



Nahuel Moreno

**GCI, Ideological
Agent of Peronism**

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1951

Taken from the magazine *Revolución Permanente*, Year II, No. 7-8, November 1951

English Translation: Daniel Iglesias

Cover and interior design: Daniel Iglesias

Editor notes: Daniel Iglesias, Agustín Gigli

www.nahuelmoreno.org

www.uit-ci.org

www.izquierdasocialista.org.ar

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Buenos Aires, 2026
cehus2014@gmail.com



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Foreword

The text we present here, *GCI, Ideological Agent of Peronism*, was written by Moreno in 1951 and published in the journal *Revolución Permanente* (Vol. III, Nos. 7–8, November 1951). Moreno engages in a debate with Jorge Posadas and his Fourth International Group (GCI), who repeatedly levelled baseless accusations against the GOM/POR. In response to these accusations, Moreno states: “It is necessary, once and for all, to demonstrate what the GCI is and what we are. That is the aim of this extensive document.”

In 1948, Moreno participated in the Second Congress of the Fourth International, which was held in Europe after the Second World War and the assassination of Trotsky. At that time, the main leaders were Pablo, Mandel and Frank. This was the GOM’s first international participation; until then, it had only maintained relations with the rest of the Trotskyist movement through correspondence. To make the trip possible, a major fundraising campaign was launched to cover the travel expenses. The funds provided by the International Secretariat were not made available, as they had been withheld by Posadas with the intention of ensuring that GCI would be the sole Argentine group at the congress.

The main debate centred on the defencists and anti-defencists of the USSR under Stalinist rule. The anti-defencists rejected the Fourth International’s founding position: the defence of the USSR against a military attack, despite the rule of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy led by Stalin. The former view prevailed. The congress also issued a call for the various Latin American groups to unify. In Argentina, specifically, this was a call for joint work between the GOM (which, after this congress, would become the Partido Obrero Revolucionario, POR), the GCI, the UOR and Jorge Abelardo Ramos’s *Octubre* group.

Attempts at joint work between the various groups and parties were unsuccessful. In 1951, the Third World Congress of the Fourth International was held. The POR participated with Moreno as one of the delegates, and came under attack from Pablo’s leadership and was marginalised. The debates raised within *GCI, ideological agent of Peronism*, were brought to this congress. The central topics of discussion were the characterisation of Peronism, the USSR and the Glacis countries, and the 1946 Bolivian insurrection that brought down the Villarroel government.

From this congress, with Pablo’s support, it emerged that Trotskyism should unify by having all militants join Posadas’s group. The conditions set for this “unification” were accepted by Moreno even though “entry into the GCI had to be individual, that is, each militant from the other groups had to personally apply for membership, the militant history of any other Trotskyist who had not been a member of the GCI was not recognised, and no member of the leadership of the other groups (the resolution was also directed at the UOR and *Octubre*) could be part of the leadership of the new unified organisation” (*Workers’ and Internationalist Trotskyism in Argentina*, Volume 1, Antídoto Publishers, 1995). None of this bureaucratic order for unification came to fruition.

Unfortunately, the text we present is incomplete; we have therefore reproduced it from the beginning up to page 34 of the original, leaving it incomplete to the end. We hope that the partial publication of this

document will facilitate the discovery of the complete original, so that we can address the missing parts. We thank our comrades at CEHTI who provided us with the material exactly as it is in their possession.

All footnotes are by the editors. We have also included some clarifications in square brackets within the original text for better understanding.

June 2026

The editors

GCI, Ideological Agent of Peronism

Introduction

The GCI [Fourth Internationalist Group],¹ in one of its latest documents, has characterised our organisation in [illegible] terms.

“The GOM [Marxist Workers Group] regards the [Peronist] government as an agent of British imperialism of the classic Bonapartist type. There are no mass movements. The masses are ‘castrated and lacking in drive’. It is not proletarian mobilisations that have supported Perón,² but electoral ‘gerrymandering’. The masses are in retreat and degenerate. It is the police and the army that have driven the workers out of the factories and into the streets. The government, as an agent of British imperialism, relies on the police and the army for its policy. The trade unions are semi-fascist. It is necessary to destroy and smash to smithereens the CGT (*the trade union confederation that*

1 GCI was led by Jorge Posadas (1911-1981), whose real name was Homero Cristalli. He was a professional soccer player for Estudiantes de La Plata, a worker and union leader in the shoe industry, and he ran a travel agency. He began his political activity in a split from the old Socialist Party, the PSO (Socialist Workers’ Party), which was formed in 1937 and involved various Trotskyist militants and groups. He was involved with GOR, promoted by Liborio Justo, and later with the PORS. There were controversies regarding the unity of Argentine Trotskyism, fuelled by a profound political debate fostered by Moreno’s GOM. After the PORS dissolved in 1943, he founded the Fourth Internationalist Group. In 1947, he began publishing the newspaper *Voz Proletaria* (Proletarian Voice). He supported Peronism, defining it as the government of the anti-imperialist and almost revolutionary industrial bourgeoisie. From the Second World Congress in 1948, Posadas aligned himself with Pablo and became his all-powerful representative throughout Latin American Trotskyism. Following Pablo and Mandel’s capitulation to the Stalinist communist parties with a “sui generis entryism”, Posadas began to capitulate to the local Communist Party, headed by Victorio Codovila. His opportunism became increasingly intertwined with sectarian and ever more delusional positions, constituting the right and extreme wing of the Pabloite movement. One of his obsessive themes was the imminence of atomic war, and he called for the construction of underground shelters for survival. In 1954, GCI adopted the name POR(T). When he broke with Pablo and the Fourth International in 1962 (to found a “Posadist” international), he dragged along most of the Pabloite movement from several Latin American countries. It gained some influence in Brazil, Uruguay, Guatemala (with Yon Sosa’s guerrilla group), and a group in Cuba. In his later years, Posadas provided guidance for actions on an interplanetary scale. The Posadist groups began to disappear after his death.

2 **Juan Domingo Perón** (1895–1974) was elected president of Argentina three times (1946–1955 and 1973–1974). He was a high-ranking officer in the Argentine army. He participated in the military coup that seized power in 1943. He headed the Secretariat of Labour and Social Welfare, from where he promoted a policy of expanding labour and social rights that allowed him to gain strong support from workers and lead a massive bourgeois nationalist movement that clashed sharply with US imperialism. As president, he promoted an import substitution industrialisation model, expansion of the domestic market, and greater state intervention in the economy, developing a strong centralization of power. The figure of his wife, Eva Perón, was also key. Under her patronage, a very powerful union bureaucracy developed. Overthrown by a civilian-military coup in 1955, instigated by the oligarchy and sectors of the middle class (the “gorillas”), the Catholic Church, and US imperialism, he went into exile in Spain. The massively Peronist working class fought for years against the dictatorship. After the Cordobazo, in 1969, a semi-insurrection of workers and students, the military made a pact with the pro-business parties, the Radicals, Perón himself, and the still-outlawed Peronist movement to call elections and thus curb and channel the great workers’ and popular uprising. He was re-elected president in September 1973. He died the following year, and his wife, Isabel Perón, assumed the presidency. From the vast political elaboration on Perón and his movement, we suggest reading *1954, Key Year of Peronism, Who knew how to fight against the “Liberating Revolution”*, and *After Perón, what?*, available at nahuelmoreno.org and *Rise and fall of Peronism* by Ernesto González, published by CEHuS in 2026.

brings together the whole of the proletariat and which has joined, driven by its class instinct. The note is ours). It is necessary to fight for a new ‘free’ and ‘independent’ trade union confederation.

“It rejects the national task of a great Latin American state, considering each country separately.

“GOM denies that our era is a revolutionary one. It likewise denies the revolutionary nature of the mass movement in Latin America. It denies the existence of the bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie who have pursued and continue to pursue a policy of nationalism and collusion with imperialism.

“It adopts a sceptical stance regarding the defence of the USSR [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] and a hesitant policy towards the International.

“The founding nucleus, later the leadership of this group, is composed entirely of petty bourgeoisie. Subsequent recruitment took place mainly among the petty bourgeoisie or among de-classed workers” (*Letter from the GCI to the IS* [International Secretariat], p. 4)

These are the accusations levelled for years by the GCI against our organisation, without substantiating them and without attempting to provide the slightest documentation. Many of the quotations provided by the GCI are completely false, such as that of “electoral gerrymandering”, as we have never spoken or written that expression. Other quotations are taken out of context and lose their meaning. It is necessary, once and for all, to demonstrate what the GCI is and what we are. That is the aim of this extensive document.

Given the nature and character of GCI’s statement – a multitude of accusations and false quotations – we will have to make extensive use of quotations ourselves.

In the international positions of the POR and GCI, it is the method rather than the class content of both tendencies that stands out. This has its own profound logic, since, taken out of the sphere of influence of Peronism – which is fundamentally Argentina and Latin America – GCI is left without its political driving force, Peronism, and its methods of thought and critique come to the fore, which we can summarise as follows:

1) Generally, generalisations and abstractions in the characterisation of phenomena; that is, when conducting a concrete study, they isolate a characteristic of a phenomenon and identify it with the phenomenon itself;

2) Political abstentionism of the worst kind;

3) Falsification and distortion of opposing positions;

4) An extremely low political level;

5) A slavish adherence to the International Secretariat, without applying or understanding its policy.

We emphasise that these characteristics relate to the GCI’s method and not to its social content, although from the very solutions they propose to international problems, this group also emerges as an ideological agent of Peronism and of bourgeois public opinion within our movement.

The core of our work is set out in the chapters dealing with Latin America and Argentina. From this emerges our program for those regions, as well as the secret of the significance of GCI and *Octubre*³ as a revisionist current within Trotskyism. In December 1949, our party characterised the GCI, its minions and allies as the transmission belt of the reactionary Peronist government within our movement. The main objective of this work is to demonstrate the correctness of our characterisation. The title it bears is thus justified.

3 Group led by Jorge Abelardo Ramos (1921-2007). It bore the same name as its publication, *Octubre* (October).

Chapter I

International positions

a) The defence of the USSR

“The GOM adopts a sceptical stance regarding the defence of the USSR and a hesitant policy on international matters” (p. 4 of the letter cited). Of the UOR [Revolutionary Workers Union],⁴ it is said: “It is anti-defencist,⁵ despite never having expressed this. This emerges from its international discussions just as much as from its attitude towards the issue” (*Letter from the GCI to the IS*, already quoted).

We do not doubt that our international movement will repudiate such a manner of debating and reporting: “It is anti-defencist despite never having expressed this.” “It has a sceptical stance regarding the defence of the USSR and a hesitant policy on international matters.” When? At what point? On what evidence? These are the questions every responsible comrade must ask themselves, since a Marxist must adopt a serious approach to gathering and disseminating information.

Within the UOR, there was an anti-defencist comrade who put forward his positions, and these were rejected by the rest of the small group: that is, the entire group, except for a single comrade, rejected the anti-defencist positions. That is the reason why the UOR never expressed its anti-defencist position. We could elaborate further by saying: The UOR never declared itself anti-defencist, because it is pro-defencist...! Does the GCI leadership not know this? Does it not know that Oscar, the UOR’s top leader, is and always has been a rabid pro-defencist advocate? To which discussion is GCI referring? To those in which the pro-defence position was adopted almost unanimously? For GCI, the existence of a single anti-defencist comrade within an organisation means that the organisation as a whole must be characterised as anti-defencist. This is a concept of the revolutionary organisation, a reflection of Stalinist monolithism that we shall see repeated when we analyse GCI’s positions on the unification of the Argentine Trotskyist movement.

As for the GOM-POR, GCI’s documentation is not extensive. Is GCI unaware that we have had anti-defencists members almost permanently within our group or party, who promoted continuous discussions and that, as a result, there are numerous documents and votes in favour of defending the USSR? In 1944 — according to *Theoretical Bulletin* No. 6 — we published the manifesto issued in *Clave*⁶ by the Mexican section on the defence of the USSR, clarifying that this manifesto represented the official position of the GOM, as it had been approved by five votes to three, with two abstentions. The three votes against and the two abstentions were cast by comrades who left the organisation shortly afterwards, some of whom joined

4 The UOR was a group led by Miguel Posse, “Oscar.” It published *El Militante* (The Militant).

5 **Defencist:** those within the Fourth International who maintained the position of defending the USSR against military attacks by imperialism, despite being under the Stalinist bureaucracy, were called “defencists.” This position had already been outlined in the founding *Transitional Program* of 1938. Conversely, those who rejected this defence were called “anti-defencists”.

6 The journal *Clave* (Key) was published in Mexico from 1938 by Trotsky and his collaborators during their exile. It ceased publication after his assassination.

the Socialist Party. The five votes in favour – which were cast by the founders of the GOM – continued to carry the greatest weight within the organisation for years.

At a plenary session of the GOM in December 1946, the *April Theses* were unanimously approved, with one significant objection – which is irrelevant here – raised regarding the economic perspective. In that same year, issue 5 of *Frente Proletario*⁷ published an extensive article in support of the defence of Russia, characterising it as a degenerated workers' state. In 1947, or rather a year after the adoption of the *April Theses* as our group's official position, in December 1947, the GOM's national congress issued a manifesto to the working class, which stated in part:

“In this offensive by the world's exploiters against the USSR, we, the revolutionary workers fighting both within and outside it against the cunning Stalinists, come out in defence of the basic gains of the October Revolution, which, despite the setbacks, remain: the nationalisation of industry, land, mines, banks and foreign trade, and the planning of the economy.”

