prisoners.

This call can be made through a manifesto that the group would be in charge of writing, publishing and distribution. We will have given an idea or a few to an entire group of people.

In all comfort, we will have carried out both personal and group propaganda and agitation if we understand by this that a few people and in a few places have propagated and agitated our positions and political and economic claims against any fact whatsoever.

Undoubtedly, it would be much better to make an appeal that, for our influence and the decline of reformism and Stalinism in the proletarian movement, was immediately heard — the call for a revolutionary general strike for the freedom of political prisoners. And to have as a complement legal newspapers that would be distributed throughout the country. Here we would denounce the fallacies of this government, as of any bourgeois power, and we would incite the population to be led by the working class to invite and force the government to confiscate without payment the largest companies, the only way to make the cost of living cheaper.

Following such tactics, we would expose the government and its “popular measures” and channel all spontaneous movements of opposition, which, we know, would form a single current that would be our movement.

Simultaneously, we would publish a theoretical magazine that would study all the domestic and foreign facts, economic, political, workers, etc. with all minutiae. And we would translate all the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, and other great socialist thinkers into Spanish; we would publish Marxist dissemination publications, and so on and so forth.

We would, therefore, carry out the agitation and the propaganda of a powerful party.

This image, this dear desire of all of us, makes the majority, in their eagerness to achieve it, forget the path to follow because we are not melded to the worker’s movement, to achieve this yearning, and they strive to see it materialised immediately when external objective conditions are very favourable.

We have an example of this, because in every blunder by Stalinism, in every blatant betrayal, most of the comrades believe that the time has come for the unity of the Trotskyists and their appearance on the historical scene as a meteor to occupy a vacant place, that of Stalinism. The problem is not, as the comrades think, to defeat Stalinism occupying its place and taking over its mass. The problem is that we must educate the proletarian vanguard in authentic Marxism.

There are those who lately claim if previously the Trotskyist newspapers did not progress, it was because Stalinism had not dissolved as an International and because it was not in total illegality as it is today.

We will attempt to demonstrate in another chapter that the Fourth-Internationalists papers failed because they had nothing of Bolshevik but the name.

To assume otherwise would be to assume that a revolutionary workers’ newspaper is not listened to in a time of revolutionary ebb tide.

In an era of the revolutionary ebb tide, it is very difficult to have an organisation capable of putting out a Leninist periodical. But if this exists, it will be heard because it will precisely present the immediate economic and political demands that interest the proletariat however primary they may be.

The newspapers of LOS, LOR, and PORS failed not because of the revolutionary ebb, but because they had nothing of revolutionary workers’ newspapers.

On the one hand, the activity of the comrades has been circumscribed to the party agitation carried out by a group; on the other, to the sectarian, metaphysical and bombastic propaganda of a university. This agitation was not listened to by the people to whom it was addressed, as the group did not have the means to reach it. Propaganda did not form the militant because it denied him his first teaching, that is, the need to be active in the workers’ organisations.

They are the two sides of the same problem, reaching the mass opportunistically, not according to our ability, but to the extent of our desires.

In Quebracho (it is said history seeks men to represent it), this antinomy typical of opportunism in the movement is personalized.

He advocates, or rather, asserts they are “a group of propaganda and not of agitation”, and the personal activity of the group has not been, as it was logical to assume, the editing of pamphlets or a theoretical magazine, i.e., something that corresponds in practice to what is theoretically held, but to publish newspapers after newspapers in issues of 1000 copies, which the six or seven militants were responsible for writing, publishing and distributing, with the consequent practical result: the withdrawal from activity when seeing there was no success.

vMr Quebracho may assure us that the newspaper is the first “Bolshevik-Leninist organ of propaganda and combat published in Argentina deserving the name of such”, but we do not agree for reasons we will give later.

What we fail to understand is how a newspaper of “combat and propaganda” will not make agitation, when the name of newspaper alone shows — according to the Leninist definition — it is dedicated mainly to agitation.

If we look at the print run and the slogans of the “first Bolshevik Leninist organ” we see the publishers cannot avoid, despite being only a group of propaganda and not of agitation, pretending to make, as a group, party agitation.

We, therefore, observe a patent contradiction between Quebrachian theory and practice.

As an intellectual, he proposed something in opposition to the most elementary principles of socialism and to his and his comrades’ wishes of going to the masses and doing something within them.

It is a great pity that “the wishes for action of many comrades” have been directed towards a goal superior to their scanty forces of six or seven people, to attract the mass in full, instead of acting according to their scanty forces, striving to attract the proletarian vanguard by entering the workers’ organisations.

The formula “we are a group of propaganda and not of agitation”, should be followed to the author’s opprobrium, by “Plekhanov’s well-known sentence”. Lenin quotes from the third letter of Plekhanov’s work “Tasks of the Socialists in the Fight against the Famine in Russia” in his *Obras Completas*, Ediciones Sociales Internacionales, Vol. IV, page 16.

