



Nahuel Moreno

**Who knew how
to fight against
the "Liberating
Revolution" before
16 September 1955?**

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(1954–1955)

Translated from the 2012 Spanish edition by Editorial El Socialista of the book
The Gorilla Coup of 1955 — The Positions of Trotskyism

English Translation: Daniel Iglesias

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cehus2014@gmail.com



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Foreword to the 2021 edition

Peronism was a bourgeois nationalist movement that won the massive support of the working class. Since the 1970s when it won the 1973 elections and Peron returned from exile, it had already left behind all traces of anti-imperialist nationalism, although it continued and continues to call himself “national and popular”. It still holds an important influence over the workers and has held government for many years, alternating with military dictatorships and periods of government of the other traditional bosses’ party, the Radicals, or some other bosses’ alliance.

For its part, a very small revolutionary force also began to develop in those same years. We refer to the current of Trotskyism led by Nahuel Moreno, and which was taking its first steps in its connection with the workers in the industrial heart of that time, Avellaneda, in Greater Buenos Aires. Thus, a small organization, the Marxist Workers’ Group (GOM), was founded in 1944.

In the work *1954, Key Year of Peronism* (available at nahuelmoreno.org), Nahuel Moreno analysed the Yankee colonization plan on Latin America and its advance on Argentina after the invasion of Guatemala in 1954 and the fall of the nationalist government of Jacobo Arbenz. This was the fundamental framework to guide a revolutionary policy before the Peronist bourgeois government and for the workers who followed it. Argentina had not yet succumbed to the imperialist offensive of the United States.

The offensive of Yankee imperialism intensified in 1955, driven by growing opposition to the government among the bosses, the active mobilization of its faithful from the Catholic Church and the “gorilla”, Radical, Social Democratic and Communist parties.

The work *Who knew how to fight against the “liberating revolution” before 16 September 1955?*, published for the first time in 1957, compiled Moreno’s articles published in the newspaper *La Verdad* or in flyers distributed by the militants of the Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution (PSRN). The PSRN was a party led by brothers Enrique and Emilio Dickmann, who had distanced themselves from the Socialist Party because of their anti-working-class positions and had managed to obtain electoral legality in 1954.

Nahuel Moreno and his party had a revolutionary response to promote among the workers the rejection of the Yankee offensive and maintain political and class independence towards Peronism and defend the workers’ own interests. The rest of the left sided with the reactionary offensive (the traditional socialists and the Communist Party) or capitulated to Peronism, as did various Trotskyist sects led by Pablo and Mandel. In this work, the reader can follow step by step the Yankee and gorilla offensive, the comings and goings of the Peronist government and the alternative proposals the Trotskyists were proposing. The reproduction of some flyers is impressive. For example, the one that was distributed on 16 June in the afternoon, or the one that called for a general strike for 17 October of that tragic year, and that the workers complied *en masse* and spontaneously despite the repression. The first edition of 1957 included a foreword by Milciades Peña that we reproduce.

Editorial Pluma reissued it in Buenos Aires in 1974, with a foreword by Daniel Zadunaisky that we reproduce.

In 2012, Editorial El Socialista reissued this pamphlet and both prologues, together with *1954, Key Year of Peronism* and also the 1956 work *After Peron, what?* (both available at www.nahuelmoreno.org), with the title *The Gorilla Coup of 1955 — The Positions of Trotskyism*.

All notes are from the editor unless otherwise noted.

Mercedes Petit¹

Agosto 2021

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

Foreword to the 1974 Spanish edition

Ediciones Pluma presents under the title *The gorilla² coup of 1955* the third edition of two works of great value to understand Peronism. It does so while thinking of the working-class and student youth, of the young activists who did not live through the "Peron era". If the reader is a student or young professional from the middle class, it is likely he heard at home "Peron ruined the country", "Peron was a fascist", etc. A young worker will have heard, on the contrary, "Peron was the greatest thing we had; everything we have is because of him".

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

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

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

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

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

² **Gorilla** is a term from Argentina's domestic politics, historically used to refer in a derogatory or pejorative way to those who gave a coup against Peron. Over the years, the term has been extended to a greater or lesser extent to other countries in Latin America as synonymous with "reactionary right".

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

Was Peron consistently anti-imperialist?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Was Peron really against the bosses?

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

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

What are the measures that Peron did not take? The Peronist government did not carry out an agrarian reform, which could have destroyed the large estates and increased agricultural production. The property of the livestock oligarchy remained intact. The same happened with the most important

sectors of industry. At that time industries emerged, such as light metalwork, which in the hands of bosses are organised according to their profits.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who came out to fight on 16 June?

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

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

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

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

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

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

The army and part of the bourgeoisie did not come out with everything in this coup. They felt insecure of their own strength, given the massive support Peron received from the workers. But the general rehearsal of 16 June showed them two things. One, that Peron was not willing to mobilise the working class. It is true that in the following months Peron used the threat of creating workers’ militias as a weapon of blackmail against the gorilla bosses and imperialism. But everything remained at that — a threat. No concrete action was taken to create them; instead, much was said about the loyalty of the “San Martinian army”.