The GCI leadership can hardly claim to be unaware of this manifesto, as it was reprinted in April 1948. In 1948, the Central Committee of the GOM unanimously approved, as part of the instructions to the delegate to the World Congress, the International Secretariat's thesis on the USSR, except for the section defining the classes. We understand that this was the vote cast by our delegate. In 1949, Comrade Luis – an anti-defencist – was invited to lead a discussion before a plenary session, where the Political Bureau (PB) was to defend its defencist position. In 1950, in the opening speech to our national congress, the Political Bureau of our organisation, through our General Secretary, characterised the emergence of a small anti-defencist wing in the discussion of the Korean issue as follows:

“It is important to point out, however, that our party's Political Bureau has taken a position on Korea, and this has allowed a group of comrades, led by Comrade Reula and leaning on theoretical adventurism of the worst kind, to come to the fore and deny the best teachings of Comrade Trotsky. From this congress onwards, the debate against opportunism on the international stage will be opened, and we hope that the party at the extraordinary congress will know how to defeat revisionism on international issues, just as it will, I have no doubt whatsoever, crush the opportunists on Latin American and Argentine issues.”

Cannon⁸ was elected to the presidium of that congress on the following political grounds:

“An example of perseverance in the defence of Marxism, in the struggle against the petty-bourgeois wing of our International, in America and throughout the world.”

All these testimonies are nothing more than those that can be verified because they are in print, but dozens and dozens of other pieces of evidence exist.

Do all of the above demonstrate, as the GCI claims, any doubt regarding the defence of the USSR? Responsible Trotskyists should draw a single conclusion from all our quotations: it is one of the many slanders of the GCI group against the POR.

b) Character of the era

“The GOM denies that our era is a revolutionary one” (*Letter from the GCI to the IS*, already cited, p. 4).

7 In October 1946, the GOM began publishing a regular newspaper, *Frente Proletario*. In its second issue, it explicitly declared its adherence to Trotskyism and the Fourth International. The POR continued publishing it until issue no. 154, dated 5 June 1954.

8 **James Patrick Cannon** (1890-1974). American revolutionary labour leader and founder of American Trotskyism. From the age of 18, he participated in the struggle and in the union and political organisation of the American working class. He was a founding member of the Communist Party. He travelled to Moscow and participated as a delegate to the sixth congress of the Third International in 1928. There, he learned about Trotsky's critical positions and began his militancy in the left opposition. Expelled from the Communist Party, he founded the American Socialist League and later the Socialist Workers Party in 1938.

We have already stated that we stood by, and continue to stand by, the *April Theses* in their general conclusions. We continue to believe these did not foresee the increases in production levels in the European economy due to the aid of US capital; that is, they did not foresee the Marshall Plan and its economic, political and social influence. This is the entire difference we had at that time and up until about nine months ago with the political line of the majority of the International.

We now hold more critical positions regarding those upheld by the International following the death of the *Old Man*,⁹ but the important point is that these critical positions do not even touch upon the characterisation of the era, which we continue to accept as entirely correct. GCI is perfectly familiar with the document that, together with the Bolivian POR [Revolutionary Workers Party] and the Brazilian PSR [Revolutionary Socialist Party], we presented to the Latin American Bureau in December 1948. That document has the inestimable value of being known to GCI and sets forth not only our view regarding the nature of the era, but also the difference between our position and that of the GCI regarding the characterisation of the current revolutionary moment.

“The criterion of *Octubre* and GCI, which draws from a valid premise — that the postwar period ushers in the era of the deepest revolutionary crisis in history — the conclusion that this revolutionary crisis is taking place in all countries and regions of the world, is completely false.”

There are a great many written statements by our party along these lines, but no quotation has the triple value of this one. But this is not the only difference we have with the GCI regarding the character of the era; there is another difference, a deeper one, which we had not previously noticed. For the GCI:

“In the other postwar period, world conditions were still immature for world revolution”
(Report to the Second GCI Conference on the International Situation, *Voz Proletaria*,¹⁰ 15 September 1950, p. 15).

The Leninist theory, developed by Trotsky, of the initial maturity and subsequent decay of the global conditions for socialism since the outbreak of the First World War — whose manifestations were the war itself and fascism—is a hermetically sealed, unknown book for those who declare themselves the executors of Trotsky’s thought in Latin America. This theory of the lack of conditions for world revolution in the postwar period will not only serve to be relegated to the museum of theoretical absurdities spawned during the Stalinist era, alongside the theory of uneven development as a law of the imperialist era, but it also illuminates and is the cornerstone of the entire political thought of GCI. GCI regards the objective maturity for socialism — or rather, for the world revolution — as something akin to the Great Flood, something that mechanically acts in every corner of the earth and in every country, provoking crises and revolutionary upheavals without exception. Before this war, there could have been revolutionary ebbs and flows, so GCI believes, or so it follows from its thinking, because conditions were immature. But today, none of this is possible. There are no proletarian or bourgeois offensives, but a single, uniform revolutionary movement throughout the world because conditions are ripe. That is truly the profound difference we have with GCI, that is to say, not regarding the character of the era, whether or not it is revolutionary, but whether the revolutionary crisis manifests itself with equal intensity in all countries and regions of the world. GCI fails to grasp the difference we have and invents one that we deny: the revolutionary character of the era. GCI could not provide a single quotation to that effect.

c) The Yugoslav revolution and the Glacis¹¹

Nothing better illustrates GCI’s ideological subservience towards the International Secretariat and the SWP than its international thesis of the mid-1950s. By that date, the problems of Yugoslavia and

9 Colloquial way of referring to Leon Trotsky, who was assassinated at the age of 60.

10 *Voz Proletaria*, journal published by GCI since 1947.

11 In medieval castles or in the early modern fortresses, a “glacis” was an artificial slope that protected the walls from enemy attacks. By extension, the term “glacis” was used to refer to the countries of Eastern Europe that were occupied by the USSR after the defeat of Nazism and became bureaucratic workers’ states: Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

the Glacis had already been discussed at length within the SWP and the IEC [International Executive Committee]. We might even say more: the discussion had already been exhausted.

As is well known, within the IS, there were and are significant differences regarding the nature of the Glacis and Yugoslavia. On the Glacis, whether or not they are workers' states and whether or not they should be defended; on Yugoslavia, the first difference was whether or not it was a workers' state and subsequently whether it was a workers' state before or after 1948.

The GCI, devastated by the division between the SWP and the SI, sidestepped these decisive issues in a rather simplistic manner, saying not a word about the Glacis and, regarding Yugoslavia, stating the following:

“The Communist Party of Yugoslavia [CPY] is essentially different from the other communist parties. It was able to intervene outside the tutelage of the Red Army and with mass support; its development was different. In the process of liberation, the YCP combined the struggle against the invader with the struggle against the bourgeoisie. This is the result of the contradictory nature of Stalinism (sic!), which meant that the struggle was also waged against the native bourgeoisie. Trotsky, already foreseeing this, said: ‘We must expect complex problems in the future’. (*It would seem that for GCI, this quote from Trotsky clarifies the whole issue of the debate over whether it was a workers' state before or after 1948. POR.*) This is because the subjective conditions are not ripe. As this does not occur, Stalinism presents itself as a distorted process. The historical significance of the issue lies in the fact that the still young Fourth International must confront one of the most difficult problems in history: What is Yugoslavia? The International affirmed at its Eighth Plenum that Yugoslavia is a workers' state with bureaucratic deviations. In eight months, it has defined us and educated us on the crisis of Stalinism. Never has an International faced such complex problems. With this, the Fourth International is in an excellent position for the building of its party. This makes us deeply optimistic” (GCI, Second Conference, international report of June 1950, summarised in *Voz Proletaria*, No. 21, 15 September, 1950).

These lines, filled with the prudishness of a teenager and penned by someone with children of that age, attempt to conceal theoretical nakedness and political shamelessness. Throughout the entire work, there is not a single further line on the Yugoslavian issue, which means that GCI does not take a stance on the Yugoslavian issue, whilst trying to give the impression that it does. GCI repeats the case of the Glacis, but with less candour, since it did not write a single line on that subject, whereas on Yugoslavia, it wrote a few lines that say nothing. We could generalise by saying that an international thesis or report produced by a Trotskyist organisation that does not analyse or take a clear stance on the Glacis and Yugoslavia is utterly useless. We have long since taken a stance on the Yugoslav issue, as on that of the Glacis, both before and after becoming aware of the international discussions. One must be revolutionary in everything, including the courage to tackle the most burning issues, even if we run the risk of disagreeing with the International Secretariat!

“Concerning Yugoslavia, the PB was consistent with the analysis of the Second World Congress, which we considered accurate. According to that analysis, the fundamental cause of the friction between the Glacis and the USSR could be none other than economic factors stemming from the capitalist structure of the Glacis countries. We saw the split as a capitalist-type national movement sweeping the masses along, and not as an authentic workers' dictatorship seeking to pursue its own policy. Our analysis of this issue, based on extensive documentation from the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), led us to the following conclusions:

“a) Under pressure from the masses and due to the stance of its leadership, the CPY was not, even under Stalin's iron fist and during the imperialist war, a typical communist party that obeyed Moscow's instructions in all circumstances;

“b) The Popular Front in Yugoslavia had a character distinct from that which we are familiar with; it was an alliance, under the leadership of the CPY, between the proletariat and the peasantry;

“c) The war of liberation waged by the CPY and the Popular Front was transformed into a civil war of the exploited against the exploiters from the beginning of national liberation;

“d) From 1945 onwards, the Popular Front government led by the CPY carried out a series of revolutions in the sphere of relations of production and exchange. Land was not nationalised, but the landowners were eliminated, and the kulaks¹² were shot;

“e) The break with the Cominform¹³ was due to the support the CPY enjoyed among the Yugoslav masses, which gave it considerable independence from Moscow. This break accelerated and ushered in a period of democratisation within the workers’ organisations.

“These conclusions broadly coincide with those adopted by the Gabriel-Hansen-Mestre faction.” (*International Theses*, POR, 1950.)

This is about our self-criticism, because there is a special chapter dedicated to developing our position on Yugoslavia.

Regarding the Glacis, we have made this self-criticism of the international position:

“29. Despite its proletarian tendency, the International Secretariat has committed a series of errors in its method of analysis which must be pointed out and overcome:

“(…) b) About the Glacis, the IS, the World Congress and the April Conference have interpreted that as long as these countries remained independent of the USSR, they would remain capitalist countries, failing to understand that the enormous political power of the bureaucracy and the weak power of the bourgeoisie in the Glacis – isolated from imperialism as a consequence of the latter’s crisis – gave rise to a dual power of antagonistic social regimes in a sui generis form with a [illegible] of bourgeois property relations. This dual power, like all dual power, was extremely unstable, and as power was resolved through the agency of the USSR, a whole process of the liquidation of capitalism began within the borders of that country, liquidating the bourgeoisie as the ruling class and establishing nationalised ownership.

“c) In the event of a war with the Glacis, the World Congress (*without specifying which war*) advises, given the characterisation of the Glacis as capitalism, revolutionary defeatism. This is the tremendous error of the World Congress since it starts from a false premise: that revolutionary defeatism must be practised in any war in which capitalist countries are involved. This is not the case. Defeatism is the strategy in any war between major imperialist bandits, not merely between capitalist countries. In a war between the USSR and imperialism, the latter’s war against the Glacis will be a war against the socialist gains achieved by the Stalinist bureaucracy, and not to liberate those countries from Stalinist rule; the return of land to the landlords and of factories to imperialism against a country of the Glacis, as a whole, or against the USSR and its sphere of influence.”

Given the nature of the war, the working masses of the Glacis must defend the existing gains in their country against the attack of imperialism. In defending the Glacis, we apply no other tactic than that of weakening imperialism and capitalism and preventing them from re-establishing their equilibrium. If tomorrow British capitalism deems it necessary to abolish the nationalisation of the mines because it has passed its critical phase – not because the mines have been paid for or were nationalised by the socialist bureaucracy – we shall cease defending what is a consequence of the crisis of British imperialism and a general advance for the workers’ movement. We employ the same tactic in defending the Glacis against a future imperialist attack.

c) The Korean War and the Chinese Revolution

GCI characterised the Korean War as follows, before learning of the International Secretariat’s position: “A situation of civil war is unfolding in Korea”.

12 In Yugoslavia, by analogy with Soviet terminology, the term “kulaks” was used to refer to the relatively well-off sector of the peasantry, owners of larger tracts of land and, in some cases, employers of wage labour, although their structure and social influence differed from the kulaks of Tsarist Russia.

13 **Cominform:** The acronym for the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers’ Parties, created in 1947 as a coordinating body for communist parties outside the USSR under the hegemony of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It was dissolved in 1956. It expelled the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1948, in the context of the split between Tito and Stalin.

For us Marxists, a civil war is a war between antagonistic classes within a country. It would have been logical for GCI to clarify for us which Korean classes were involved in the civil war. GCI does none of this, since it understands civil war not as we Marxists do — a war between classes — but merely as war within a country between two regions. For GCI, the civil war in Korea was a civil war without antagonistic classes, a reactionary war on both sides, in which the proletariat fought on both sides.