“Agitation is necessary for any party that wants to have a historical role; a sect may be content with propaganda in the narrow sense of the word, a political party never. The propagandist gives many ideas to an individual or some individuals; an agitator gives only an idea or some ideas but a whole mass of people, sometimes even the whole population of a locality; I do the propaganda to have a reason to do the agitation.”

This was true yesterday when Quebracho wrote his pamphlet, and it is true today when he adopts a conformist attitude in face of the revolutionary ebb tide. You can already see as the gentleman of “Plekhanov’ well-known sentence” did not and does not know the “well-known sentence”.

Symbols and opportunist Quebracho

“We must take into account, in particular, that revolution is not in the symbols, in names or outward appearances, but in the social background and class content of our propaganda which as a tactic must be disguised, if necessary, for its better dissemination and results, without losing at all its revolutionary edge. Is it necessary for a good Communist to go out on the street with big red cockades and shouting at the top of his voice what we are? Of course not, since being a good or bad militant is conditioned by the value of our action and not by the use of external symbols.”

Revolution as change, as social, cultural, and political transformation, is not in the “social background and class content of our propaganda” but in the ideological superstructure. It is there and only there where the revolution is going to operate.

This transformation will take place with the proletariat in power because it is the only class that suffers and has to solve the contradiction between the structure and the superstructure.

If the problem that Quebracho brings is that a just and consistent revolutionary action carries the revolution in its hips, because the objective conditions favourable to the revolution are given, we will agree with him.

On the other hand, it happens because propaganda alone, however social and class content it has, will never implicitly carry within itself the revolution.

Propaganda, as a part of the daily revolutionary action, is of enormous importance, as are agitation and many other factors.

Now, this propaganda must raise the consciousness of the proletariat as a revolutionary class in itself, of its antagonistic role in the face of the bourgeoisie and its satellites.

Let us understand as propaganda, as does the pamphlet's author, not one that gives many ideas to one or a few people, but that action of scattering political positions by any means, and we find that to propagate our positions, or better, to raise class consciousness, the different parties, bourgeois, petty bourgeois, as the proletarians, use a modality that has fundamental importance in political propaganda: the symbols.

The white beret of the Radicals was, so to speak, a symbol of their party.

We, as a political movement we are, must use all the means at our disposal to achieve the immediate goal sought: to give the proletariat consciousness of its historical mission.

Symbols are a powerful medium that we have the duty to use. If this happens, the revolution will be implicit in the symbols, as one more facet of just revolutionary action.

May Day, the red flag, the sickle and the hammer, to name but the main insignia, synthesise in their forms an entire past of struggle that was used and we would be bad politicians if we did not use them.

The characteristic, according to Trotsky, of the theoretical Philistines, and in this case of one who learned Marxism in the United States, is to generalise particular facts.

Quebracho is right that an organ dedicated, in its intention at least, exclusively to propaganda should not bear the name *Bandera Roja* [Red Flag].

This brought the case in which he was right to the absolute category of law, asserting that "revolution is not in external symbols", when on the contrary he should have shown the importance of symbols which reflect in a name a whole current, to argue later that being *Bandera Roja* a name destined to the agitation is not fitting for an organ destined to propaganda.

If the gentle reader were to seek for Quebracho an escape from his statements regarding symbols, he would find a little further down in the same pamphlet: "The same can be said about the nostalgic memory the revolutionary workers allegedly have of *La Internacional*, memory that also refers to the content of the struggle and not the title of the newspaper." We will make a point, Mr Quebracho makes a discovery in the field of logic in these paragraphs: words express concepts or symbols (we do not demand from him scientific precision in his terminology because we do not want to see our relatives insulted) and that these symbols reflect real and subjective processes and objects.

In spite of our desire to say something to him, like Dante to Virgilio:

"Master, your speeches are so sound to me, and so hold my belief, that any others
are like spent ashes"⁴

we see ourselves in the sad obligation to recall that Aristotle had already discovered this and studied it in every detail.

Men already before Aristotle knew that when they say "I like the roast" they do not refer to the word "roast" but to roast meat. Nowadays no one doubts either, except for Quebracho, that when we assert the bourgeoisie were and are afraid of the true Bolsheviks we do not refer to the words "true Bolsheviks" but to the revolutionary action of these.

We, the human race, construct mental processes that have been called concepts, judgments and reasoning and we operate with them. By these concepts, we fix an object, as an image, as a mental or objective process. Subsequently, to communicate with our peers by oral or written language, we assign to the concept the word or words that usually

4 Dante, *The Divine Comedy*. {Editor]

individualise it. By this means men of the same language understand each other and no one has doubted this.

Mr Quebracho, who belongs to a species other than *Homo sapiens*, to the Super-Men, instead and in spite of having the same language, is surprised that instead of “furniture with drawers and divisions to keep shirts, underpants, petticoats, jackets, trousers, dresses, money, etc., etc.”, we say “wardrobe” and we understand each other quickly.

The key is that we “unfeathered bipeds”, unlike the Super-Men, do not like to waste time and we leave them with their “memory that refers to the content of the struggle and not the title of the newspaper”.

Let’s go to something else — that the title of the newspaper is of no importance because they “will receive it with joy, whatever name it may have, provided that this newspaper expresses through its preaching, the true concerns and yearnings of the oppressed class in the struggle for its emancipation”.