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

“I don’t want to shed Argentine blood”

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

Why did Peron not do any of this? Here lies the key to the victory of the gorilla coup of 1955. These measures would have attacked the bourgeois property regime, the capitalist system. Adopting them would have meant to wrest power from the hands of the bourgeoisie to hand it over to the

workers. Peron did not do it and thus revealed the bosses' nature of his government, destined to defend the interests of capitalism.

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

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

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

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

How did the left act?

Most of the groups that move particularly in the student movement and the guerrilla groups that exist today had not appeared in the Peron era. The guerrilla groups appear in the middle of the retreat of the workers' movement during the government of Ongania (1966–1969). They reflect the desperation of the petty bourgeoisie in the face of its impoverishment, the result of the sell out to Yankee imperialism and the immobility of the working class and they go on to individual and terrorist action in search of "shortcuts" to the revolution. The hundreds of small sects that exist in the student movement are the product of the rise began with the Cordobazo (May 1969), scattered by the lack of a strong revolutionary pole in the workers' movement.

But the reader should know some leftist parties did exist in the Peron era: the Communist Party, Jorge Abelardo Ramos,³ *Politica Obrera* [Workers' Politics] (or, rather, its predecessor Praxis) and the Trotskyism organised at the time in the Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party (National Revolution), currently *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* [Socialist Workers Party].

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

³ *Jorge Abelardo Ramos* (1921-1994) was an Argentinian politician, historian, and writer, founder of the political and ideological current called Izquierda Nacional (National Left), which vindicated things of Trotsky and fervently endorsed the Peronist government.

The Communist Party

On 22 December 1945, the Communist Party held a national conference to define its electoral policy. The central report was delivered by its general secretary, Victorio Codovilla,⁴ and was published later under the title of *Nazi-Peronism*, title which is, in itself, a whole definition. There we read that, while there may be some difference of form between Peron and the European fascist regimes, “Peron’s politics, tactics, and objectives resemble, like a drop of water to another, those of fascists everywhere in the world.”

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

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

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

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

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

Bearing this in mind, no communist comrade can be surprised that his party has sent him to vote for Alende and for Sueldo. Let’s recall who these gentlemen were. Oscar Alende was governor of Buenos Aires province under the presidency of Frondizi, to whose Party he belonged. Frondizi, yes, the party of the oil contracts and the Conintes plan and the “free” education (read: religious) in the schools, in opposition to secular education. Horacio Sueldo, former leader of the Christian Democratic Party, who formally disagrees with the more pro-Yankee wing of the Church (Caggiano) but has never spoken out in favour of a workers’ dispute (as have the priests of the Third World, for

⁴ **Victorio Codovilla** (1894–1970) was a leader of the Argentine Communist Party and became one of the most important leaders of Argentine and South American communism.

example). Both Alende and Sueldo were officials of the “executioner”,⁵ established after the 1955 gorilla coup.

The policy of labelling Peron as a fascist lasted 27 years and eight months. At the end of that period: miracle, Peron became progressive! The Communist Party orders its members, who should be quite confused, to vote for Peron in the elections of 23 September 1973. *Nuestra Palabra* clarifies this is a “programmatic vote” since it aimed to facilitate the realisation of the programmatic guidelines of FREJULI [Justicialist Liberation Front]. Perhaps it forgot that five months earlier it had stated these programmatic guidelines could “be endorsed even by Nueva Fuerza”.⁶

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

Politica Obrera

To begin with, it is necessary to clarify that *Politica Obrera* [Workers’ Policy] claims to be Trotskyist, although it does not belong but explicitly repudiates the world Trotskyist organisation, the Fourth International. This small party is the heir of the intellectual group Praxis, formed in the mid-1950s by Dr Silvio Frondizi.⁷ The two future leaders of *Politica Obrera*, Jorge Altamira and Marcelo took part in it a time later.

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

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

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

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

Reading this book, where that policy is widely explained and documented, will allow the reader to judge whether it was capitulation or not. What policy did the Praxis group have? We have already said: absolutely none, they did not even say the coup was coming. And that, in plain English, is called capitulation to the bourgeoisie, the Church, and imperialism. Altamira and Marcelo will be able to argue the policy of Praxis was formulated by Silvio Frondizi. Not even this excuse remains because

5 Among workers’ activists, the gorilla government was called “the executioners revolution” instead of “liberation revolution” as they called themselves.

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

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

in forming *Politica Obrera* they did not make the least self-critical balance of their line against the gorilla coup of 1955. Who capitulated to whom?

In the presidential elections of 1964, Peron, in the framework of his agreements with the Radicals, ordered the support of the Illia⁸ government. At that time, the 62 Organisations,⁹ led by Vandor,¹⁰ refuse to comply. The Trotskyist party *Palabra Obrera* [Workers' Word], considering the biggest obstacle the workers' movement had was its discipline to a bosses' movement like Peronism, supported the indiscipline of Vandor as a progressive phenomenon that accelerated the Peronist crisis while warning about the bureaucratic character of Vandor's leadership and the possibility of it linking to another bourgeois sector. At this time, *Politica Obrera* showed its sectarian face: unable to understand the positive aspect of Vandor's break, it accused the Trotskyists of "capitulating before the bureaucracy".