“The civil war unfolding in Korea is increasingly turning into a war by imperialism against North Korea. This is due to the rejection by the masses in the South of Syngman Rhee’s¹⁴ pro-imperialist regime. The rout of his army is an indication of this rejection. Imperialism must resort to the UN as it finds no support from the masses. But these masses, at the same time, distrust the North Korean government. There have been no mass movements or uprisings in the South in support of it. The fact is that the North Korean regime does not have mass support either, nor are its intentions to establish socialism or develop the mass movement. This is revealed by the absence of a revolutionary call to the masses of the South to overthrow the puppet government of imperialism, on the basis of a programme of factory and land occupation, forming councils of workers, soldiers and peasants. There is none of this. North Korea serves the Soviet bureaucracy in the ‘Cold War’ game against imperialism. While there have been certain reforms, the capitalist regime has been maintained in North Korea, despite the four-year Soviet occupation. And the withdrawal of its troops has not meant the right for the masses of the North to freely determine their destiny, but rather the continuation of control over them through the State Political Directorate (GPU) of Stalinism. This regime’s current calls to the masses of the South to occupy the land and promote its distribution to the peasants (sic) indicate nothing other than the consequences the Korean conflict is having with the systematic intervention of US armed forces and global imperialism and the bourgeoisie. The northern regime — an agent of the Soviet bureaucracy — needs to appeal to the masses (sic) —and this tendency may become even more pronounced in the immediate future — to secure their support, enabling it to achieve its objectives in the ‘Cold War’, whilst at the same time keeping the masses in check. Its fear of their mobilisation leads it to employ strictly military methods. The current agitation of the North Korean regime is not accompanied by a socialist call to form workers’ councils, etc. Here, the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy is separate. Acting in accordance with its own caste interests and using North Korea as a pawn in its game, only to later roll back its gains and crush them.

“In the face of this, the masses of the whole world, together with the proletariat and oppressed masses of North and South Korea, must support every progressive reform carried out in North Korea and every similar measure that tends to be implemented in the South. But to safeguard and deepen these reforms on the path towards socialism, they must demand freedom for the Korean people to determine their own destiny. Freedom for all tendencies and workers’ parties. Freedom for the proletariat and the oppressed masses.

“Whilst supporting every measure leading to a revolutionary and socialist solution, whilst confronting imperialism and its troops, whilst rising in the South to occupy land and factories (sic), whilst they demand and fight on both sides for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the formation of workers’ councils, whilst they prevent the subjugation of the South to the North — as pursued by the Soviet bureaucracy — fighting for their freedom of action, for freedom for their parties, for a proletarian regime, whilst they seek to consolidate their gains in the North and fight **for their own power**, the proletariat and oppressed masses of Korea, supported by all the exploited of the world, agitate and fight, in the south and in the north, for the realization of a constituent assembly, **for the socialist unification of Korea under a workers’ and peasants’ government**” (GCI, *Voz Proletaria*, Supplement No. 7, 9 July 1950).

The GCI has engaged in self-criticism, pointing out that there was insufficient observational material to accurately judge the nature of the Korean War. This is false, as there was more than enough journalistic and informational material for a Marxist observer:

14 **Syngman Rhee** (1875-1965) was the first president of South Korea, from 1948 to 1960, including the period of the Korean War (1950-53). He was a conservative and anti-communist. In 1960, accused of fraud, he went into exile in Hawaii.

“The bourgeois reports themselves, for any conscious worker who knows how to read them, tell the truth: the South Korean government is reactionary, anti-popular and subservient to Yankee imperialism,” we stated in our Manifesto on Korea. (POR, *Frente Proletario*).

Moreover, the problem does not lie there, but rather in the fact that the GCI, with its interpretation of the Korean War, jeopardises the entire Trotskyist characterisation of the USSR. Trotsky himself taught us that the USSR, by its very nature, must always or almost always accompany its wars against capitalism and imperialism with civil war, of the exploited against the exploiters. Starting from this characterisation and with less information than the GCI had on Korea, Trotsky correctly characterised the Russian-Polish and Finnish wars. If GCI believed that the USSR was capable of waging an eminently reactionary war against imperialism, as it did, it should have explained, with exhaustive documentation, why Trotsky’s teachings – or rather, the laws he analysed and discovered regarding the bureaucratic USSR and its wars – were not being fulfilled. This lack of information runs counter to GCI’s self-criticism, as it boils down to this: faced with a lack of information, GCI threw our entire program overboard, the whole class analysis of the USSR, to make whatever interpretation it fancied, or rather, the one that bourgeois journalists were making. But what proves that the whole self-criticism is false is that GCI itself points out:

“The current calls by this regime (North Korea) to the masses in the South to occupy the land and promising its distribution to the peasants” (...) “the regime of the North – an agent of the Soviet bureaucracy – needs to appeal to the masses, and this tendency may become even more pronounced in the immediate future”.

The GCI’s error is beyond appeal; it is the same as Shachtman’s¹⁵ error regarding the Russo-Polish war.

In the face of the Korean War, as in the face of any event, a Bolshevik party provides, following a class characterisation and the additional factors required by that characterisation, the most concrete solutions to all the concrete problems facing the proletariat.

In the case of Korea, we encounter three facts of decisive importance for the proletariat of our country: the civil and anti-imperialist war waged by the North against the South, that is, by our class brothers in the North against our class enemies in the South; the diplomatic and propaganda use that the Kremlin bureaucracy is attempting to make of the war in North Korea; and finally, the support that Latin American exploiters and governments, including “nationalist” Perón, are giving to South Korea and imperialism.

Faced with these three events of decisive and fundamental importance for the proletariat, the GCI offers us a vague, contradictory program that, even with the best of intentions, could be described – using a critical standard that is neither particularly sharp nor severe – as a magnificent wish list of contradictory aspirations, as political self-destruction, as Shachtmanist abstentionism of the worst kind, or as a foolish rejection of the *Transitional Program*. GCI begins by ignoring the war in its approach, just as Shachtman did in the face of the Russo-Polish War. There are three possibilities regarding the war, and there is no escape: we are with the North, the South, or for revolutionary defeatism. GCI does not stand for any of these options, since in the face of war, they propose... a National Constituent Assembly. It offers another way out – or rather, it offers every possible way out – without offering any of the three that had to be offered; this is a method, not an accidental error as GCI now wants us to believe.

“Today, regarding Korea, we affirm our policy of the revolutionary proletariat: Out with the troops of Yankee imperialism and world imperialism!

“For freedom for all the workers’ parties of Korea!

“For the expropriation of the bourgeoisie: all power to the Councils of Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers! (sic!)

15 **Max Shachtman** (1903–1972). He was a leader of the United States CP and, later, along with James Cannon, was a founder of the Left Opposition with Trotsky in 1928. Shachtman was an important intellectual who promoted the revisionist faction, “anti-defencists” of the USSR, against which Trotsky polemised in 1939–1940, in his work *In Defence of Marxism*. After his break with the SWP in 1940, Shachtman founded the Workers Party. In 1958, he joined the Socialist Party.

“For the non-subjugation of South Korea to the North: National Constituent Assembly!
(*emphasis added by POR*) (*This is not a printing error, as they self-criticised in another document!*).

“For the Korean people to freely determine their destiny: Socialist unification of Korea!

“Against Wall Street and the Kremlin: Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” (GCI, *Voz Proletaria*, Supplement No. 7, already cited).

The GCI practices a simple political method in solving the problems facing the proletariat: it applies the *Transitional Program* without discrimination. For example, although the manifesto on Korea clarifies that the creation of soviets does not have a great scope, it does not dwell on trivialities, and the slogans do not call for the establishment and strengthening of the soviets, but rather for them to seize power. The question every conscious worker asks: which soviets will take power? The GCI can only answer by saying those listed on page 43 of the Founding Manifesto of our International, since, as they themselves say, they do not exist in Korea.

Faced with the Korean War, there were, as we have already said, three concrete and simple problems: the Korean War, the Stalinist exploitation of it, and the support of the nationalist Perón for imperialism in South Korea, with food and possibly troops. We had to provide the Argentine proletariat and people with concrete solutions to these concrete problems. Our party, we insist, launched the following slogan before knowing the IS’s position:

“Not a single man, not a single supply for the outpost of capitalism, the landlords, and imperialism in South Korea. Let us support North Korea” *Frente Proletario* No. 34, 1 August 1950).

And previously:

“(…) finally, in the face of the brutal offensive by Yankee imperialism, the Secretariat issues an urgent call: War on imperialism! Not a single piece of equipment, not a single man for South Korea! Out with the Yankee army! Long live the unity of Korea and the war in the North! Death to Stalinism, the counterrevolutionary agent!” (Position of the Political Bureau, adopted four days after hostilities began in Korea).

GCI, in opposition to us, gave another clear and precise response to the Korean War: “For the non-subjugation of South Korea to the North: for a Constituent General Assembly.” The call for a General Constituent Assembly as the conclusion to the slogan of South Korea’s non-submission to the North serves to divert attention – or rather, to dodge the issue – so as not to be clear in the conclusion, since South Korea’s non-submission to the North must be followed, if the GCI were consistent, by “let us defend South Korea”.

GCI, however, offers another clear and precise answer to the issue of the Korean War, which, like the previous one, the GCI twists and turns to ensure it remains unclear and imprecise: “Out with the troops of Yankee and global imperialism”. There is a slight snag with this slogan, namely that the South Korean government and army have called for and formed a united front with global imperialism to prevent the South from being subjugated by the North. Does GCI conclude that we must side with the North to drive out global imperialism? No, there is neither a colon nor any conclusion following the slogans “Out with the troops of Yankee and global imperialism”. In other words, for GCI, we must not stand for the defence of the South so that it is not subjugated by the North, nor with the North so that it can drive out imperialism. For those for whom GCI seeks ideal solutions – and not just a single ideal solution, which, though incorrect, would be tolerable –but all ideal solutions and which, moreover, never arrive at a consistent political solution, nor a precise solution to the concrete problems facing the working class, the GCI’s silence regarding the three possible solutions is no mystery.

The curious thing about their entire position on the Korean War is not the fantastic manifesto that appeared in *Voz Proletaria*, but the extraordinary self-criticism on the matter. The GCI leadership has not deemed it necessary to point out in its self-critical document as a political error the failure to oppose the Perón government’s systematic dispatch of supplies to the South Korean side. All that GCI has said about the Peronist government’s stance on the Korean War is as follows: “It is worth highlighting the protests and condemnation that the national government’s declaration supporting Yankee imperialism has

encountered among the country's workers. These, in turn, reflect the proletariat's reaction against capitalism and imperialism." This alone defines GCI better than dozens of pages or numerous polemics. And as in fairy tales, we could end this sub-chapter with a ... and GCI still fails to attack the government in its articles for sending supplies to the South Korean government.

The Chinese Revolution, or rather the triumph of Mao Tse-tung,¹⁶ is an event of historic significance, just like the Glacis and Yugoslavia. GCI, as usual, offers no position or analysis in its international thesis on the Chinese Revolution, nor on the significance of Mao Tse-tung's regime. Our party adopted the following position:

"The Chinese Civil War can be summarised as a class war: the war of the peasantry, primarily in the north, against their additional oppressors, capitalism and the bureaucracy of Chiang Kai-shek,¹⁷ allied to them.

"The Chinese peasantry, contrary to Trotsky's prediction, has played a much more independent role than the Russian peasantry. Trotsky's analysis, however, was correct since this development has been made possible by the existence of an extra-national factor, which allowed it to homogenise and centralise the decentralised Chinese peasant class in a modern regular army. The extra-national factor was the USSR, or rather the bureaucracy that benefits from the USSR, since, with its technical, military and cultural aid, it allowed the centralisation and efficiency of the Chinese peasant army to a high degree.

"Undoubtedly, this does not negate the analysis of the peasant class as a class, and especially of the Chinese peasant class. The alternative of the peasant class is either with the proletariat or with the bourgeoisie, not only in the political field but also in the economic field. The peasantry in China, as elsewhere in the world, cannot escape its status as a class that is continually engendered by capitalism and which cannot adopt an independent policy.

"Because of this momentary aspect of the Chinese peasantry, an aspect given to it by the aid and action of Stalinism and the USSR, the class basis of the national liberation movement and the fall of Chiang Kai-shek and the revolutionary movement was not, in its beginnings, as Trotsky foresaw, the Chinese proletariat but the peasant movement.

"The decomposition of Chiang Kai-shek's regime has meant that important sectors of Southern landowners, of the military governors of various provinces and of the bourgeoisie have gone over to Mao's movement. This has been possible because the Chinese revolutionary process has so far been characterised by one transcendental event: the proletariat has not intervened as a major force in the revolutionary movement. When the proletariat begins to intervene and mobilise, the movement will be sharply confronted with the Trotskyist dilemma: defeat or proletarian revolution.

"Mao's regime reflects perfectly well the character of the Chinese revolution at present, it is a semi-Bonapartist government which is fundamentally based on the army, which in turn reflects the general interests of the peasantry but which is becoming, by the very dialectics of the peasant movement itself, more and more the agent of the petty and middle bourgeoisie of the cities; a government which, in the end, flirts with the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to be able to pursue its timid and zigzagging program of agrarian revolution and national liberation." (*Theses on the International Problem*, POR, December 1950, available at www.nahuelmoreno.org).

16 Mao Tse-tung (current romanisation Mao Zedong) (1893-1976), was the main leader of the Chinese Communist Party from the 1930s. He led the peasant mobilisation and the guerrilla army that defeated Chiang Kai-shek in 1949 and seized power. He was a proponent of the reformist and Stalinist concept of "revolution in stages". However, the vigorous revolutionary mobilisation went beyond the orders of the Communist Party and Mao himself, resulting in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the emergence of a bureaucratic workers' state. In the early 1960s, Mao spearheaded China's break with the USSR, which was formalised in 1963. In the following years, Maoism exerted a significant political and guerrilla influence in numerous countries.

17 **Chiang Kai-shek** (1887–1975) was a Chinese military man and dictator. He succeeded Sun Yat-sen as leader of the Chinese Nationalist Kuomintang Party. He led the fierce repression against the workers' revolution of 1925–1927 and ruled the country ever since. At the end of the Second World War, and after the surrender of Japan, he tried to liquidate the guerrilla armies of Mao Tse-tung, who finally took power in October 1949. After the defeat, he took refuge on the island of Formosa and founded the Republic of Taiwan, with the support of the main imperialist powers.