We agree that the main thing in a revolutionary organ is not the name but what is expressed in that organ, but from there to deny that the name is one more factor that has its importance there is a great distance.

According to Quebracho’s theory, we would publish a perfect Bolshevik-Leninist organ with the title of *The Scab*; we augur little success to an organ with that title.

Quebracho is consistent to expose himself to ridicule. Following his inveterate custom, he contradicts himself a few lines beyond the above said, because he asserts that “to take the name of *La Internacional* could, in a way, have its effectiveness in two or three issues of the newspaper, to continue with it any longer would be a mistake which would lead us to a position of dissenters from Stalinism, which has nothing to do with our true position”.

Succinctly, a name or a symbol is of enormous importance for the revolution.

Quebracho is a dialectical compendium; we find on the same question its affirmation and in the following line its negation. The booklet readers do not know what to expect. But if you take the trouble to continue his disquisitions to the end, you will arrive — we know — to a very categorical conclusion: that Quebracho is an imbecile.

No one other than an imbecile can, after asserting the title of the newspaper is of no import, that “they will receive with joy, whatever name it may have, provided that this newspaper expresses, through its preaching, the true concerns and yearnings of the oppressed class in struggle for its emancipation”, assert a page later that to continue with the name of *La Internacional* is an ill-fated error and, even more, that “it is not possible to fulfil our mission... under the auspices of a name that...”.

We see how generalising specific cases Quebracho commits horrors. To deny as applicable the titles of *Bandera Roja* and *La Internacional* at any given moment of our movement the author brings to light the, according to him, no import of symbols in the revolutionary movement, asserting that what is important is the propaganda activity, without understanding that this is also done through symbols.

Subsequently he is forced to give the concrete reasons why he does not accept the names already mentioned, and forgetting to his misfortune the generalisation already made, he falls into the error of giving as much importance to the titles as to assert that with one such as the already named it is impossible to fulfil our mission.

As we see, irreconcilable extremes touch on... Quebracho.

The newspaper as main and urgent task

A rather large group of comrades seems to hold today the position of the inescapable necessity of a Bolshevik-Leninist newspaper. We have already named these comrades in point b), we will now analyse them more closely.

Although Quebracho does not support this position today, the GOR's activity was for a time to publish *La Internacional* [The International], *La Nueva Internacional* [The New International], and *Lucha Obrera* [Workers' Struggle].

We resort to the publications of this organisation, despite the time elapsed, because it seems to us the best of our movement from the agitation point of view.

We do not know of any document holding the opinion of the unavoidable necessity of the newspaper; it would be interesting thus polemise directly.

If one understands the need for a newspaper as the need which stems from the lack of a revolutionary organ among the proletariat, we agree. Just in case, we think it appropriate to point out that this urgent need has been missing for many years.

We have only to remind some of the proponents of the theory, to organise the forces of thought accordingly as it is commonly developed. Let's see:

1) Leaning on Lenin, "Without a political organ, a political movement deserving that name is inconceivable in the Europe of today",⁵ they argue that as the political movement we are, we need the political organ that is the newspaper.

2) As the stage of the groups has already been overcome and the different groupings are to be organised through the newspaper, true "collective organiser" because "we precisely live in such a moment of our party life, when we have stones and bricklayers, but we only lack the plumline visible to all and to which all could abide".

3) They are of the opinion the newspaper is insistently demanded by tram workers and those from Lanus and other establishments.

4) That we need an organ to put forth our positions; in addition, that the newspaper will land on its feet because Stalinism and reformism have already fully shown its dirty linen to the masses. On the other hand, if a newspaper is published, in two months a powerful organisation will be brought together.

Here it is condensed the position of so many comrades, among whom Quebracho stood out at another time with a newspaper that was the best written and most distributed of the Fourth-Internationalists.

Let's go in parts. 1) We do not argue that publishing a newspaper is a negative task; it always plays a role, even though it propagates our positions very poorly, as has generally happened.

What we deny as a positive and urgent function is a newspaper which calls itself Bolshevik has nothing of what is implied in that name. Later we will verify the latter through the example of *La Internacional*. On the other hand, we are not to blame if nowadays we continue to refuse the newspaper because, frankly, we do not feel capable of publishing one, nor do we believe capable of doing so those who have tried so many times and have failed. If today an organisation produces a newspaper that is good enough to give our position about the main issues of the working class, we assure our organisation of our full intellectual and material support. While this is not happening, we will continue to hold that the main task, given the impossibility of publishing a newspaper, is to approach the proletarian vanguard.

We believe the approach to this proletarian vanguard is possible and what is immediate. We laugh at those who, knowing there is no organisation more or less powerful to produce a newspaper, insist on it as a justification of their inactivity.

Much more important is the second argument; that groups have always existed in our movement is a visible truth.