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

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

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

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

Abelardo Ramos

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

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

Thus, in his book *Revolución y contrarrevolución en la Argentina* [Revolution and counter-revolution in Argentina], commenting on Peron's negotiations with imperialism and anticipating

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

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

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

the explanations given by Frigerio and Alsogaray¹¹ to justify the sell out, he will say: "... this industry of imperialist capital pays revenues to the Argentine state, proletarianises a part of its population, develops a modern economic activity that rises the standard of life in general and objectively strengthens the country." This about the contracts with Kaiser, with California Oil Co! For the first time in history, a "Marxist" had discovered that imperialist penetration can benefit a country. The important thing is that the industries be there, it does not matter their owners are foreigners and take all the profits. This runs parallel to the policy of Peron, who before June 1955, when the pressure of imperialism and the gorilla bourgeoisie were increasing, sought to make concessions to relieve the pressure. Before the coup of 16 June, Ramos said absolutely nothing, neither about the Church nor about the signs of the coup. The following day (17 June) he wrote in the newspaper *Democracia*: "The army founded by San Martin, tempered in the gaucho wars and organised by Roca and Riccheri, fulfilled its duty until the end..."

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

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

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

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

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

Trotskyism

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

Daniel Zadunaisky

15 March 1974

¹¹ **Rogelio Frigerio** (1914–2006) was an Argentine economist and politician. Adherent of developmentalism, in 1958 he was Secretary of Socio-Economic Affairs of the critical Economics Ministry. **Alvaro Alsogaray** (1913–2005) was an Argentine politician and businessman. Minister of Economy during 1959–1962, he was one of the principal proponents of economic liberalism in modern Argentina.

Foreword to the first edition (1957)

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

Two fundamental currents disputed before 16 September, with each other and with the Peronist bureaucracy, the leadership of the Argentine working class. One (expressed in the different journalistic publications and two books published between 1946 and 1955 by Rodolfo Puiggrós,¹² Jorge Abelardo Ramos, many aliases, Eduardo Astesano,¹³ Enrique Rivera,¹⁴ aka Peñaloza, and others who revolved around them) argued the Peronist government was doing a National Revolution and the working class had to support it through the strategy of the National Front, i.e., through collaboration between the workers and the bosses who supported Peronism. According to this current, the working class had to support Peronism until Peron had made — after a whole historical stage — the industrialisation of the country. Only then, only after this, the working class could think of ruling the country.

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

Faced with the threat of a *coup d'état* against Peronism, the strategy of the Trotskyist current, revolutionary socialist, was not of the “National Front”, i.e., to support the Peronist government and to collaborate with the bosses and Peronist agents of the bosses as the army, but the revolutionary

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

13 **Eduardo B. Astesano** (1913-1991), an Argentine politician and historian affiliated to the Communist Party.

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

Marxist tactics of the United Anti-Imperialist Front. In other words, to fight together with Peronism against the *coup d'états* but placing no trust in the politics of the Peronist leadership and constantly explaining to the working class that only them, armed, trusting in their own forces, acting independently of the Presidency of the Nation and the Ministry of War, only them, could crush the bosses-imperialist intent and defend the gains achieved with Peron. But, the socialist revolutionaries, the Trotskyists pointed out, the only way to definitively crush the oligarchy and imperialism is for the working class to take power because a government like the Peronist, who ruled with one foot supported by the workers and the other foot on the bosses and the generals, in the long run, would capitulate to the oligarchy and imperialism, leaving the working class unarmed before its enemies.

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

The "putsch" of 16 June 1955 was part of the struggle unleashed in 1954 between the Peronist government and the Catholic Church. From the first moment, the Trotskyist socialist revolutionary militants clearly stated what the real meaning of that struggle was and its position in it. And from the first moment, they foresaw the "putsch" and warned the working class against it. As early as November 1954 *La Verdad* said: "*The creation of a social-Catholic party responds to the Yankee plans for the colonisation of the country.*"¹⁵ And later, until the day before the "putsch", they continued insisting on this position and explaining the inescapable dilemma: either Peronism arms the working class or the army and navy break the neck of the working class and Peronism.

The sects

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

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

¹⁵ *La Verdad*, Avellaneda, 10 November 1954. MP

Grupo Cuarta Internacional (Fourth International Group, GCI, now *Partido Obrero Revolucionario Trotskista* [Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers Party], POR-T, led by Jorge Posadas), which publishes *Voz Proletaria* [Proletarian Voice], is the most important sect, whose gospel is the Transitional Program of the Fourth International and respect for the international leaders. Because of its “internationalism”, GCI, today POR-T, could continue to exist, although its most important theoretical task was always to translate the publications of the International that arrived from abroad.