Our stance on the Korean War has emerged from a prior characterisation of the war: anti-imperialist, proletarian and peasant in the North; pro-imperialist, bourgeois and landowning in the South. All this, like the GCI, before the official position of the IS was known:

“Two criteria for judging the Korean War: the bourgeois and the proletarian. Various explanations are put forward regarding the Korean War. The propagandists of the imperialist regime, whether conscious or unconscious, raise a problem typical of legalists: “whoever attacks first is in the wrong”, “those who defend themselves are always in the right”. This, comrades, is fine for the benches of parliament or the courts, but not for conscious workers. If the workers in a factory attack an injustice by the boss, is the boss in the right?

“Can we apply the criteria of ‘whoever strikes first’... and ‘the defender is always in the right’... to relations between the exploited and the exploiters? No, it is the exploited who are always in the right when it comes to the workers’ cause. The division of Korea is an injustice perpetrated by Stalinism and imperialism at the end of the war. The Korean people must be united as a single nation today. It is imperialism that prevents this union, just as it was Stalinism that allowed it in the past. All the people of Korea want the unification of their country, but they want it without US imperialism and without the bourgeoisie. That is why they support the North’s war against the South, to unify Korea and drive out their exploiters. The POR of Argentina supports the North’s war against the South; the Korean people’s war against their exploiters for the unification of their country; we stand and will stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters, the exploited people of Korea, against the common enemy: US imperialism. Supporting the war of the North against the South means that we will sabotage all aid to imperialism and the South Korean government, and not that we will remain neutral and pacifist: we will support North Korea with all our might.”
(*Frente Proletario*, August 1950, before the position of the IS was received.)

d) The Stalinist crisis

Unlike the GCI, our party did not settle for merely stating that there is a crisis of Stalinism, but carefully analysed that crisis and drew precise political conclusions:

“We must understand this situation and the need to work wholeheartedly on the cadres of the major workers’ parties in Europe and Asia. Regarding this task, we must eliminate anti-Stalinist prejudice from our sections and members, working on the Stalinist ranks where their members are the best and most conscious of the exploited in a country, even with all their prejudices. Our sections must carefully study the possibility of entryism into the Communist Parties of the countries of Asia and the Glacis, aiming to build, with great care and without haste, a proletarian tendency within these parties, working essentially amongst the proletariat and its vanguard. In Italy and France, we shall maintain our section’s complete independence but shall carry out work on the Stalinist rank and file, though without practising any form of entryism.”

All this without knowing the current theses of our International!

e) Our attitude towards the International

“The GOM has shown its hesitant attitude towards the International through its publications, which did not appear under the banner of the Fourth International and did not publicly defend its policy” (quoted letter).

This attack was levelled at us some time ago by “*Octubre*”, renegades from our movement. The only truth in this is that in the first issue of *Frente Proletario*, we did not mention the International, though we defended its policies and continually quoted the main documents of the SWP and the IS, for a tactical reason: it was published as a journal of the proletarian left wing of Avellaneda’s¹⁸ Stalinism and socialism,

18 The city of **Avellaneda** is part of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (AMBA). Located south of the city of Buenos Aires, it was characterized as an important industrial centre for metallurgy and meatpacking. The GOM was developed there in the 1940s.

to provoke a definitive break. Once this had been provoked by the second issue of *Frente Proletario*, before anyone could criticise us, we began to quote them continuously and to declare ourselves part of the International. The first and second issues of *Frente Proletario* were published in 1946; before these issues of *Frente Proletario* — which, given their nature, one might even question whether they can be considered in themselves as official organs of the GOM at that time, although they were — the GOM had published many other publications in which it declared itself a disciplined organisation of our International, more specifically, from 1943 onwards. In our constitution, which predates *Frente Proletario* by two years, we submit ourselves entirely to the discipline of our international.

There are curious facts regarding this accusation. At the risk of our lives — the police had orders to shoot to kill, as evidenced by the deaths on that May Day — on 1 May 1944, we were the only revolutionary organisation in the Federal Capital that dared to post manifestos on the walls; these manifestos were signed by the Fourth International and the GOM. With the GCI having framed the issue in these terms, we feel compelled to ask the question we always ask and which remains unanswered: What was the veteran Trotskyist militant Posadas,¹⁹ founder of the GCI, doing during the period of illegality? He was thinking, giving courses to friends and family, living and letting live; that much is certain, but he was not active in the movement. We insist on asking this question of GCI, which accuses us of hesitancy in our commitment to the Fourth International, so that it may answer before the entire International: during the period of illegality in 1943 and 1944, with concentration camps, unrestrained torture, and orders to the police to shoot, what revolutionary propaganda activity, or more simply what organised revolutionary political activity, with or without the Fourth International's seal, did Posadas, founder of the GCI and veteran Trotskyist militant, or the organisation to which he belonged, carry out? During those two years, we published our bulletins in the name of the Fourth International and distributed and posted leaflets in its name; we hasten to clarify.

But that is not all. After the first few issues of *Frente Proletario*, the world did not come to a standstill, as GCI seems to believe. The defence of the USSR continued to be published; discussions began with Posadas and his organisation, *o manes* [sic] of illegality, about the best way to apply the Fourth International's *Transitional Program* to the country; and, crucially, **the GOM was the first Argentine Trotskyist organisation to begin holding public tributes to Trotsky on the anniversary of his death and in solidarity with the greatest and most decisive work of his life, alongside the leadership of the Russian Revolution: the Fourth International.** Three hundred workers attended the first event in 1947, held in a closed venue and monitored by the police like all the others. The second rally took place in the street, and the podium was adorned with a banner featuring the hammer and sickle and the number 4 in the centre, with Lenin and Trotsky on either side. (The photographs taken that day and published in *Frente Proletario* make this clearly visible). We had a clash with the Stalinist provocateurs and were pleased that 500 workers attended. Despite invitations to collaborate or hold joint events, the GCI refused to participate or cooperate: **it sent two observers to the first rally, forbidding its members from attending;** for the second rally, GCI came to picket its newspaper, *Voz Proletaria*, which carried a key article, a commentary on our group publicly branding us as agents of imperialism — a public attack that disregarded the first article of the proposal made by the Uruguayan section and approved by the IS, which called for an internal, non-public discussion amongst the Argentine groups. It is unnecessary to clarify that the aim of GCI was to sabotage the rally and sow confusion among the workers attending it. **It also forbade its members from attending this second rally, with the exception of the picket line.**

The entire Argentine Trotskyist movement welcomed with enthusiasm our public tribute to Trotsky and the Fourth International, and the organisation we asked to provide a speaker gladly agreed.

The only thing that remains of GCI's accusation is that we did not mention the International in our first issue of *Frente Proletario* and that for several issues we did not include the emblem. One may debate whether or not it was a tactical error — as a faction of the GOM argued in 1946 — not to mention the International in the first issue of *Frente Proletario*, or to have given it such a general and abstractly Marxist content. But from this — from this discussion of a tactical problem — one can never draw the conclusion that a Trotskyist and Fourth Internationalist organisation, tested not in the comfortable life of legality

¹⁹ See note 1.

or semi-legality, but in the harsh and gruelling struggle of illegality, casts doubt on or displays a hesitant attitude towards our International.

f) Our characterisation of the tendencies within the International

The GCI has a habit: never to quote, nor to base itself on the actual positions of the political adversary. Having invented and its own fabrication exposed, it invents anew. What could be simpler to demonstrate our centrifugal tendency concerning the International, to prove our anti-defencism, than to quote our document on the Second World Congress and the characterisation of the tendencies presented there? It becomes our duty to quote it ourselves since the GCI does not:

“In April of this year, an event of decisive importance for the international workers’ movement took place. It was certainly not an event that took place in the slums, on the streets or in working-class neighbourhoods; it was an event which, whilst not taking place within the very places where the proletariat struggles and suffers, was intimately connected with its struggles and sufferings.

“The world vanguard of the exploited people of the entire world gathered in Paris to hold its Second World Congress. Delegations from all corners of the globe were present.

“Describing the congress in this way could lead to confusion, suggesting that it had nothing more than a profound symbolic significance and nothing else. Quite the contrary: the congress represented the most important step taken by the Fourth International since its inception, for the following reasons:

“a) It was the most democratic congress of any of the internationals that have ever existed, preceded by an intense and wide-ranging discussion.

“b) It promoted the new generations of Trotskyists as the leaders and vanguard of our movement, demonstrating that today the Fourth International is a movement of working-class and intellectual youth.

“c) It gave rise to the decisive triumph of what we call the proletarian faction of the International. This requires some clarification. The Fourth International was a breeding ground for snobs and petty-bourgeois elements; for reasons we have often analysed, these snobs and petty-bourgeois elements contributed to the objective conditions that led to our estrangement from the proletariat. The Fourth International, with its triumphant faction at the last congress, represents, in our view, the new core that has overcome or is tending to overcome all the old vices. The victorious faction is the one that fights against opportunism and sectarianism; it is the one that prevented and continues to prevent our old vices from paralysing us; the other factions, except for that of the British majority party, reflect all the characteristics of the past.

“The Congress had its negative aspects; we would not be fulfilling our duty if we did not point them out:

“a) Youth and lack of experience contributed to the weakness of the discussions and the political documents presented.

“b) There was no opposition to the responsible majority faction with a serious theoretical grounding.

“c) The true international leadership is numerically very weak, and this leads to a poor division of tasks within the international leadership and the congress.

“For us, even these negative factors are positive because we believe they are the logical result of the general inexperience of the international leadership and the national sections, but it means that we are on the path to overcoming this, that is, on the path to acquiring the necessary experience — the most gigantic step taken in that direction.”

The characterisation of Haston²⁰ as a proletarian tendency, which was subsequently amended in the party's official document, reveals our agreement with the defence of the USSR and our complete and total opposition to the anti-defencist faction. But there is more; the GCI has tirelessly accused us of reaching pessimistic conclusions as a result of the World Congress. The quotation we have provided speaks for itself. We say all this, setting aside the points of agreement in analysis – while maintaining a logical distance, of course – between the IS and our party. These points of agreement reveal, better than any rhetorical or speculative posturing, the parallel class-based methods and content between the leadership of our International and our party.

20 **Jock Haston** (1913-1986), in the 1940s, he was the leading figure of Trotskyism in England. In 1934, he broke with the Communist Party and, with a group of followers, approached the Fourth International, which had a small presence in England. Haston's Workers International League (WIL) grew during the war. In 1944, when the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) was founded, he became its main leader. From 1946 onward, he raised concerns and disagreements with the positions promoted by Pablo and Mandel regarding the postwar situation and prospects. Together with Bill Hunter and Nahuel Moreno, he submitted amendments to draft resolutions of the International Secretariat, pointing out the strengthening of Stalinism and the lack of immediate prospects for an economic crisis. At the same time, he held positions close to the Goldman-Morrow faction of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). He had a strong influence on Tony Cliff (who was the driving force behind the state capitalist current regarding the USSR). Following the debates on entryism, which he rejected, in 1947, and his ongoing clashes with Gerry Healy, he left the RCP in February 1950. He remained a member of the Labour Party until the end of his life.

Chapter II

The relations of imperialism with the colonial bourgeoisie in this postwar period

a) Two theories of imperialism

Bourgeois economists have developed a theory of imperialism that reflects the interests of finance capital: the cold and progressive de-imperialization of the capitalist world. This theory can be summarised in a few words: the colonial world ceases to be dominated by imperialism as a consequence of the industrial development brought about by the great crises of imperialism. The United States, which has no colonies in the old sense, is the main focus of this theory, but it is equally evident in the other imperialist countries. This theory conceals the secret of imperialist domination in the present era: finance capital. In opposition to the imperialist ideologues, we Bolsheviks put forward a correct position, one that is not carried away by the surface of phenomena and which seeks to grasp the contradictions of the entire process: The imperialist and capitalist world is suffering its most severe crisis; the industrial, yet uneven, development of the backward countries is accelerating and is itself a product of this crisis; the tendency of imperialism and the colonial bourgeoisies is not towards the liberation of the backward countries from the imperialist yoke, but rather towards reorganising enslavement in a more brutal or subtle form, in accordance with the new conditions brought about by the crisis, thereby ensuring that the exploitation of the colonial masses is maintained and developed.

These are two antagonistic, completely antagonistic conceptions: the bourgeois and the proletarian. The bourgeois position draws its strength from confusing industrialisation, nationalisations and formal political independence—brought about by the imperialist crisis—with true independence from international finance capital. The proletarian position demonstrates time and again how the bourgeoisie of the backward countries “at every stage of their development becomes increasingly linked to international finance capital” (Trotsky), that the unity of the capitalist world, as a consequence of the crisis, is growing ever stronger, despite industrial development and the relative strengthening of the colonial bourgeoisie.

Peronism has developed this capitalist theory of imperialism in a demagogic and grotesque manner. The most significant nationalisations carried out by imperialism were brutally imposed on it by the metropolitan countries, due to the crisis they were suffering and as the best way to save themselves from it. The industrial development that took place in Argentina during the Peronist government and the previous military government was the bare minimum that could have been achieved under conditions of absolute lack of competition caused by the war and its aftermath. According to its own statistics, the Peronist government is the government that has developed industry the least in relative terms over the last 15 years. This does not prevent Perón and his propaganda office from calling nationalisations and industrial development a “complete independence from imperialism”.