But have these groups been genuine proletarian groups, where at least the economic activity of the proletariat burned most of the energies? Unfortunately, we have to answer with a flat negative since there has been no Fourth-Internationalist group taking an active

⁵ VI Lenin, "Where to Begin?", Published in *Iskra*, No. 4, May 1901, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, digital reprint 2009, p. 25.

part in the actions of the proletariat, even the most primary, such as picketing, handing out leaflets inciting economic strikes, and so on.

From this angle, we argue the need for those groups that have not existed. Groups that train workers in socialism firmly, and at the same time take part in factory life near their zone of influence.

Opportunist groups have generally been true groups of intellectuals or of workers away from their environment. The activity of these groups relied on one or two comrades and they assigned as a mission the creation of the Party in the short term, i.e., the union of all the Fourth-Internationalists.

We are more modest in terms of our internal organisational goal. We want to join the four or five people who are currently active on a common task.

Lenin said it well, the newspaper is the plumbline; the problem is we have neither stones nor masons.

What to do? We answer without hesitation that if to look for the masons and the stones we need to lose or keep the plumbline, we will go looking for the stones and the masons, because the plumbline is easy to get, once these are present, which are paramount.

That has happened in our movement; we have had the reins but the horse has been missing.

Let's start by looking for the horse and once we have it, we use the old reins if we have them or we look for others if we do not. What we should do is avoid riding bareback.

The proletariat as a class and through its vanguard has lacked and lacks a connection to our movement. Let's fulfil this immediate task and let's not be alarmed if it is long one. If there is the possibility, very strange indeed at the moment, to publish a good newspaper, let's do it; but let's not forget that the immediate task is the other.

We do not believe the newspaper is insistently demanded by Lanus and tram workers⁶ and for that, we base ourselves only in external experiences in point 3). We argue that there are not 30 workers who pay dues for the newspaper between Lanus and Liniers and hopefully we are wrong. We talk about dues because it is through this where you can see whether the newspaper is a necessity along with dressing or going to the movies on Sundays.

That Stalinism, like reformism, does not even keep the Marxist forms, we agree.

What seems to us inaccurate to the extreme is that for this reason our newspaper will triumph. A genuine workers' newspaper will be listened to and will polarise new elements, but the point is just that, the impossibility of publishing with our forces a genuine workers' newspaper.

That there are many old people who preserve something of their consciousness and will enjoy a newspaper with more or less revolutionary positions, we know. But these people will go no further than sympathy, hiding behind their theory of "technocracy" or any other similar "ideology".

The young worker without socialist training (almost all) will not pay attention to us, since he will find nothing to his liking, in the very difficult case the newspaper reaches its hands. The paper's mission will, therefore, be let down because of an organisation unable to publish a newspaper but determined to publish it.

The example of the first issue of *La Internacional* is very eloquent and applies to all of the previous and subsequent Fourth-Internationalist publications.

Lenin asserts that the newspaper is a superior form of agitation in relation to leaflets. In the article "Draft Declaration of Iskra and Zarya", he says:

"We must try to create a higher form of agitation by means of the newspaper, which must contain a regular record of workers' grievances, workers' strikes, and other forms

⁶ Those who felt that way are now forced to recognise that an organisation of about 15 to 20 people they cannot pay dues of \$60 a month, even when they are called militants. How far we are from those genuine militants, not cardboard ones like these, who pay dues of four workdays a month! (NM)

of proletarian struggle, and all manifestations of political tyranny in the whole of Russia; which must draw definite conclusions from each of these manifestations in accordance with the ultimate aim of socialism and the political tasks of the Russian proletariat.”⁷

We do not expect a newspaper to be like the Bolsheviks’s that reflected the everyday and political life of the proletariat as a class from one end of all Russia to the other. But we do expect at least the most important facts for the proletariat are analysed drawing “definite conclusions from each of these manifestations in accordance with the ultimate aim of socialism and the political tasks”.

The first issue of *La Internacional* came out in the middle of April 1939. Not that we systematically deny Quebracho, but the evidence proves it expressed nothing more than his wishes, truly far removed from reality when he claimed that “the appearance of the first issue of our newspaper, the first Bolshevik-Leninist organ”, for we may assume that the following matters of importance to the Buenos Aires’s proletariat have been dealt with in the highest degree.

The month of March, important news that *La Internacional* does not comment on:⁸ Augusteo Hall, meeting of the bakers. Meeting of the CGT [General Confederation of Labour] secretaries. Francisco Nedujal, a member of the Bakers Union, is notified of his deportation from the country; he is torn from his home by police and deported incognito. The Plumbing and Sewer Workers Board of Directors meets. Meeting of marble workers at 386 Victoria St. The Argentine government concluded a treaty with France whereby it undertakes to send 200,000 tons of wheat, 15,000 tons of oats, and 18,000 tons of barley. General Meeting of the Footwear Workers Union. General Meeting Cigar Makers Union, 2008 Bartolome Mitre St. Chamberlain affair in the House of Commons for the recognition of Franco (1 March 1939). Bakers accept the proposal of the National Department of Labour; in case of the bosses not accepting general strike is declared. Meeting of the Buenos Aires Province cotton spinners in the Textile Workers Union, 1760 Cochabamba St. The Argentine Industrial Union in its magazine informs that the restrictions to North American trade are an injustice and that the USA is after England our main buyer.