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

All these sects, which are grouped around a great priest (the Frenchman Michel Pablo), have had a uniform position against the 16 June and the *coup d’état* that was approaching. Neither GCI-POR-T, nor the Praxis group, nor the UOR **said a single word before 16 June on the possibility of a *coup d’état* and on the way to prevent it and also did absolutely nothing nor prepared their people for 16 September.**

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

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

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

Nahuel Moreno wrote the documents published in this book for various publications of Trotskyist revolutionary socialism, grouped in the Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party of the National Revolution. This was the political current that most lucidly and consequently noticed the driving forces of the anti-Peronist conspiracy. And it was also the only political current that, fighting side by side with Peronism against the rising tide of the clerical-bosses-imperialist coup, knew how to preserve its independence against the Peronist government and denounce to the working class the

tremendous disaster the disastrous policy of the Peronist leadership was leading to. This, the best men of the working class and of workers' Peronism do not ignore it or forget it.

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

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

Orthodox Trotskyism has been the only organisation that foresaw the *coup d'états* of 16 June and 16 September and fought accordingly to confront them, preparing its militants for action. Subsequently, it was the only organisation that made intense efforts to reorganise the trade union movement and made an effort not to boycott the union elections. It was the only organisation that dropped 100,000 flyers in Capital and Greater Buenos Aires calling for a strike on 17 October 1955. Workers' activists and all revolutionaries must recognise orthodox Trotskyism as the only revolutionary organisation in the country and they must demand from any sect that tries to influence them proof they had the same positions we had in face of facts of such great transcendence. The workers will turn their backs on the sects since these have nothing to do with the working class and will be grouped around orthodox Trotskyism.

Milciades Peña¹⁶

30 August 1957

¹⁶ **Milciades Peña** (1933–965) was an Argentine historian, politician, and thinker. In 1947, he joined the *Grupo Obrero Marxista* (GOM), led by Nahuel Moreno, which later became the *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* (POR), of which he was elected a member of the Central Committee. He actively participated in party formation. However, in 1952 he left the organization, in disagreement with Moreno's decision to privilege territorial militancy over theoretical training. In 1957, again together with Moreno, Peña founded and directed the *Estrategia de la liberación nacional y social* (Strategy for the National and Social Liberation) magazine (1957-1958). Finally, in 1964 he launched the very prestigious journal *Fichas de investigación económica y social* (Cards for Economic and Social Research) (1964-1966), in which he, besides) advancing chapters of his unpublished works, translated Marxist authors such as Charles Wright Mills, Henri Lefebvre and Isaac Deutscher. He married and had a son. Peña committed suicide on 29 December 1965, at the age of 32.

Who knew how to fight against the “Liberating Revolution” before 16 September 1955?

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

(*La Verdad*, 3 December 1954)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We do not agree, as we have said on another occasion, with the policy the government takes in its dealings with the Yankees because they do these in secret. The latest government attitudes insist on denying the workers a conscious role in the talks with imperialism. With his speech, Peron wants to tell the Yankees he has the threads well held and they will not be able to overthrow him with a *coup d'état*. The turn to the left is then a speculation to stop the attack in full by the Yankees and keep the negotiations on a ground that may be more advantageous to him.

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

A bloc without principles

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

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

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

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

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

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

The speech of the 25th

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

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

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

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

government prefers to carry out negotiations with imperialism on its own and not to promote the working class mobilisation.

The politics of the Peronist government is Peronist and ours is socialist, i.e., they are different, and often antagonistic. For example, we do not agree with the government's attempts at an agreement with Yankee imperialism because the working class is not consulted or given direct participation in it. The working class is the only one capable of defending the interests of the country to its ultimate consequences in all economic and political negotiations.

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

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

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

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

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

(*La Verdad*, 19 May 1955)

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

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

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

The consequences of a false political characterisation

The Stalinist working class comrades have to make an effort and understand the capitulating policy their Party has led and leads in the face of the Church is based on the false political characterisation they do of the

Peronist government. The Communist Party defines the Peron government as "Corporate Fascist" and says "it has sold out to the Yankees".

We do not want to convince anyone that the Peron government is a workers' government. On the contrary, we are the first to say the current government has a reactionary character and serves the capitalists. But this is not enough. Yrigoyen's¹⁷ Radical government was also a government of the bourgeoisie, but Uriburu's¹⁸ coup, also being so, subjected even more the destiny of the country to the capitalists and imperialism. In short, neither Yrigoyen with his "democratic" characteristics nor Peron with his attempts of a total organisation is the government that yesterday or today imperialism need.

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

The Communist Party characterises the Peron regime as "the government of monopolies" (*Nuestra Palabra*, No 245) and to put a final example, quite ridiculous in itself, it said in a leaflet the US State Department planned the prison for Osvaldo Pugliese.¹⁹ This characterisation, which appears as ultra-revolutionary, is, on the contrary, completely false and fatal for its own members because it politically disarms them to face reality. If the Peron government is totally sold out, why does the Communist Party say now that Yankee imperialism encourages the *coup d'état*?