GCI is the unwitting agent of the Peronist Propaganda Ministry within our own movement. Like the imperialist and Peronist ideologues, GCI believes that the crisis acts mechanically, in the sense of achieving complete independence for the backward countries and the national bourgeoisie, through the cold, hard

path of imperialist economic development. GCI has never grasped the contradiction that the common sense of the best and most honest theorists of the bourgeoisie has also failed to grasp: the general crisis of imperialism across all spheres — political, social, economic and colonial — accelerates the general unity of the capitalist world, rather than weakening it. The bourgeoisie of the backward countries, which form part of the capitalist world, are increasingly united with imperialism for economic, social and political reasons, even though they continue to have friction with the metropolitan countries over the distribution of surplus value, as a consequence of the growing power of certain sectors of the bourgeoisie in the backward countries. The important point is that these frictions do not weaken the united front between imperialism and the national bourgeoisie; rather, the crisis increasingly strengthens this united front.

b) The nature of the bourgeoisie in backward countries

GCI accuses POR of ignoring the frictions and the existence of the bourgeoisie in backward countries.

“It denies (referring to the POR) the existence of bourgeoisies or petty bourgeoisies that have pursued and continue to pursue a nationalist policy of opposition and speculation with imperialism.”

It hardly needs clarifying that GCI’s attack is completely false. Our organisation has not confined itself merely to pointing out in abstract terms that the bourgeoisie of backward countries has friction and clashes with imperialism, but has studied in great detail which sectors of the bourgeoisie, at what times, have had clashes and friction with imperialism, and with which imperialism. In our Latin American Theses,²¹ we have already characterised with great precision the general relations between imperialism and the colonial bourgeoisie; since this is well known, we shall not quote that document. In a debate with a document from the São Paulo region of the Brazilian PSR, a member of our leadership has set out our position on this matter:

“Under the misleading title ‘The Economic Characterisation of the Country’, the São Paulo document seeks to characterise the country not merely in economic terms; as if there is one thing not addressed in that chapter, it is precisely the economic characterisation of the country — whether it is agrarian or industrial, semi-colonial or not — and the specific features of its combined development. The leading faction in São Paulo regards the country’s economic structure as an amalgam of agrarian and industrial formations that interpenetrate in all its spheres and are likewise reflected in the superstructure. Frictions with imperialism, when they arise, are of a superficial nature. From this arises the Bonapartist nature of the national bourgeois governments. In the domestic sphere, similarly, the disagreements between the various economic groups are also superficial, such that they do not allow a Marxist party of the proletariat to establish an entire strategy around existing or probable divisions. We believe this holds even and especially for a short-lived electoral situation such as the present one.”

This is not a characterisation or definition of Brazil, but of most backward and semi-colonial countries; it could even be used to define many advanced countries. With this definition, our party does not take a single step forward; we must state clearly: which region, which class, is the strongest, and what kind of relations exist with imperialism? Do every national exploiting class or subclass have the same kind of relations with imperialism? Is it fair to say that “frictions with imperialism, when they arise, are of a superficial nature”? Is it correct that in Brazil “disagreements between the various economic groups are also superficial”? And finally, does all this “give rise to the Bonapartist nature of the national bourgeois governments”? It is not possible to improvise in this way when characterising Brazil or any other country. This is not merely a false characterisation, but a false method that leads us to opportunism; the method of absolute and immutable truth is not our method. Any sector of the national exploiters will have agreements with imperialism, superficial differences, and even total ruptures, depending on the situation at any given moment. Let imperialism buy coffee at half price and we shall see the “fazendeiros” [landowners] rail against it; let imperialism decide not to buy coffee and we shall see them not merely rail, but advocate violent measures; and if no settlement is reached, they will try to put them into practice, since this is a

²¹ *Latin American Theses* (1948), available in nahuelmoreno.org

matter of life and death for that class or sector of the class, and so they will behave. Are these superficial differences in the last case? The same applies to the various regional sectors: if the government adopts a measure favouring one sector at the expense of another, we shall see significant and not superficial differences between these sectors.

As always, GCI takes the problem out of the terms in which it is truly posed and reduces it to a false, not to say absurd, formulation. The discussion between GCI and us stems from our differing views on imperialism and its relations with the national bourgeoisie. For GCI, the decisive factor in imperialism today is the division of global labour; for us, it is finance capital. For GCI, imperialism and the national bourgeoisie have shared characteristics throughout their entire existence; for us, each form of imperialism has characteristics distinct from the others, and with each passing moment, the specific characteristics of each form of imperialism – and of imperialism in general – transform. The same can be said of the bourgeoisie in general. The fundamental and decisive difference in the general characterisation of the national bourgeoisie is well articulated by GCI:

“What truly unites and identifies the bourgeoisie with imperialism is not, as *Frente Proletario* claims, a general identity of interests. What interests are these? Economically, they clash; **it is their fear of the masses that unites them**” (*Voz Proletaria*, No. 4, August 1948).

Herein lies the essence of the entire theoretical debate between GCI and ourselves regarding the character of the bourgeoisie in backward countries. If it is indeed as GCI says, that the only thing uniting imperialism with the national bourgeoisie is fear of the masses, then as long as the national bourgeoisie can control the masses, the economic aspect will prevail – its economic interests rather than political ones – and the national bourgeoisie will be an honourable fighter against imperialism, because in this way it defends its most immediate and vital economic interests; a case similar to that of the bourgeoisie against feudalism. For us, the national bourgeoisie of backward countries is bound to imperialism by multiple economic ties of enormous weight, which means that even when the bourgeoisie does not fear mass mobilisations – either because it controls them or because they do not exist – it does not clash with imperialism for economic reasons either. These ties of extraordinary weight are: the backward technology that allows imperialism to monopolise the possibilities of more or less significant productive development; control of the world market as a source of raw materials and means of production for the backward country; and, crucially, almost absolute control of the bulk of the world’s financial capital.

All these laws can be summarised in a more general one: imperialism is intimately linked to the national bourgeoisie in the economic sphere, because they are based on the same mode of production, the capitalist one. Imperialism is the senior partner, the principal exploiter of the colonial masses; the national bourgeoisie is its junior partner, not politically, but economically.

If we add to all this a political factor of decisive importance today – namely, the terror, not mere fear, of the world revolution on the part of the bourgeoisie and imperialism, and their holy war against the mass movement throughout the world – we shall have the full picture of the reasons why the alliance between the bourgeoisie of the backward countries and imperialism is today stronger than ever, despite the greater or lesser industrial development that has taken place since the last war, and the strengthening of sectors of the national bourgeoisie which logically demand a greater share of surplus value. This is not something we have just discovered, since in December 1948, together with the two sections already cited, we gave the following characterisation of the bourgeoisie in the backward countries in the present era; we said:

“The process of industrialisation, which has proceeded at different rates in different countries and has been accelerated by the two world wars and the Great Depression of 1929, has had two consequences: the emergence and strengthening of industrial sectors, and the consolidation and centralisation of the strongest native exploiters with imperialism. In other words, the law of capitalist centralisation and concentration has three consequences in our country: the heterogeneity of the interests and structure of the national bourgeoisie; the fact that each stage of capitalist development in our countries binds the national capitalists ever more closely to foreign finance capital; and that the clash between sectors of native exploiters and imperialism over a greater share of surplus value is intensifying. In other words, the general trend pointed out by Lenin and Trotsky and the latest theses of our International, regarding the growth of imperialist domination throughout

the world (meaning the capitalist world, POR), is not negated by this correct assertion: that native exploiters are strengthening themselves with capitalist development and consequently demand a greater share of surplus value” (*Draft Political Resolution* presented by the Bolivian POR-PSR-POR to the Latin American Bureau (BLA), December 1948).

For GCI, the alliance between imperialism and the national bourgeoisies across the globe has never been more fractured than it is today. That is the real difference between us.

c) Two interpretations of Indian independence

The GCI’s one-sided conception of the bourgeoisie in backward countries is revealed in its characterisation of the independence granted to India by British imperialism.

“Wherever the mass movement rises, it forces it (*referring to Britain, POR*) to retreat deep into the background. **Indian independence is no fiction.** But it was not the Indian bourgeoisie that liberated it, but the drive of the masses. The bourgeoisie had previously attempted to exploit the conditions of inter-imperialist struggle and manoeuvre to surrender to another imperialism from which it could gain a greater share. That was the policy of its leader, Chandra Bose,²² who favoured a rapprochement with Japanese imperialism. **But now he has relied on the rising movement of the masses and taken a great step forward, achieving genuine political independence, which he seeks to exploit for his bourgeois ends. In another sphere, it is a case similar to that of Perón. For Great Britain, the result of all this is a profound setback in terms of its financial power**” (*Voz Proletaria*, No. 21, p. 17).

In absolute opposition to GCI, the world congress of our International has characterised the relations of imperialism with the colonial bourgeoisie in this postwar period as follows:

“Imperialism increasingly tends to resort to indirect domination through greater collaboration and a closer engagement with the national bourgeoisie in those countries where demands for independence could not be sidestepped. These political means tend to conceal, as far as possible, the maintenance of an extremely extensive, indeed decisive, control over the economy of the country to which ‘independence’ (*let us not forget, in view of these quotation marks, GCI’s famous phrase without quotation marks... real political independence. POR*) has been granted by the metropolis. Imperialism continues to dominate by the sheer weight of the influence of its economy over that of these countries” (*Colonial Thesis, Quatrième Internationale*, April–May 1948, p. 61).

And about India, the world congress of our International stated:

“England could find no solution in strengthening its military and repressive apparatus; its economic situation, which had been severely weakened by the end of the war, prevented this. **It sought a way out in a nominal independence** (*let us not forget that GCI says ‘real’, POR*), **spectacularly marked by the withdrawal of British troops, but which left the foundations of British domination completely intact. It is in India that this manoeuvre appears in all its clarity.** By creating two states as artificial as Pakistan and Hindustan, lacking both geographical and economic unity, England kills two birds with one stone. On the one hand, it superficially satisfies the nationalist aspirations of the masses, diverting hostility towards imperialism into a struggle between religious communities; on the other hand, it irreparably weakens the country by preventing any serious economic development and secures long-term room for manoeuvre by pitting the two Indian states against each other. England will impose its will on both and will be able to safeguard its hold on its mines, plantations, industries and banks (*let us not forget what GCI says: the result of all this is a profound setback for Britain’s financial power. POR*). Indian independence, therefore, means that imperialism dominates the country, not directly, but through the Indian bourgeoisie and feudal lords and

22 **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** (1897–1945) was an Indian nationalist politician and leader who fought for Indian independence. He believed that armed struggle was necessary and inevitable to defeat British colonial rule. He attempted to gain support from Stalin and the Soviet Union, but when this failed, he travelled to Nazi Germany, without achieving any decisive results. Later, he moved to Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia, where he reorganised the Indian National Army and led the Provisional Government of Free India.

through the division of India, which guarantees England the submission of the Hindu or Muslim bourgeoisie to its will” (ibid.).

How profound must GCI’s conception be that this characterisation of Indian independence appears in the very same thesis where Mao Tse-tung’s regime is not characterised! Apparently, for GCI, the anti-imperialist policy of the Indian bourgeoisie, supported by the rise of the masses, has weakened British imperialism far more than the glaxis, Yugoslavia and the Chinese revolution, since it merits a precise and exhaustive analysis. It goes without saying that the differences between the World Congress and GCI are the same as ours: greater unity between imperialism and the bourgeoisie according to the World Congress, and rupture and clash according to GCI.

d) The character of the Latin American bourgeoisie

“The lack of Fourth International parties, combined with the betrayal of the Communist parties or their virtual non-existence (except in Chile, Brazil and Uruguay) — the first and third phenomena stemming from the absence, in the preceding revolutionary era, of a great Bolshevik revolutionary tradition — made it possible for the national bourgeoisies or nationalist petty bourgeoisies to channel the drive and combativeness of the masses to their advantage, using them as a mass for manoeuvring and speculation in their opposition to or negotiation with imperialism (*Special Bulletin for Discussion with the POR*, 12 April 1950).

For GCI, the Latin American bourgeoisie, generally backward, is deeply anti-imperialist at this moment, since everywhere — in India, Chile, Brazil, Cuba, Argentina — the bourgeoisie stands alongside the masses against imperialism, achieving and promoting a “real liberation” from it, and not alongside imperialism against the masses.

The bourgeoisie of the backward countries is so at odds with imperialism that these are the two decisive social factors in the contemporary history of Latin America. Nothing demonstrates this GCI criterion better than the division it makes of the Trotskyist movement on our continent: agent of the national bourgeoisie or of imperialism, except for the GCI tendency. While the International holds that the decisive contradictory and antagonistic forces at present, which exert pressure on our movement and any other movement throughout the world, are imperialism, Stalinism and the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the mass movement, GCI modifies this criterion of the International, at least for Latin America, by adding a new decisive factor: the national bourgeoisie; thereby relegating the mass movement to the shadows. Every difference between GCI and us is also encapsulated in this characterisation. GCI contradicts itself regarding the mass movement in Latin America, since it believes that it is almost as powerful as in Asia or Europe, yet despite its momentum, no movements or currents emerge that reflect the aspirations of the masses, except for the tiny GCIist current. We, on the other hand, are consistent with the International’s criteria and believe that of the three decisive factors, the national bourgeoisie is united with imperialism, even if it has its frictions with it, but without being an independent factor at this moment. We do not believe in the strength of Stalinism in Latin America for specific reasons; we hold that there has not yet been a revolutionary crisis or a mass or proletarian mobilisation in Latin America strong enough to put pressure on the whole of society.