USA	Year 1935-37	\$190 million
	Year 1938	\$300 million
England:	Year 1936	\$262 million
	Year 1937	\$322 million

A general meeting of the SP in different sections, 12, 13 and 15. A campaign against telephone services monopolies started by *La Vanguardia* [The Vanguard]. In Santa Fe Province overtime is regulated. Cotton workers decide the strike if the proposed improvements are not accepted. CAMEA’s strike in Villa Lugano, a worker of last name Fernandez is brutally punished, the collaboration of the police with the bosses. March 10, General Meeting of marble workers. General and partial Meetings of FOV [Clothing Workers Union]. The government does not allow entry to Hebrew families of Monte Grande and General San Martin. In Santa Fe, there is a rally remembering Don Lisandro de la Torre. Stalinist leader Jose Peter sends a letter in which the conservative government of Mendoza is praised. A movement for reform of the law 10585 of work at home is begun. The footwear workers in opposition to the proposal of the bosses resolve to make a stoppage. A victory for the Israeli Cooperative Society workers and employees. A general meeting of construction workers in Avellaneda. Multiple rallies of the SIA [Argentine-Israelite Society]. *La Vanguardia* argues in an editorial article that the borders must be opened mainly to the United States. Stalinist and workers uprisings against the loyal government. Roosevelt ponders democracies. There are 350,000 refugees in France. The Balkan Conference. The

⁷ VI Lenin, “Draft of a Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra and Zarya”, Collected Works, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, digital reprint 2009, p. 326.

⁸ Compared to the Social Democratic newspaper *La Vanguardia* [The Vanguard], which comments on these news. (NM)

magazine of the Metalworkers Union places most of the blame of the burdens they undergo on the presidential side. Dispute of restaurant workers. A new issue of Internal Argentine Credit. Bricklayers strike in Santa Fe. Roosevelt is against the neutrality law. The socialists put under cover of an organisation on 62 Maipu St the non-existent buses. Pedro Albizu Campos remains in custody. *La Pasionaria* is told she is an undesirable element in France. A celebration of the 35th anniversary of the election of the first socialist deputy in Latin America. A separatist movement in Slovakia. Meeting of house-calling tailors. Iscaro, the Stalinist construction union leader, is arbitrarily arrested. A delegation of metal workers visits the Finance Minister to request permission to import cars. A general meeting of cardboard workers. Yankee documents on Nazi penetration. The unfortunate situation of the tram workers' technical section. Death of 12 workers in an explosion in a factory of pyrotechnic articles. Stoppages on the Argentine Central Railway. Report by the National Department of Labour on the cost of living and wages.

	Capital	Provinces
Wages:	\$127.26	\$97.21
Expenses:	\$164.19	\$112.29

Democratic meeting in Montevideo. Argentine Merchant Navy. General Congress of Buenos Aires Province construction workers. Discontent among the workers of municipal slaughterhouses. The agrarian crisis and the solution of Stalinists and socialists. A trade agreement with Brazil and Germany. Strike of footwear workers. Danzing affair. Dispute of metallurgical workers. The general meeting of Tram Workers Union approves the work of the directive commission.

As it was not so, and despite all these events happening at least 15 days before the newspaper publication, we must, despite our regret, acknowledge that the newspaper did not fulfil its purpose and that it is, on the other hand, the negation of Bolshevism.

[German philosopher Ludwig] Feuerbach says of reason, "existence is made known to me by quality". And the life of the GOR, the life of estrangement from the proletariat, is made known by its newspaper.

If we take *La Internacional* and the group led by Quebracho for our criticism, it is not because of a random choice, but rather because they reveal opportunism, the unmistakable tint of our movement, elevated to the tenth power.

Those who today support the immediate need for a newspaper that gives our positions, analyses the most general problems, and is distributed profusely, forget the example of *La Internacional*. This was the best written newspaper, the one that best posed our general positions and was best distributed and that also fell further down as organisation, leaving of the old GOR no one else than its animator Quebracho, who today is forced to say "we are at midnight of the revolutionary movement" and "let's keep the positions gained", that is, the most resounding failure, the only position definitively gained.

They will assure us that conditions have changed, that Stalinism does not mobilise combative sectors of the proletariat, that the SP is a sorry sight limping on both legs, that all trade unions are empty, and so on and so forth. And that, therefore, if the Stalinist, reformist, anarchist and trade unionists leaders are not listened to, it will have to be us, the ones who have no position earned within the proletariat.

This indeed is to apply the identity principle.

The reason the chauvinist workers' leaders are not heard is the wave of the revolutionary ebb tide in which we live and that the working mass and the future vanguard sleep on the soccer fields, in the Radical Party, in the Cafiaspirina's ballrooms their class consciousness. And, therefore, that we are less likely to be listened to, that we reflect in the newspaper only for lack of workers contact, the general principles of the revolutionary class struggle.

For this to be heard in an era of the revolutionary ebb tide, it is more than ever necessary to contact the proletariat, the only way to express the most primary aspirations of the masses.