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

"National Democratic Front" and capitulation before the Church

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

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

The Communist Party says: "there are also democratic people who add mindlessly to the idea of the *coup d'état* because they have no confidence in the working class" (*Nuestra Palabra*, No. 261). But... where do

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

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

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

these “democratic” people who want the *coup d'état* belong...? Is it not the Catholics who, together with all the contras, are promoting trouble, who have such inclinations...? Is it not the Church that heads the movement for the *coup d'état*?

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

In the same issue of their newspaper, the Stalinists say they do not ignore “that in the ruling circles of the Church there are right-wing and reactionary sectors”. All right, but are they the ones looking for the coup? Yes or no? The Communist Party does not answer this question, but it is so enthusiastic trying to gather “democrats” for its “great Front”, that in order not to miss any of them and to further confuse its militants, it later says: “But it would be a grave mistake to confuse those reactionary leaders with the Catholic masses, who are animated by democratic and progressive sentiments.” A better demonstration of where the line of the “great Front” leads to, impossible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Peronist worker is in a similar situation. He believes the government is a giant that when it wants to thwart coups, put on the spot the unruly, be they priests or others, it has only to move a finger and it's over. For him, the government is all-powerful and increasingly he thinks with the police and the army it can do everything. He trusts the government, its politics, its apparatus and although he would support it in an emergency situation, he believes the government does not need him for much. On the other hand, he thinks... Who are the priests to endanger our gains?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The demonstrations carried out by Catholics on 25 May, at the exit of the churches throughout the country, was a new demonstration of pro-Yankee reaction forces. They tried to repeat the mobilisation of 6 May

when they attacked several transport workers in the centre of the city as if they had wanted to display in advance their true intentions toward the working class.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How the working class should be mobilised

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

The working class must face the confrontation of the Catholic mobilisation through its own mobilisation. How should this mobilisation be carried out? The problem of Catholics must be discussed in all places of work. The clerical mobilisation, the demonstrations, the separation of Church and state, the danger of a coup, must be discussed, starting with each workplace, broadly and democratically, with complete freedom of opinion for all

workers, including Catholics or Communists. Above the political differences, the workers of any tendency, even those whose leaders respond to imperialism, will know how to orient themselves, we are sure, by a position that represents the interests of the working class at this moment.

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

The extension of this discussion to the whole shift, to the whole factory, from factory to factory, from union to union, will signal the mobilisation of the entire working class. This change of ideas will put the workers in a position to clarify the problem that appears so dark and will turn them into true judges of the events that affect their immediate future. From all the meetings by section, factory or union, from all the factory committees and congresses of delegates, there must be pronouncements against the Catholic mobilisation and the *coup d'état*.

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

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

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

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

Unity of the working class to crush it!

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

Moreover, the newspapers report every day of arrests of priests in different parts of the Republic and frustrated plots in which clerical elements would take part. All these news are accompanied, in the Peronist press, by an anti-clerical campaign in which the friars are ridiculed and all the frictions the Church has had with the state since the time of Maria Castaña²⁰ until today are resurrected.

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

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

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

In November of last year, Peron said in a speech to the governors there was no conflict with the Church and it was only about 15 or 20 priests who were plotting against the government. In *La Verdad* No 6, appeared on 3 December 1954 and in subsequent editions, we pointed out the reasons for the conflict were broader. We noted the Church was trying to form a party that favoured the colonisation plan of Yankee imperialism, opening the country to its conquest. Also, that the government wanted to reach an agreement with Washington

²⁰ **Maria Castaña** was a woman of the fourteenth century of whom we know very little currently. By the time of Cervantes, she had already become an ambiguous temporal reference to refer to a very distant past, equivalent to "the times of Methuselah".

but in the best possible conditions while the Yankees, without rejecting the talks, wanted to impose on the country a servile government in the style of Castillo Armas.

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

After seven months of tension, the government continues to give secondary reasons to the conflict with the Church. In statements made by General Peron to an Italian journalist, he said, among other things, there is no issue with the Church; “what there is, is a conflict between a part of the clergy and the organisations of the Argentine people”. In short, even today he still insists the tension obeys to the whim of some priests who, who knows for what reason, came up with the creation of organisations similar to the Peronists but of a Catholic nature. And, it is not known why, giving up the enormous advantages the government had granted them, they place themselves in a position to lose them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vuletich²¹ said on May Day the triple alliance has re-manifested itself and it is composed by the clergy, the oligarchy, and capitalism. We believe such a general language cannot be that of the CGT. The Workers’ Central has the obligation to clearly and unequivocally point out what the true relations between the Church, the bosses’ organisation, and Yankee imperialism are, and it should be the GCT that drives it in any arena necessary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(*La Verdad*, 25 June 1955)

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

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

The causes of the coup are still standing

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

The Peronist government made up and makes up the main obstacle to the achievement of this program. They want the class struggle that Peronism does not allow, to suppress gains and workers' organisations. From

these columns, we have pointed out for many months these intentions of the bourgeoisie and imperialism and their *coup d'état*. The capitalists and imperialism acted with a clear program:

- a) in the economic field: implementation of the bosses' program in the Congress of Productivity;
- b) greater penetration of Yankee imperialism in the national economy;
- c) defeat of Peronism and CGT and the rise to the government of a right-wing political party with a popular base that could be led by the Church or Radical Unionists.