What is curious is the sector of the bourgeoisie that, according to GCI, clashes with imperialism: the industrial bourgeoisie, which always, always clashes with an abstract imperialism that forever and ever is always opposed to industrialisation. In contrast to that sector of the bourgeoisie in underdeveloped countries that is constantly opposed to imperialism, we have another sector that is forever and ever on the side of imperialism: the landowners. If this isn’t mechanistic thinking, then it’s sheer idiocy!

Perón’s government, for example, clashed violently with the United States. All bourgeois and imperialist economists point out that the sector of the Argentine bourgeoisie that has always, always, got on badly with Yankee imperialism, is the big cattle-ranching landowners, and that the Argentine industrial bourgeoisie has got on very well with Yankee imperialism since the last world war, because it needs capital, machinery, raw materials and spare parts for its machinery, which only US imperialism can provide on

unbeatable terms. The industrial bourgeoisie, through the Argentine Industrial Union, formed a united front with US imperialism and was the vanguard of the struggle against Perón, giving money hand over fist to the Democratic Union.²³ However, according to GCI, Perón's clashes with US imperialism are carried out in the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie against the cattle ranchers. Who can make sense of this? We can repeat the same story about Vargas.²⁴ His main and greatest supporters in the last election campaign were the large landowners of southern Brazil; Vargas himself is one of them. The Brazilian industrial bourgeoisie, just like US imperialism, did not look kindly on Vargas's candidacy; yet, for GCI, Vargas is the representative of the industrial bourgeoisie against the landowners and imperialism. Who can make sense of this?

In contrast to the collaborative attitude of the Argentine industrial bourgeoisie with Yankee imperialism during the last war and the postwar period, we find the attitude of the same industrial bourgeoisie in the years 1929, 1930, and 1931, at the height of the depression, when British, European, and US imperialism demanded that the government allow metropolitan goods to enter duty-free to purchase Argentine products. The Argentine Industrial Union quoted Marx and Engels in its magazine and, for the first time in 1930, planned and held street rallies calling for a popular mobilisation to defend Argentine industry, which was threatened with extinction by imperialist demands. Subsequently, the industrial bourgeoisie reached a status quo with the Argentine landowners, who implemented a special type of protectionism not applied to Great Britain (buyer imperialism), becoming the most ardent defender of this situation, which allowed it to develop.

In opposition to this status quo of the large cattle ranchers of Buenos Aires province, the large industrial bourgeoisie, and British imperialism, the voices of the medium and small ranchers of the country's interior and coastal regions rose. These were the ones who bore the brunt of the arrangement between British imperialism and the cattle ranchers of Buenos Aires province. That is, when the industrialists' protests against imperialism ended in 1932, the firm and tenacious protest of the small and medium-sized ranchers against it emerged, a protest that would resonate in the famous meat investigation promoted by Lisandro de la Torre.²⁵ The friction and rupture with imperialism on the part of the bourgeoisie, or a sector of the Argentine bourgeoisie, have depended not on the anti-imperialist will of the industrial bourgeoisie or the bourgeoisie in general, but on very concrete problems in the distribution of surplus value.

When an imperialist sector allies itself with a sector of the national bourgeoisie, it tends to harm or undermine another. This imperialist sector has an ally and an enemy, and the ally doesn't cease to be an ally simply because it is the industrial bourgeoisie, nor does the enemy cease to be such simply because it is a landowning class. Major clashes with imperialism, or the conflicts, are not the norm, nor are they permanent, in the existence of Latin American industrial bourgeoisies, since they count as allies the great capital holdings of imperialism itself, which tend to protect the industries they control or influence, even though the industrial bourgeoisie has an almost absolute dependence on imperialist machinery, spare parts, raw materials, and imperialist capital. All this does not preclude the possibility that at certain times profound frictions or open ruptures may arise between a sector of the industrial bourgeoisie and a sector of imperialism, or sometimes with imperialism in general. This occurs at certain times, not permanently.

23 **Democratic Union (UD)** was a pro-imperialist and pro-oligarchic electoral alliance formed in 1945 between the Radical Civic Union, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Progressive Democratic Party to confront the Perón-Quijano ticket in the 1946 presidential elections. It was supported and financed by the Rural Society, the Argentine Industrial Union, the Stock Exchange and by the former United States ambassador, Spruille Braden. The nascent Peronism called not to vote for it with the electoral slogan "Braden or Perón."

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

25 **Nicolás Lisandro de la Torre** (1868–1939) was an Argentine political leader, lawyer, and writer. In the Argentine Senate (1935–1936), he spearheaded the investigation into the meat industry, a parliamentary commission established to denounce the privileges granted to foreign meatpacking companies under the Roca-Runciman Pact and the complicity of officials in the conservative government. The process culminated in the assassination of Senator Enzo Bordabehere on the Senate floor, an event that symbolized the corruption and political violence of the Infamous Decade. It was depicted in the film *Murder in the Senate of the Nation*.

All this confusion stems from a very common error in vulgar and metaphysical thinking, which is characteristic of GCI: dissolving the concrete problem into a single abstract law. When faced with any national bourgeoisie or any of its sectors, we cannot determine their relationship with imperialism, or with a particular form of imperialism, based on the single law: that imperialism and the national bourgeoisie have friction and clash over the distribution of surplus value, accompanied or nuanced by another law: that the industrialization of underdeveloped countries is detrimental to imperialism when it sells to these countries.

To judge the relationship between imperialism and the bourgeoisie at any given moment, we must not forget, alongside the entirely correct laws we have already stated, other laws that limit and may subordinate those already mentioned: the backward bourgeoisie needs imperialism for technical, economic, political, and military reasons. The general crisis of capitalism in today's world increasingly unites the bourgeoisie of the backward country with imperialism and imperialism with the backward bourgeoisie (that is, both sides tend to settle everything through amicable negotiations because they need each other). Financial capital, or a sector of it, also benefits from industrial development if it has invested its capital; imperialism, which instead of selling manufactured products for everyday use, can sell means of production and raw materials in greater quantities and invest enormous amounts of surplus capital in the metropolises for the development of the industry of the backward country, is not against industrialization (the specific case of US imperialism during this postwar period in Latin America).

GCI, when analysing the relations of the Latin American bourgeoisie, completely disregards all these laws, clinging instead to the single law of friction, rather than providing a concrete analysis – that is, the combination and relationship of all these laws that best fit reality, indicating what is essential from what is secondary, and the changes that occur. For GCI, there is only one law governing all relations: the economic aspect permanently divides imperialism and the bourgeoisie, while the political aspect, and only the political aspect, unites them; hence, friction and clashes are almost constant.

The Second World War gave an extraordinary boost to Latin American economic development, allowing it to overcome the economic stagnation caused by the Great Depression of 1929. As a consequence of this economic development, relations among all sectors of the exploiting class, during the war and even in the postwar period, have been characterised by agreements rather than clashes. However, a significant contradiction has emerged among the exploiting classes and in their relations with the dominant imperialisms. Until the war, the exporting bourgeoisie and European imperialism, both buyers and sellers of manufactured goods for everyday use, wielded considerable influence in many Latin American countries. The war and its aftermath led to the rise of the industrial bourgeoisie and US imperialism, which are inextricably linked. The former needs the capital, raw materials, and means of production that only the latter can provide, while the latter, unlike European imperialism, is not fundamentally a buyer but a seller, thus inevitably clashing with the exporting bourgeoisie of the developing countries. This creates a permanent imbalance among bourgeois sectors and in inter-imperialist relations. Despite this, the essential characteristic has been understanding and not clashes and friction, contrary to the GCI's view that the defining feature since the war has been the clashes.

Chapter III

Revolutionary and Reactionary Mobilisations in Latin America

a) The characterisation of Latin American mobilisations

“GOM denies the equally revolutionary character of the mass movement in Latin America”
(*Letter from the GCI to the IS*, already cited).

Attacks like these have been repeated for years. This is correct: we deny that the mass and proletarian mobilisations in this postwar period in Latin America have acquired a revolutionary character in the main countries, whether anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist. In our view, this is the difference between this postwar period and the pre-war period, that is, the 1930s. We have never denied, as GCI insists, that there have been large popular and proletarian mobilisations, large economic strikes, which most of the time have not crystallised into revolutionary mass movements. We call this stage in Argentina and in the main Latin American countries pre-revolutionary, not revolutionary.

If every major movement for economic improvements, for readjustment to inflation, and the high cost of living, is considered a revolutionary mobilisation, then we are mistaken in our terminology and will have to find new words to indicate the difference that has emerged in this postwar period in the countries that suffered most from the world conflict, in Europe and Asia, compared to the mobilisations in Australia, Africa, or the United States. For us, there were only revolutionary mobilisations on the two continents mentioned, and only because of the war suffered on their own soil. In the rest of the world, especially in the United States, Australia, and Spain, the postwar period brought with it a series of tremendous contradictions that led the masses and the proletariat to wage economic struggles, which did not become revolutionary because they remained mere struggles over economic problems that left the bourgeois and imperialist regime in a relatively stable position. That is, they never transformed into mobilisations that objectively threatened the existing political power, and that, for us, is what characterises a revolutionary mobilisation.

“The proletariat and mass movements in the postwar period

“In general, the war in Latin America has not caused a violent revolutionary upsurge. This is due to several reasons. First, the absence of a profound economic crisis in Latin America during this postwar period. Second, the lack of a decisive victory for the proletariat in Europe, a victory that would almost certainly have triggered a revolutionary crisis in the main Latin American countries, as a consequence of the proletariat’s rapid ideological assimilation.

“The criterion of *Octubre* and GCI, which draws from a valid premise — that the postwar period opens a new era and the deepest revolutionary crisis in history — the conclusion that this revolutionary crisis is occurring in all countries and regions of the world, is completely false.

“This mechanical criterion must be vehemently rejected, because it can lead us to dreadful defeats. The general Characterisation of the era does not cancel the contradictions and precise analyses of specific periods and countries.

“The general Characterisation that Hitler’s triumph consolidated the power of the world bourgeoisie and imperialism remains accurate despite the offensive of the Spanish proletariat and the Spanish Revolution.

“In the main Latin American countries, the decade of 1930–1940 a violent revolutionary upsurge, the result of the global crisis of capitalism and the dead end to which Latin American countries and the working classes were driven.”

“The partial overcoming of the global crisis and the subsequent war allowed Latin American governments and the exploiting classes to go on the offensive and establish more or less stable regimes.

“The date of the revolutionary crisis or the extreme antagonism between classes varies from Latin American country to Latin American country, as does the resolution of this crisis. Brazil precedes all the other countries; a revolutionary stage began in 1930 and ended in 1937 with the Estado Novo.²⁶ In Mexico and Chile, the revolutionary crisis was longer and more widespread due to the persistent economic crisis in these countries and, in Mexico, the agrarian problem. In Argentina, the revolutionary upsurge did not coincide with the crisis, but rather emerged later, as industrial production grew. The war brought an end to this general revolutionary upsurge in Latin America.

“The postwar period brought with it a process of readjustment, not only economic but also political, in all Latin American countries. The proletariat played an important role in this readjustment process, on the one hand seeking economic improvements to compensate for general inflation, and on the other hand, politically supporting some bourgeois sectors against others. The actions of the Latin American proletariat in the postwar period did not fall outside the framework of bourgeois political struggle. There was no revolutionary crisis: no antagonism between a country and imperialism (like Cárdenas’s)²⁷ or a serious political mobilisation of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

“This does not mean that the proletariat was not acquiring colossal experience and that, beneath the apparent tranquillity, enormous revolutionary possibilities were not accumulating.

“The best cadres of the working class assimilate experiences and tend to draw conclusions from them. The conditions are ideal for our work of penetrating the proletariat; we are always consistent and do not lose heart.

“The economic situation is similar. Latin America’s privileged position as a result of the war and postwar period will inevitably end, and, as in 1929, Latin American countries will be among the hardest hit by the global crisis. The possibilities for a crisis with no way out through bourgeois means are stronger today than ever before.

“The economic and revolutionary crisis exists in Latin America not as a reality, but as a short-term possibility. In this sense, this situation can be compared to that of 1912-14 in Russia, that is, as a pre-revolutionary, but not revolutionary, situation.

“Bolivia is an exception to this analysis. This exception is precisely a confirmation of our thesis. The Bolivian revolutionary crisis is a product of the dead-end crisis in Bolivian mining resulting from the postwar period; Bolivia is a true reflection of the rest of Latin America in that sense.” (*Draft Political Resolution on Latin America*, already cited.)

One point to note regarding this quote is that GCI, which is familiar with our document, disregards it and relies on gossip, asserting that POR leaders maintain that Cárdenas’s movement was not

26 In Brazil, the presidency of Getúlio Vargas between 1937-1946, characterized by bourgeois nationalist traits and dictatorial features, is known as the **Estado Novo**.

27 **Lázaro Cárdenas** (1895-1970) was a Mexican general and statesman, president from December 1934 to November 1940. He was noted, among other governmental actions, for agrarian reform and the creation of “ejidos” in the Mexican agricultural sector; for the nationalisation of the oil industry with the creation of Pemex; and for having provided political asylum to republican exiles during and after the Spanish Civil War. He also gave refuge to Trotsky when he had to leave his exile in Oslo at the end of 1936 after being deported by the Norwegian government under pressure from Stalin.

anti-imperialist but rather in favour of Yankee imperialism. Written quotes mean nothing to GCI; gossip and personal opinions are everything.

b) The opinions of IS and GCI are antagonistic.

The opposition between our international leadership and that of GCI, although the leadership of the Argentine group swears daily allegiance to the past, present, and future line of IS, never coincides. Regarding the crisis of our movement in Latin America, two antagonistic interpretations stem from and reflect equally antagonistic characterisations of mass mobilisations in Latin America in the current era.