That is why, comrades of the newspaper, as an urgent task, do not hasten to reach the masses by means that are not appropriate, because after a time we will have to say, as today we do with the president's son...

“Note how he has made a chest of his shoulders: because he willed to see too far beyond him, he now looks behind and goes backwards.”⁹

Where and how we can act

Quebracho rightly asserts that the comrades who acted with him were eager to go into the mass.

Authentic revolutionists always go to the mass and they are bad or good revolutionists if they know how to penetrate or understand that mass.

There are, however, important stages we can delimit for clarity in three:

1) When the proletarian vanguard is not won, the effort of the conscious militants must point towards it as it is the most important sector and future leader.

2) Once the proletarian vanguard is won, we must strive to attract the less capable sectors of the proletariat.

3) The entire people are led by the proletariat and its vanguard, the party.

These three conditions are not rigorously given in the above way as history is not scholastic, but it follows more or less this turn as evidenced by the experience of the Russian Bolshevik party.

As we can see how important it is always to approach the mass, our beloved sycophant says today another thing. Let us see. After announcing the publication of the magazine *Estrategia* [Strategy], he says: “But now there has arisen a problem on which we must meditate. Is it possible and advisable to begin the publication of a magazine, such as was planned, in an era of retreat, paralysis and repression as we are living in?”

What Quebracho wants to announce with decorum with this is his definitive disengagement from the revolutionary movement. He tries to justify himself by asserting he expects the revolutionary rise because “we are at midnight of the revolutionary movement”.¹⁰

We cover ourselves by answering the current apathy of Quebracho and many others in the following words of Lenin: “It is ridiculous to plead different circumstances and a change of periods: the building of a fighting organisation and the conduct of political agitation are essential under any “drab, peaceful” circumstances, in any period, no matter how marked by a “declining revolutionary spirit”; moreover, it is precisely in such periods and under such circumstances that work of this kind is particularly necessary, since it is too late to form the organisation in times of explosion and outbursts; the party must be in a state of readiness to launch activity at a moment's notice.”¹¹

With surprise, we see that for Quebracho the important thing is not to go to the proletarian vanguard that is a part of the mass because “it is not just about going to the mass” but of “creating the leading cadres capable of gathering the revolutionary vanguard of that mass and lead it”.

9 Dante, *The Divine Comedy*. [Editor]

10 LOR's *Internal Bulletin* No 4, p. 7. (NM)

11 VI Lenin, “Where to Begin?”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, op. cit., p. 18.

On the one hand, we have that, according to Mr Quebracho, the revolutionary vanguard and the leading cadres are different because we must “create the leading cadres capable of gathering the revolutionary vanguard”.

On the other hand, as a logical corollary, the revolutionary vanguard is not as we might have thought, we poor mortals who do not share the socialism of Quebracho, the leader of the mass. The leader of the mass and its vanguard is that absolute category of “revolutionary leaders” discovered by the president’s son.

Let Quebracho define the difference between leading cadres and revolutionary vanguard.

Let us imagine that Quebracho when saying leading cadres wanted to refer to Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, and the few major leaders of the party.

These are not the leading cadres but the chiefs or leaders of the revolutionary vanguard and they are counted on the fingers and not by cadres. Let us leave aside that many of these chiefs at the crucial time have to be led by the same mass, as this does not tarnish, at least theoretically, this necessary function.

We do not know how to develop even two leaders without intimate contact with the proletarian vanguard. Because if Quebracho’s reasoning is carried out until The End,¹² the leaders will not organise themselves in contact with the masses or their vanguard because “it is not just about going to the masses, but of creating the leading cadres” and leading cadres who once created will attract the revolutionary vanguard and mass to our ranks as “the leading cadres capable of gathering the revolutionary vanguard of that mass and lead it”. The first thing is, according to this, to find a Lenin, a Trotsky, a Bukharin and once we discover these leaders, we can address the mass we will attract and its vanguard. Quebracho thus transforms from a Marxist into a supporter of the decisive importance of individuals in history; he again unearths the theory that the social movement is done by the chosen.

There remains the problem of which class to resort to developing the leaders. Let Quebracho continue the syllogism from this extremely precise premise that with all the children of presidents and former presidents of the world it is impossible to lead the world revolution.

Let us forget the questions asked because Quebracho will not answer them nor do we have any interest in untying this new knot. What is very important is the need, as Lenin says, of chiefs highly trained and attuned to their mission to lead a party.

These chiefs do not respond to their function by the imperative of their desire, because if it were so, Quebracho, we do not doubt it, would be Top Brass. Instead, they would take their place by fulfilling the law of survival of the fittest, or, as our friend Quebracho rightly says “fulfilling Darwin’s law” of the struggle for existence.

However, on another page of his pamphlet, Quebracho insists, so as to not leave any doubt of his cerebral incapacity, as he raises the task which is for the moment the immediate one: “to create a revolutionary party and form its leading cadres”.

Marxists have always fought against schemas, and they do not or did not assume that in Buenos Aires, South America, a Mr Quebracho, calling himself Marxist, would put schema as fundamental and life as secondary, as determined.