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

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

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

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

The politics of conciliation is the politics of the bourgeoisie

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But conciliation also has another meaning. Peronism cannot face, as before, the combined pressure of the capitalists and Yankee imperialism. The threat of a new *coup d'état* still hangs over its head. The only way to stop it is to mobilise the working class and the government knows this very well. Therefore, it gives in to the pressure of Yankee imperialism and its allies, which require it to give freedoms to the parties defending their interests. Peronism, faced with the alternative of capitulating before imperialism or mobilising the working class, leans towards the first because it knows very well once the working class has risen in defence of its interests, it will continue until the final liberation, and then the whole capitalist regime will falter.

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

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

7. Oil and *coup d'état* ²²

But the imperialist offensive on the country did not act only through the clerical agitation that began in late 1954. Already since 1953, Yankee capital and its native agents were pressing on the Peronist government from within, through the ministers of the economic team who increasingly imprinted on Peronist politics a surrendering character in face of the demands of Washington and Wall Street and of growing support for the bosses' campaign against the workers' gains. So successful was this Yankee pressure that some of the main agents of American capital in the country did not hesitate to proclaim Peronism was regenerating and would become a good bosses' and pro-Yankee government. Thus, Guillermo Kraft, a notorious agent of the Yankee capital invested in Argentina, declared in 1954 that "a profound transformation is taking place in our country. The private company is recognised and the businessman is trusted. The assets that were once nationalised are being returned one after the other to private entities. We are invited to participate in the management of state organisations. And all this, with absolute freedom of opinion and total political independence. However, these are the first steps. Our government thinks of loosening gradually the bureaucratic springs and giving private activities not only the role of their own existence but also — and we already have unambiguous signs of this — to make their intervention in our activities disappear."²³ And this was also the opinion of Federico Pinedo, who trusted the evolution of Peronism would "make the *coup d'état* unnecessary".²⁴

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

²² This chapter and the following were part of Chapter 6 in Editorial Pluma's republishing in 1974. We present them as individual chapters and we have added subtitles to facilitate reading without altering at all the text published then.

²³ *Argentina at the VII Plenary Meeting of the Inter-American Council of Commerce and Production* (Mexico, 1954), p. 126. NM

²⁴ Federico Pinedo, *El fatal estatismo* [Fatal statism], Kraft, Buenos Aires 1956), p. 17. NM

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

La Verdad said on 4 March 1955:

Argentina faced with the colonisation plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In *La Verdad* No 15, we talked about the meaning of some clauses of the oil agreement with Standard Oil, already signed by the Executive Power and put to the consideration of the chambers. We were not wrong to say the fate of the Yankee attempts to colonise the country now depended on this covenant since Yankee

Imperialism has forged this as the best instrument to achieve its basic goal, i.e., to control the southern part of the continent as a preliminary step for the management and defence of the Strait of Magellan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The working class must mobilise for the oil covenant rejection

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

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

Those comrades already present in the unions and in the country and who want to carry out a policy of consistent opposition to the bosses and the foreman of bosses — Yankee imperialism — should set in motion in

their factories and in their unions for the rejection of the oil pact knowing that with it they are fighting in the first row against the Yankee plan of Latin American colonisation. It is necessary to press so that in each factory, in each union, the workers express themselves against the colonising agreement and demand the CGT deputies, who claim to represent them, vote in the Chamber of Deputies against the covenant. The next assembly or congress of delegates of the textile, railway, metallurgical union, etc., the first factory or section meeting held must discuss this problem so the CGT deputies know the position they must represent in parliament.

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

8. Competing with the Peronist “national left”

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

Radicalism opposed in Parliament all the progressive measures that Peronism took against the Catholic Church. And on 13 June, three days before the putsch, the president of the Radical bloc in the Chamber of Deputies of the Nation (Alende) said: “We are with the Catholics who suffer persecutions and prison, we are for the freedom to profess any cult, for men of all religions, we are for the freedom of Jews when it is their turn, we are for the freedom of Protestants when it is their turn.”²⁵ This is how the pro-imperialist action of the Catholic Church was covered!