While GCI, echoing Peronist propaganda, holds that the most extraordinary mass mobilisation in Latin America was the Argentine one, and that, like other mass mobilisations in other Latin American countries, it is on par with any of the most colossal mobilisations that have occurred in Asia, the IS states:

“It almost goes without saying that the organic lag of the movement in Latin America is not an accident of geography or nationality, but rather reflects the continent’s historical backwardness and the circumstances of war and the specific form of imperialist ties. This is due to the combination of circumstances in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of Asia and Oceania – extreme weakness of imperialism, periods between occupations, and an absolutely intolerable economic situation – which have fuelled formidable revolutionary explosions. These circumstances have not occurred in Latin America. Consequently, the sense of historical imperative for building a single revolutionary party, firmly rooted in the masses, which has so greatly driven other sections so much, has not existed there” (Letter from the IS to the Latin American groups and sections, published in No. 2 of the *Internal Discussion Bulletin* of the Argentine Fourth Internationalist Movement, July 1947).

That is, the IS agrees with our differentiation of the revolutionary process on the different continents on the one hand, but on the other hand, it completely disagrees with the interpretation of the crisis of the Latin American Trotskyist movement made by GCI. While GCI attributes the crisis to the pressure of the bourgeoisie and imperialism, the IS, like us, attributes it to the weakness of the Latin American mass movement itself.

c) The “revolutionary and anti-imperialist” mobilisations of González Videla and Vargas

“In Latin America, the first postwar revolutionary upsurge, in the absence or weakness of workers’ parties, was channelled for their own benefit by the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie (Perón, Betancourt²⁸ in Venezuela, and González Videla²⁹ in Chile), but the masses wrested away important concessions” (*Voz Proletaria*, No. 23, 20 December 1950).

“The resounding victory obtained by Vargas in the recent elections in Brazil indicates the level of political consciousness of the Brazilian proletariat; a political consciousness that the Latin American proletariat has demonstrated in recent times, especially after the Second World War” (*Voz Proletaria*, No. 22, 19 November 1950).

“The workers and peasants of Brazil wanted to express their support for Vargas, not only their repudiation of the Dutra³⁰ regime but also of his and his party’s policies of subjecting their country to the yoke of Yankee imperialism” (*Ibid.*).

28 **Rómulo Betancourt** (1908-1981), leader of the social democratic party Democratic Action and twice president of Venezuela from 1945 to 1948 and from 1959 to 1964.

29 **Gabriel González Videla** (1898-1980), was president of Chile between 1946 and 1952. Elected with the support of the Communist Party, he quickly adopted repressive actions against the worker’s movement. In 1948, he promulgated the so-called “Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy”, known as the “Cursed Law” that outlawed the CP and opened a stage of persecution against militant unions, leftist leaders and popular organisations.

30 **Eurico Gaspar Dutra** (1883-1974), Brazilian general and key figure in military anti-communism. Vargas’ Minister of War during the Estado Novo, participated in his displacement in 1945 and was elected president (1946-1951). His government

GCI has surely never drawn a comparison between the election of Truman³¹ and those of Vargas or González Videla. The analogy is important as well as accurate. Truman's victory reflected the aspiration of American workers to crush reactionaries like Taft.³² In that sense, it reflected a proletarian aspiration. But only in that sense and only in that, since Truman's party, by its very nature, its program, its structure, its apparatus, and its leaders, is a party and a mobilisation of Wall Street, as are the Republicans. Truman's demagoguery is in keeping with the pattern of US bipartisanship, that is, the division of labour among bourgeois politicians, and not with the developed class consciousness of the American proletariat, or with its revolutionary mobilisation. The fact that a wing of the capitalist two-party system had to appeal to the proletariat and managed to gain its support demonstrates, on the one hand, the fear of the bourgeoisie and democracy of the proletariat's independent movement, and on the other, that the proletariat has not yet reached a sufficient level of class consciousness to create its own political organs to combat the bourgeoisie.

The mobilisation that brought Truman to power, therefore, does not represent a revolutionary mobilisation, nor even an anti-capitalist proletarian mobilisation. It is merely a reactionary capitalist mobilisation that appealed demagogically and won the support of the proletariat; that is the essential point. The same occurs in Latin America with the mobilisations of Vargas and González Videla; we will address Peronism in detail later.

Vargas, a longtime servant of US imperialism and all Brazilian exploiters, used the Brazilian bourgeoisie's enormous profits during the last war and the need to adjust wages due to inflation and the demand for labour to initiate a demagogic policy of concessions to the proletariat. This was intended to secure their support for his semi-fascist, Bonapartist policies: the suppression of democratic freedoms (as the *Old Man* [Trotsky] himself defined it), and his role as arbiter between Brazilian exploiters and imperialism. US imperialism got along exceptionally well with Vargas; he didn't pursue his demagogic policies to defend himself or to attack imperialism, since he initiated and implemented them during his honeymoon period with the Yankees.

After the war, US imperialism, as a reflection of the European revolution and the global revolutionary crisis, as well as its agreements with Russia, pursued a worldwide policy in favour of bourgeois democratic freedoms. It championed the freedom of the colonies from the old metropolises, and so on. There was also an economic interest at play: the need for free competition in world trade. The fact is that in the postwar period, US imperialism transformed itself, for profound political and economic reasons, into a champion of democratic freedoms that did not threaten its dominance. The State Department, through Braden, launched a fierce campaign in Latin America for "democratic governments". This also stemmed from profound economic reasons: to displace governments of an extremely Bonapartist nature, which still defended bourgeois sectors long linked to European capitalism. In the case of Brazil, this included the southern "fazendeiros" (landowners) of the south, great friends of England and Vargas.

It was the State Department, through Braden and his new policy, that ousted Vargas by means of a *coup d'état* by the Brazilian army. This is perfectly proven and was denounced as such by Vargas himself. The Brazilian proletariat was with Vargas and Stalinism. This, in turn, played into Vargas's hands, fully supporting his positions and voting for his candidates for governor in the most important states. Vargasism did not change its reactionary and totalitarian character because of this, just as Pilsudski's³³

firmly aligned Brazil with US policy, outlawed the Communist Party, and deepened repression against the labour movement.

31 **Harry S. Truman** (1884–1972), president of the United States from 1945 to 1953 for the Democratic Party. He assumed the presidency after the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt and was elected in the 1948 election. His government was marked by the beginning of the Cold War, the doctrine of "containment" of communism and the consolidation of the international leadership of the United States in the postwar period.

32 **Robert A. Taft** (1889–1953), leader of the conservative wing of the Republican Party and senator from Ohio. He was one of the leading figures of the postwar Republican right and a candidate for his party's presidential nomination on several occasions. He is known, among other things, for his support of the Taft-Hartley Act (1947), which limited union activity in the United States, including among other things, restrictions on the right to strike.

33 **Józef Pilsudski** (1867–1935) was a Polish nationalist leader who established an authoritarian Bonapartist-type regime in 1926. Although openly anti-communist, the Third International dominated by Stalin adopted opportunist positions faced with his government.

remained unchanged by the Stalinist confusion. Vargas created two parties: the Brazilian “Travallista” [Labour Party] and the Social Democratic Party; the latter brought Dutra to power. Dutra, the agent of imperialism according to GCI, rose to power supported by Vargas and by the party founded by Vargas, the anti-imperialist party according to GCI itself. For the last presidential elections, Vargas tried to run as the candidate of both parties, but he was unsuccessful. However, he managed to secure the open or covert support of all the most important leaders of the PSD (Social Democratic Party). Vargas offered the vice-presidential candidacy to the top leader of the PSD, General Góis Monteiro,³⁴ who declined. The “Labour” party fielded PSD leaders, and even members of the other major national party, the UDN (National Democratic Union), as candidates for governor, senator, and representative in many states. General Góis Monteiro, the man who led the palace coup against Vargas, the favoured agent of US imperialism, who rejected his vice-presidential candidacy offered by Vargas, was immediately appointed Chief of Staff of the Army upon Vargas’s rise to power. Quite a statement!

The PSR of Brazil has, in our view, aptly defined Vargas’s mobilisation:

“The essence of ‘populism’ can be summarised as follows: its basic social content comprises the disoriented plebeians, remnants of the tenentism³⁵ movement, and the most backward sectors of the working class. Its outward manifestation is a timid demagoguery that makes half-hearted promises of reforms typical of any capitalist country whose socio-economic development has reached the level of the 19th century.

“The leadership of populism consists of bourgeois strongmen and middle-class opportunists who combine faint aspirations for reform with strong personal ambitions for power. Rather than parties, the ‘populist’ currents are predominantly electoral mass movements, centred around leaders from the bourgeoisie or with solid economic positions in the bourgeoisie” (*Internal Bulletin*, July 1950, PSR, p. 2).

In Brazil, there have been three bourgeois electoral parties, which during the electoral campaign had different tones: Vargas, representing backward sectors of the peasantry and proletariat; Gómez, representing the petty and middle bourgeoisie; and Cristiano Machado, representing the bureaucracy. These three candidates and parties reflected the interests of the bourgeoisie, the dominant imperialism, and even the Church (which advised voting for any of the three candidates). About the bourgeois and imperialist tone of the three candidates, Vargas differed from the others in that, without explicitly supporting or directly reflecting the interests of European capitalism and its associated bourgeois sectors, he exhibited a much more pronounced role as an arbitrator than the other candidates, and in that sense, a greater degree of speculation regarding European capitalism. Vargas’s connection to the “fazendeiros” (landowners) of southern Brazil, the cattle ranchers, and the economic program presented in his campaign speeches – “let’s look to Europe again” – is no coincidence. The important thing is that all three mobilisations were bourgeois and imperialist, and that Vargas’s victory does not reveal the high political consciousness of the Brazilian proletariat, but rather its backwardness. This does not preclude the fact that the workers who voted for Vargas did so because they believed they were improving their situation and harming their exploiters, but that was secondary, incidental in Vargas’s mobilisation, just as it was in Truman’s. The petty bourgeoisie that supports fascism and the backward proletariat also believe they are acting against the big bourgeoisie.

González Videla received the support of Stalinism and the masses not because the people declared themselves anti-imperialist, but, on the contrary, because he was the most liberal, that is, the one who made the most promises in accordance with democratic countries. The election of González Videla and the decisive support he received from Stalinism stemmed from an internal problem in Chile: the existence of two bourgeois parties, one setting the tone in a reactionary direction and the other in a democratic-liberal

34 **Pedro Aurélio de Góis Monteiro** (1889–1956) was one of the main Brazilian military leaders of the 20th century. He participated in the 1930 Revolution that brought Vargas to power and became a key figure in the formation of the Estado Novo (1937–1945). Nationalist and authoritarian, he defended a model of “national security” with strong military tutelage over politics. After the fall of the Estado Novo, he maintained influence in the army. During the negotiations for the 1950 elections, Vargas offered him to be his vice president in an attempt to secure military support for his candidacy, but Góis Monteiro rejected the proposal, reflecting the tensions between Vargas and sectors of the officialdom.

35 **Tenentism**: A movement of young officers of the Brazilian Army (the tenentes [lieutenants]) who in the years 1922–1930 promoted rebellions against the oligarchies and proposed a nationalist and authoritarian modernization.

one. Logically, Stalinism implemented its Popular Front policy, supporting the policies of the democratic liberals, that is, the Radicals. The struggle against imperialism was not raised by anyone, least of all by Stalinism, since if González Videla had made even the slightest anti-imperialist allusion in his electoral platform, Stalinism would not have supported him, as it was enjoying a honeymoon with the US at that time.

With the advent of the Cold War, González Videla launched a fierce campaign against Stalinism, adhering to Washington's directives.

GCI considers the mobilisations of Vargas and González Videla as anti-imperialist and revolutionary demonstrations for a profound reason: GCI characterises Latin American mobilisations in the same way as the Peronist government does. For GCI, González Videla was anti-imperialist because he reached a border agreement with the Peronist government, and this fact reflected a revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat. He ceased to be anti-imperialist when he sabotaged that agreement, but González Videla's fundamental characteristics have not changed. The same is true of Vargas. He was fiercely supported by Perón, not because the forces that brought him to power were anti-imperialist, but because of his role as a cop arbitrator who maintained good relations with the cattle ranchers of southern Brazil and with British imperialism. Peronism disguised the true motive for supporting Vargas with tremendous demagoguery, portraying Vargas and his movement as the most conscious expression of the Brazilian workers' and popular movement, as anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist. Dutra is the opposite. GCI, in its interpretation of Vargas, has done nothing more than give us the interpretation of the Peronist newspapers in Marxist language. Once again, GCI reveals itself as the transmission belt of the reactionary Peronist government within our movement.

d) The Bolivian revolutionary mobilisation

The curious thing about the GCI accusing us of ignoring the revolutionary mobilisations of the Latin American masses, is that it is we, the POR, who precisely have to launch a tremendous accusation against the GCI and *Octubre*: the greatest revolutionary mobilisation in Latin America in this post-war period and one of the largest in all of Latin American history, the insurrection of the Bolivian people against Villarroel,³⁶ is ignored, or rather scorned, by the GCI with the accusation that it was a pro-imperialist mobilisation "...and its militants (*referring to the GOM militants*) received the Bolivian revolt, a coup by Yankee imperialism against the native nationalist bourgeoisie, with rejoicing, as a movement favourable and convenient to the proletariat" (Letter to the GOM from the GCI Central Committee, August 1946).

This monstrous statement, as we can say, synthesises two clearly antagonistic lines in the position regarding the Bolivian insurrection. It is essential to pause with utmost care in the analysis of this movement.