Because when he asserts that the immediate is the training of the leading cadres, we cannot help but ask him on which university examinations the degree of a leader is granted.

The index finger that points to each one’s position in the whole, the movement, is none other than the life of the revolutionary movement, the action of every day because this and nothing else exposes the qualities and weaknesses of the militants as well as the corrections.

Darwin’s selection is fulfilled through the struggle for existence and the fittest survive.

¹² The words “The End” are in English in the Spanish original. (Translator)

Let us transfer Darwin's famous law to the revolutionary movement and we will see how in a political movement of the proletariat the leaders emerge from the action of this class. They are the individuals who by their enthusiasm, their experience, their perseverance, and their training can direct it.

We believe that to choose among ten people who run the fastest in 100, 200, 300 metres and other distances, the immediate task is to make them run and to have a track. For Quebracho it is not; what is immediate is to state the task of choosing the best runners.

The proletariat in its primary struggle against the bosses forms its own vanguard, which does not go further than the economic struggle; we must inoculate these potential or actual trade union leaders with socialist theory to develop a revolutionary class policy.

This is, on the other hand, the well-known problem of melding socialism with the spontaneous workers' movement, since socialism as a theory results from a long philosophical and historical experience of humanity, which is spread through individual exposition.

As a theory, socialism does nothing but revolutionise the intellectual field. Hence the attempt by the bourgeoisie to bring Marxism to the category of pure science.

An attempt that fails if Marxism is transformed into a genuine revolutionary movement by uniting it, as the metaphysical, economic, and historical conception it is, to the policy of the only homogeneous and revolutionary class that exists, the proletariat. Transforming ourselves from a theoretical movement or isolated from the proletariat into an authentic socio-political movement, we fulfil our first and main task, to appear on the historical scene as an authentic class movement. Once this happens, the main leaders, who have been developing previously, will appear; we have no doubt. And also, if a fair tactical line is followed, there will be newspapers, and militants in all other parties who will inform us and make us aware of what is happening. But all this is later and if at some time it may provoke controversies in the aspect of its practical application, it cannot be denied that it is stupid to present today as an urgent task the creation of a newspaper, like the entry of militants in other parties, and the creation of "leading cadres".

We can state then that the problem of the leaders is not current and also that it is alien to our will as isolated entities.

We say this with great care because we are afraid that Quebracho does not expect the authentic revolutionary movement, and not falsified as the LOR, to point to each one's position, and to name the great South American revolutionary chief with total unanimity.

He is will give rise to a problem, that of the people who will complete the supreme directory. Unless Quebracho believes himself five times prudent, i.e., that he is worth ten, we imagine a notice in the press written the following way: "Classes on how to be a revolutionary Marxist leader".

If Marxist revolutionary does not mean a new brand of automobiles, we do not doubt that the notice's author would be our friend, the super of the Marxist movement. Again, we repeat: what matters of the leading cadres is not the creation of the chiefs since they arise when the time comes. What is most important is to unite in an indivisible whole the right political theory with the potential workers' leaders, namely, to transform them into authentic Bolshevik revolutionists, true leaders of the masses.

We note in passing of the need for these popular chiefs to be professional revolutionists, i.e., to dedicate their lives to the revolution.

We have moved away from the central question of this chapter; let us return to it with the small body of knowledge already gained. We will find that the greatest desire of all the South American Fourth-Internationalists is the creation of the party and therefore of its leading cadres, but this does not mean this is the urgent, immediate task, as Quebracho and so many others assert.

We do not even have the strength of the smallest fraction of the proletarian vanguard. The few militants who act in small groupings, we are also isolated or locked in a personal activity.

“Not only the general interests of our movement as a whole (training of the workers in consistent socialist and political principles).”¹³ Our movement is presented with this general interest as the urgent task.

Without a doubt, there are many factors or facets of a powerful revolutionary movement that we leave aside when saying that this task is the urgent and essential one, but well Lenin said: “The whole art of politics lies in finding and taking as firm a grip as we can of the link that is least likely to be struck from our hands, the one that is most important at the given moment, the one that most of all guarantees its possessor the possession of the whole chain.”¹⁴

No one will dare to deny that the first link is to fulfil the stage of union with the proletarian vanguard.

First of all, without a doubt, a multitude of questions arise when we answer the question, how and where to act to fulfil this task? We, like Lenin, say: “As long as the task is to attract to Communism the vanguard of the proletariat, propaganda must occupy the first place; even small circles, with all their consequent weaknesses, are useful and give fruitful results in this case.”

That is to say, in the stage to be, the workers training groups, and propaganda groups have fundamental importance.

It could not be otherwise. These groups allow us to be in direct contact with the proletariat of a neighbourhood, a factory, and to develop a task of personal propaganda within the reach of our tiny forces.

These groups are not limited to these tasks alone. They do not leave the agitation for better times to come, but: “In a word, economic (factory) exposures were and remain an important lever in the economic struggle. And they will continue to retain this significance as long as there is capitalism, which makes it necessary for the workers to defend themselves.”¹⁵

There are many groups, and there have existed many more in our movement, yet no one consciously puts forth, we believe, their specific tasks as a revolutionary workers’ group.