For its part, Stalinism docked to the putsch with all their soul. The Argentine Communist Party supported the Catholic Church! Days before the pro-imperialist *coup d'état*, its official organ, *Nuestra Palabra*, stated: “It is undeniable the reform of the Constitution in order to propose the separation of the Church from the State is a smoke screen: they want the people to forget the handover of oil, steel, metallurgy, forget the cost of living, forget the politics of war and the reactionary line.”²⁶

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

But what was the position of the “Marxist” agents of the Peronist leadership? What did the Ramoses, Puiggroses, Astesanos and the entire company of writers sensitive to the interests of Apold’s²⁷ Ministry of Propaganda say? Their words and actions in those days have the undeniable

²⁵ Argentine Republic, Chamber of Deputies, *Record of Proceedings*, 3 June 1955, p. 5361. NM

²⁶ *Nuestra Palabra*, organ of the Communist Party of Argentina, 24 May 1955, p. 2. NM

²⁷ **Raul Apold** (1898-1980) was a journalist and Peronist politician who became known for his work in the Undersecretary of Press and Media during the presidencies of Peron.

merit of crying out the way in which the agents of the Peronist leadership and apostles of the submission of the worker to the Presidency of the Nation and the Ministry of War are indirect agents of imperialism in the decisive moments. In April 1955, the Trotskyist revolutionary socialists wrote:

“The Church, as an agent of Yankee imperialism and the exploiters, is at the forefront of the Yankee offensive to colonise the country. In these moments, when the government makes concessions to Yankee imperialism, the Church sees the opportunity to weaken it and, together with all the “contra” elements (Radicals, conservatives, Repettos’ socialists, and communists, who, by a rare phenomenon, are converting to Catholicism), tries to form a great popular-based front to defeat Peronism and implant a Castillo Armas-type dictatorship and give the country bound hand and foot to Yankee imperialism. A government to do everything the bosses want: that the workers’ gains be annulled, that the collective agreements be fixed between the board of directors and the chief of personnel.”²⁸

Meanwhile, Rodolfo Puiggrós said in a *Report to the First National Assembly of the Communist Workers’ Movement* (Chapter XI: Clerical Conflict): “The struggle against clerical reaction is part of the struggle for industrialisation, for planning, for the increase in productivity... The Catholic Church is the most powerful political power in the capitalist world. We say ‘political power’ because even Yankee imperialism gives it the mission to lead the reaction, as its best agent, in some countries like Italy, Spain, France, West Germany and the United States itself.”²⁹

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

Still in June 1955, days before the putsch, Puiggrós’ newspaper devoted over three pages to the conflict between Peronism and the Church but did not say a word about the Church being the agent of Yankee imperialism, nor about the imminence of the putsch. When even the blind could see the pro-imperialist coup against the working class and the country was approaching, the newspaper *Clase Obrera* remained deaf and mute and did not foresee or alert the working class. But this is nothing, or rather, this is not all. In the same issue, the talented Marxist Eduardo Astesano gave a show of cretinism as has not been seen in the country for a long time. At a time when the entire Argentine bourgeoisie was galvanizing around the Church, the mainstay of imperialism; when the oligarchic rabble of the distinguished neighbourhoods turned to the streets, led by the priests, to show that, finally, after the failure of the Democratic Union, the Argentine bourgeoisie had found in the Curia its political party, Mr Astesano wrote — take note! —: “It is clear that a Christian Democracy, a spearhead of imperialism, does not correspond to the actual situation of the country.” And this political genius added: “The Catholic Religion is a geopolitical factor of continental unity from Mexico to Argentina that should not be underestimated and that can help to oppose the penetration of British or Yankee imperialism linked to Protestantism.”³⁰

The least a person who wrote this in Argentina in June 1955 can do is commit suicide or enter a convent. Until then, we had believed Mr Astesano was a salaried employee of Apold, but now we doubt. Maybe he is an amateur who works on his own. After all, Apold could not be foolish to the point of taking such an obvious imbecile into his service... Truth is, in this way, *Clase Obrera* served objectively imperialism, helping it to deceive and confuse the proletariat while the Church was preparing the coup.

In the meantime, what did Mr Jorge Abelardo Ramos, several aliases, the combative anti-imperialist who lived in the pay of the Peronist newspapers and who diverted his leisure in writing books for the UCR’s publishing house, do? He wrote in *Democracia* articles of palpitating actuality

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

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

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

about the revolution of 1890 in which he “demonstrated” this revolution had been a clerical-oligarchical-imperialist coup against the nationalist government of Juárez Celman–Roca. However, in 1949 the same Mr Ramos wrote: “with Roca and Juárez Celman the landlord class copies the economic map imperialism drew from London for its colonies.”³¹

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

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

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

“The cattle aristocracy, displaced from the political power, the bigwigs of the surviving oligarchy, and the cohorts of the anti-national sects created the atmosphere of the coup.”³²

See how an intellectual prostitute “fulfils her duty to the end” of confusing the working class and preparing it for further massacres. Not a word of criticism for the Peronist leadership, which sent the unarmed workers to Plaza de Mayo to serve as a defenceless target for bombs and shrapnel. The rhetorical salute to the working class is not for its vigorous revolutionary class actions —the burning of the churches, the assault on armouries to arm itself — but for its weakness prepared by the government and the CGT. Instead, he makes the apology of the army “organised by Roca”. Let’s set aside that Roca’s army only served to kill Indians and his war campaign was described by Ramos himself as a “military stroll through the desert with the withered laurels of a few hundred Indians executed”.³³ The important thing is that with the bombastic phrase “it fulfilled its duty to the end”, Mr Ramos concealed prudently the army was engaged in the putsch and came out at the last minute only to prevent the Argentine proletariat from taking over the Ministry of the Navy on its own and from ending right there and then with traitors such as Olivieri³⁴ and “loyalists” such as Isaac Rojas.³⁵ The very “Peronist” War Minister, justifying the attitude of the army, said: “We are sure we have done a good to the Nation and in future times will be recognised that nothing could be happier for the fate of the country and its institutions than the position assumed by the army. Our professional knowledge allows us to deduce the chaos that would reign now in the country if we had followed another path. And it will be easy for them to meditate on the most serious consequences of the civil war, with the international bewilderment and the tragedy of bloody battles between children of the common homeland” (*La Nación*, 12 July 1955).

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

While the miserable Argentine Castillo Armases massacred the unarmed workers, while the prostitutes hired by Peronism joined them objectively, confusing and deceiving the working class,

31 Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *América Latina*, op. cit., p. 133 134. NM

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

33 Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *América Latina*, ob. cit., p. 133. NM

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

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

the Trotskyist revolutionary socialist militants distributed the following flyer on the afternoon of 16 June that synthesises all its anti-imperialist united front tactics.

Flyer of 16 June 1955

Comrade workers:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It must be clear, only the mobilisation of the working class will stop the plans of the reaction. Therefore, we invite the CGT to begin a campaign in all the factories, branches, and unions to prepare the mobilisation. And above all, as a matter of urgency, we believe the CGT must call all workers to concentrate, at the slightest

rumour of reactionary mobilisation, in places where it is cited, to gain the streets and give them the necessary thrashing so they understand once and for all the working class is not willing to passively let go of the gains.

All united in defence of our gains!

And when the pro-imperialist opposition demanded the resignation of Peron, the Trotskyists argued it was the working class that had to decide whether Peron continued in the government (a criterion that Peron himself adopted on 31 August, when he submitted his resignation to CGT) and they requested the vice-presidency of the Senate be taken up by a representative of the CGT, so that, should Peron and Teisaire³⁶ resign, the government would pass legally into the hands of CGT. *La Verdad* said, on 5 August 1955:

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

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

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

The fact is clear. What prevented "the working class from playing the match", as Di Pietro³⁷ asked a few days before, was the lack of weapons in the hands of the working class and the subsequent coming out of the army "to maintain order". The participation of the working class was very important but not decisive. The reactionary mobilisation was strengthened with the attitude of the army since it was not crushed by the victorious mobilisation of the working class, which is why the clericals are still demonstrating today, and the reaction, especially in the middle class, feels emboldened.

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

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

36 **Alberto Teisaire** (1891–1963) was an Argentine military and politician member of the Justicialist Party who was elected vice president of Argentina in 1954.

37 **Hector Di Pietro** was Acting General Secretary of the CGT after Eduardo Vuletich resigned on 4 July 1955.

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

Only the mobilisation can stop them

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

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

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

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

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

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

Comrades:

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

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

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

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

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

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

For respect to the popular will!

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

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

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

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

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

Down with the clerical-bosses-imperialist reaction! Free hands to the working class!

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

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

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

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

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

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

all workers' and peasants' organisations, we are against the current government being replaced by a government of the priests, the bosses, and Yankee imperialism.

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

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

Abelardo Ramos in September of 1955

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

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

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

The revolutionary Trotskyists before the victorious coup: three historical fliers

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

Flyer of 17 September 1955

Workers:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Flyer of 15 October 1955

General strike for 17 October

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

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

It is not a matter of arguing with Radical, communist, apolitical, or anarchist comrades whether or not that day is a protest. It is an indisputable fact: the vast majority of Argentine workers consider

17 October as their day of protest and our organisation accepts it, calling the general strike peacefully of all workers in the country, to carry it out.

On the other hand, it is not a matter of going to strike to overturn the current government but to put into practice the promises on freedom and democracy for the workers' movement proclaimed repeatedly by such government. Since the army and tanks are on the streets, we must carefully avoid falling into tragic and bloody adventures, although this does not mean abandoning the gains made by the working class, with 17 October being one of them.

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

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

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

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

No adventures or provocations!

All to the general strike!

Buenos Aires Federation of the Socialist Party (NR)

Read *La Verdad*. 15 October 1955

Flyer of 14 November 1955

Long live the general strike!

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

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

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

The union leaders, who had capitulated a thousand times to the government's arrogance, when they saw the water reached their necks, decided to appeal to the workers' ranks calling for a general

strike on the 2nd of this month, to save the organisations and the social gains and, by the way, they would be saved as well.

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

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

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

The errors of the CGT leadership

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

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

A strike is organised and reported with enough time.

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

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

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

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

To win the general strike we must get organised

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

Thus, our advice to win the strike is:

- Stop public transport and electricity.

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

Long live the achievements of the Argentine workers' movement!

Down with the divisionists of the trade union movement!

Out the government military takeover in the unions!

Long live a united and democratic CGT!

Long live the indefinite general strike!

14 November 1955