The true groupings are not those that unite with the sole and exclusive purpose of orienting the others and choosing a CC where the alleged heroes of the movement appear. These groups were and are the absolute negation of what they should be.

For example, the GOR and our group, while the first produced a newspaper as the main activity and called itself the first and the perfect, we know and we say we are neither the first nor perfect, that together with us there will exist many other Fourth-Internationalists groups in disagreement with our opinions. If theoretical discrepancies exist, we will strive with all the material means at our disposal to make both positions known.

In addition, to us, comrades who disagree with our way of thinking are not police betrayers, or lumpen, but simply comrades who do not think the same as us.

However, the fundamental difference does not lie there. While the GOR was uselessly attempting to create a strong organism and could not exist because it lacked human material, we endeavoured to fuse with the proletarian vanguard by acting in mass organisations such as Stalinist neighbourhood clubs, trade unions, workshops, neighbourhoods, youth committees, socialists committees, Zionist dances, Catholics and countryside elements where there is a large percentage of workers.

13 VI Lenin, “What is to be done?”, February 1902, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, op. cit., p. 485.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 502.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 399.

This work extends our sphere of influence day by day.

Our work is essentially propaganda, having as its main mission the clandestine library, which is used to provide reading and study for the most capable workers, as far as we know.

We complete this task with the publication of pamphlets that clarify the urgent current tasks.

We request the necessary collaboration for all these tasks, in what they have in common with all the Fourth-Internationalist organisations: distribution and technical organisation of the publications.

These works, that are specific to a group, we believe colour the stage we have to go through and so we will hold, orienting towards the formation in all the neighbourhoods and places of the country of these Marxist study, activity and propaganda circles.

If today there is a task common to all Fourth-Internationalists, it is this one.

Without a doubt, on the basis of this task, one can attempt more extensive works, those of the need for the propaganda of Marxism as a theory, and vindicating the class struggle.

For these tasks, we can request the collaboration of those comrades of good will and the different groupings of Buenos Aires and later from other places.

This is what we want to do when starting the publication of brochures, but we do not go to the clouds by posing a task which does not match our current strength, such as producing a newspaper or the publication of a discussion bulletin. We do not forget that: "Social-Democracy does not tie its hands, it does not restrict its activities to some preconceived plan or method of political struggle; it recognises all methods of struggle, provided they correspond to the forces at the disposal of the Party."¹⁶

We also laugh at the plans that currently abound in our movement, of newspapers that if published will completely take over complete workers' organisations, for "if there is no strong organisation, initiated in the political struggle under any conditions and any period, we cannot speak of a systematic plan of action, based on firm principles and inflexibly applied, a unique plan deserving the name of tactics". We believe this organisation does not exist.

There are comrades who think it is essential to create a powerful organisation with all its attributes: newspaper, discussion bulletin, and so on, and so forth.

Ten years ago, the comrades considered the creation of this powerful organisation without succeeding. "Can one of the reasons be that Social-Democracy, 'like mankind', always sets itself only tasks that can be achieved?"¹⁷

We are of the opinion that: "Generally speaking, of course, all these are necessary, but once the solution of a concrete organisational problem is undertaken, surely time and circumstances must be taken into consideration."¹⁸ And these conditions, unfortunately, are currently unfavourable for those tasks.

For all these reasons, we propose the task of group formation, as the immediate and necessary task to approach the proletarian vanguard. That is to say, to ensure the publication soon of a genuine Bolshevik newspaper and so many necessary tasks which we are today forced to deny as possible.

There are comrades who look at us as if they were surprised as if we had discovered gunpowder with our position. It is not so. Although Lenin fought hard for the creation of a powerful organisation, he did not ignore, as it could not be otherwise, the need for groups, and to be fully active in a special sector of the population, the proletariat, when this has not yet been won.

¹⁶ VI Lenin, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement", December 1900, originally published in *Iskra* No 1, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, op. cit. p. 471.

¹⁷ VI Lenin, "What is to be done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, op. cit. p. 409.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 485

Regarding the latter, he says on page 429 of *What is to be Done?*: “In the earlier period, indeed, we had astonishingly few forces, and it was perfectly natural and legitimate then to devote ourselves exclusively to activities among the workers and to condemn severely any deviation from this course. The entire task then was to consolidate our position in the working class.”¹⁹

Therefore, to those comrades who remain inactive in the absence of a party that tells them the tasks, we say with Trotsky that there is a fundamental task for a revolutionist that he cannot fail to do: “If the leaders seek only to preserve themselves, that is what they become: preserves – dried preserves. If they enter the movement they give the impulse to five, ten, twenty others. It is more important to multiply our cadres than to preserve them, and they can be multiplied by the hundreds.”²⁰

And for those who are disillusioned by the impossibility of making our positions instantly understood among the workers, we end with the words of the greatest organiser of the Marxist workers’ party in the world: “It is a job that does not frighten revolutionary educators.” §

19 Ibid

20 L Trotsky, “American Problems”, 7 August 1940, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40)*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 335. [Note of 2017]