The Villarroel regime, from its inception, was tremendously reactionary and exhibited frankly totalitarian characteristics: suppression of the most basic democratic freedoms, persecution of bourgeois and proletarian opponents. Even the *Octubre* group, a staunch defender of the Villarroel government, acknowledged this. Since Bolivia had never experienced such a prosperous economic period and so much employment as under Villarroel's government, the reactionary and totalitarian regime, to maintain its grip on power, initiated a policy of social demagoguery: eight-hour workdays in the mines, severance pay, Christmas bonuses, etc. Initially, it garnered the support of the entire Bolivian proletariat. The high cost of living, the continuous rise in prices, which had as one of its most immediate consequences the colossal increase in bureaucracy and state spending, quickly roused the petty bourgeoisie, artisans, and urban proletariat of Bolivia, primarily in La Paz, its main city, from their totalitarian demagogic lethargy. The mining proletariat, lacking any prior political tradition, remained largely under the influence of Villarroel, and those who ceased to support him leapt from their extreme political backwardness — their support for Villarroel — to eminently Trotskyist programmatic conceptions, the most advanced in the world, such as

36 **Gualberto Villarroel López** (1908-1946) was a Bolivian military officer and politician, president of the Military Government Junta (1943-1944), provisional president (1944-1945) and constitutional president (1945-1946). On 21 July 1946, he was overthrown and executed by the popular insurrection.

the Pulacayo trade union thesis.³⁷ The important thing is that the working population of the cities understood the true error and nature of the Villarroel government, thus anticipating the mining proletariat in this regard.

“We said that one of the antecedents of the revolution was the general railway strike, which profoundly shook the political and social foundations of the government. The railway workers resorted to a strike to secure certain economic advantages. After a few days of the strike, the government compromised and accepted the workers’ demands. But their discontent was evident.

“The railway strike and its results showed the working class and the popular masses just how great their power was. It gives them confidence and nurtures the spirit of rebellion that manifested itself later in the decisive week culminating on the 21st of the following month. The Villarroel government never recovered from this blow to its prestige. From that moment on, its fate was sealed. No one ventured an opinion on whether it would be overthrown a week or a year later, but everyone recognised that the overthrow was inevitable. (...) The teachers’ strike also serves to demonstrate how far the government was from reflecting the popular will and representing the interests of the working and popular classes of Bolivia. This strike became the spark that ignited the insurrection. It was its most immediate antecedent. When it broke out, no one would have dared to predict its development or the magnitude of the insurrectionary processes that would serve as its corollary. The teachers’ movement, therefore, spread throughout the nation, winning from its very beginning the sympathy of the people and the solidarity of students and workers. Their demands were not excessive. They sought a 50% increase in their salaries, which represented only a small improvement given the high cost of living and the meagre remuneration they received.

“July 10th: The university students, the day before, decided to join the striking teachers. They organised a demonstration that, starting from the University, marched through various streets to Plaza Murillo. Throughout their march, they chanted the refrain: ‘Bread for the teachers, freedom for the people’. Some clashes with armed police occurred along the way, but they were neither serious nor significant. The shooting of the demonstrators began. Several students and workers were wounded. A student from the ‘Pedro Domingo Murillo’ Industrial School, Bergen Camberos, was killed. The crowd began to scatter. Bursts of machine gun fire rained down on the flowerbeds and streets of the plaza. State Radio, under the direction of Hinojosa,³⁸ while the people were being machine-gunned, proclaimed that the students, ‘directed by members of the **rosca** (oligarchy), armed with machine guns, are attacking the agents and state officials’. The atmosphere begins to be created for what was to happen next. A manifesto drafted that same night in a general assembly of students, after condemning the government for the bloodshed, ends with this resolution: ‘1. To express the vehemence of their protest against the bloody crimes of yesterday; 2. To remain ready for battle until the very moment when the sacred symbols of justice, valour, and loyalty require the support of their arms, and then to join the forces of vindication to impose them once and for all upon the chaos in which the country is currently mired.’

“July 11th: From very early in the morning, groups of women, workers, merchants — in short, the people — began arriving at the University. It was in vain that the police tried to disperse them. They came from everywhere and in ever-increasing numbers. Some clashes led those in charge of the police to believe that it would be impossible to prevent the symbolic burial. A major clash was possible, and they tried to avoid it. All police and military forces were concentrated at strategic points throughout the city, and Plaza Murillo became an impressive arsenal. The column accompanying the coffin was imposing. More than 25,000 people marched in silence. At the cemetery, speeches were given. Student Terrazas, son of the former professor murdered some time before by the government, spoke. A labour leader, Alfonsina Paredes (Trotskyist), also spoke.

37 The *Pulacayo Theses* was an important document in the Bolivian and Latin American labour movement. It was adopted at the request of Llallagua’s delegation to the Congress of the Trade Union Federation of Mine Workers of Bolivia (FSTMB), which met in November 1946 in the city of Pulacayo. The theses are based on the *Transitional Program* drafted by Leon Trotsky and approved at the founding of the Fourth International in 1938.

38 **Roberto Hinojosa** (?-1946). Protagonist of the “Villazón revolution” in 1930, in which the city of Villazón, Bolivia, was taken. Hinojosa declared himself provisional president of the “Worker-Peasant Socialist Republic of Bolivia”. He flees to Argentina, Uruguay and Mexico. In 1944, he returned to Bolivia and collaborated with Villarroel. During the insurrection of 1946 he was executed and hanged in the Plaza Murillo next to Villarroel.

“July 12th: A manifesto from this day, issued by a Plenary Assembly of the University — that is, composed of professors and students and held under the chair of the Rector — indicates the mood of those who lived through those days.

“July 13th: The government brings in 7,000 soldiers from different parts of the country to concentrate them in La Paz. Surveillance increases significantly. All strategic points are militarily occupied. Military patrols roam the streets. A virtual curfew is established in the city. The unrest is subsiding, and it appears the government is beginning to gain control of the situation.

“July 14th: A manifesto from the workers grouped in the Bolivian Workers’ Confederation begins circulating in factories and working-class neighbourhoods. This manifesto states in one of its paragraphs: ‘Upon seizing power, Villarroel promised the peasantry agrarian reform and the return of their lands. He convened an Indigenous Congress with all the pomp and circumstance commonly used by Nazism, only to later massacre the peasants in the most brutal manner at Las Canchas. Villarroel, supported by the ‘Marshal Santa Cruz’ lodge and his movementist lackeys, promised to nationalise the mines and railways, to increase wages, and raise the standard of living of the working classes in general. What have we seen of all this to the present? ... **Betrayal in every way.** The Villarroel regime, comrades, like every Nazi regime, is a sworn enemy of proletarian unionism, which is why it has sought to destroy it in Bolivia, fostering a General Confederation of Workers, a sham organisation to replace the authentic one affiliated with CTAL [Confederation of Workers of Latin America], led by Comrade Donato Flores Girona; it has bribed the leaders of the miners’ unions and certain local unions with money, cheap houses, courtesy visits, and other symbolic gestures and gifts of no consequence to the revolutionary movement of the working class as a whole. This was with the sole purpose of having docile leaders at its service, tasked with halting the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against Nazi-fascist oppression.

“Faced with this horrifying state of affairs, we emphasize that the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés has honourably upheld the tripartite pact of university students, workers, and teachers in the face of the recent railway strike, and now, in this moment of anguish for the entire nation, it hopes that the workers of Bolivia will demonstrate, through their material support, that they too are animated by the same sentiment of affection and solidarity with the student body. Comrade workers: It is therefore necessary to put an end once and for all to the state of affairs prevailing in the country. We know that you, who constitute the grassroots, are outraged by the criminals and that you wish to break the fence of security that Nazi-fascism has placed around you by buying off the leadership of the main local unions. Comrades: To join the strike of teachers, workers, and students throughout the republic, you need to disavow the treacherous leadership of your unions and proceed to stand in solidarity with the just national liberation movement that we have initiated in the wake of the latest massacre of children, which will only end with the total expulsion of the accursed Nazi-fascism from our homeland. Death to the tyrants! Long live democratic Bolivia!

“July 15th: On this day, 37 university shock groups are definitively organised. They possess very few revolvers. But the disarmament of the police and traffic officers patrolling the streets, heavily armed with automatic weapons, is ordered. Thousands of tricks are put to use in arming the people. Almost all day and night, throughout the neighbourhoods of La Paz, robberies against government agents take place, and similarly, the arming of the university and workers’ action groups is being carried out. Generally, the operation is carried out in the following way: a child approaches the guards to ask something. Captured by the presence of children, the attention of the man or the patrol was suddenly drawn by the presence of 10 or 15 men who, in a matter of moments, disarmed the astonished supporters of the dictatorship. These weapons are immediately capitalised for the resistance. This is how the first light machine guns and the first submachine guns were obtained. For those who kept asking in Argentina, ‘And where did the revolutionaries get the weapons?’... revealing in that question the poisonous suspicion of involvement from outside the people or from Bolivia itself, let this account serve as an answer. Later, we will expand on our response by narrating how the people acquired, paying for them with their blood, the weapons with which they put an end to the Villarroel dictatorship.

“July 16th: University students call on the people to demonstrate, as they do every year, despite government prohibitions. The Bolivian University Federation prohibits the demonstration to

avoid another massacre. Shock troops decide to hold it despite the government and the directives of their centres. The government prohibits all public gatherings and orders the closure of all businesses from 8:00 PM onwards. Patrols in armoured cars and tanks roam the city throughout the night.

“July 17th: The city awakens to news that polarises its unease: the University has been raided, chemistry and physics labs have been destroyed, and books burned. An Argentine printing worker arrives at the University with several comrades, carrying a blackboard which they hang at the entrance and read: ‘The hoof of Nazi-fascism passed through here.’ University students and workers shake hands. The students placed a banner in front of Juan José Pérez’s bust, specifically accusing the attackers by their first and last names. The students resolve to occupy the University to protect it from further attacks. They have some weapons and are procuring more. The workers, who have witnessed the murder of students and labourers in the streets, who have seen the dictatorship in all its brutality, suppressing freedom of expression for political parties and union leaders, believe the moment has arrived and declare a general strike. The proletariat’s defensive forces are now aligning against the government. No one can now prevent the dictatorship’s overthrow. While all this is happening, the government rushes to declare that the attack on the University is the work of the students themselves. Hinojosa asserts this in his newspapers, *La Noche* and *Cumbres*. Both will cease publication from that day forward, as the general strike will silence their lies. The radio broadcasts communiqués to the same effect. But confirmation of the robbery and official responsibility came this time from the government itself; the MNR [Revolutionary Nationalist Movement] expelled Zuazo Cuenca³⁹ from its ranks for attacking Bolivian culture by leading the group that stormed the University.’ The entire structure erected by the government and its spokespeople to conceal the truth collapsed spectacularly. The armed struggle began that very night in the form of isolated clashes between patrols.

“July 18th: The Workers’ Union Federation [FOS] declares a strike starting at the first minute of this day. But barely a few hours into the day, it can already be said that the strike is a success and that the order has been complied with by the workers. At 12:01 a.m., the linotype typists, typesetters, and other printing personnel of all newspapers withdraw. Including, of course, those of the government. Pickets of workers stationed around the factories swell their ranks with strikers, ready for action. The workers attack and disarm the military and police patrols that roam the workplaces. In the markets, patrols of workers and students stand guard to prevent the entry or exit of food except under the strict control of the strike committees. Clashes become widespread. Official surprise at the movement knows no bounds. There was no belief in the participation of the workers. All government propaganda was aimed at preventing the working class from taking to the streets in a state of struggle. They had the experience of all the previous coups that had failed precisely because of workers’ inaction. In all those previous attempts, the struggle was confined to the fight between the conspirators and the government forces, without any participation from the working masses. The government forces, therefore, saw this absence as the guarantee of their stability and the continuation of the dictatorship. For the first time, on July 18th, the working classes joined the opposition and insurrectional action. Despite all the difficulties, the call from the FOS was heard by the workers. The general strike united students and workers in an indestructible alliance.

“By mid-morning, fighting was taking place throughout the city. Pickets of workers and students, unarmed or with only a few weapons, engaged in combat with the government forces. Many insurgents fell. A demonstration headed to seize the Camacho Market and *Radio El Cóndor*. Both premises were taken. The recapture of these places by government forces resulted in a horrific massacre. Students broadcasting on *Radio El Cóndor* were machine-gunned right in front of the microphones. All the occupants were annihilated. A similar thing happened at the Camacho Market, located near the radio station. Women, children, and workers were swept away with heavy machinery. An unverified number of dead and wounded, estimated by some at over 300, lay scattered in the streets. All the bodies were seized by the police and disappeared. Later, after the triumph of the

Editorial CEHUS

39 It refers to **Hernán Siles Zuazo** (1913–1996). Lawyer and historical leader of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR). He participated in the insurrection of July 1946 that overthrew Gualberto Villarroel. When in April 1952, the workers’ insurrection took place that handed power to the MNR, he assumed the vice-presidency under Víctor Paz Estenssoro. He was president of Bolivia between 1956 and 1960.

insurrection, mass graves began to appear in various locations near La Paz, where the overthrown government buried these first victims of the popular uprising. Many traffic motorcycles and numerous municipal vehicles were set on fire by the people. The mayor, now the strongman of the regime, gathers the police prisoners and announces that they will be executed as a 'just punishment'.

"In the working-class neighbourhood of San Pedro, the people attacked traffic, and the first barricades appeared. The fighting began at two in the afternoon and lasted until midnight. Sheltered in makeshift trenches, the workers and a few students who had managed to reach the area fought the military forces and heavily armed agents with stones. Max Toledo, head of the Gestapo, directed the fight. Women and children carried stones, water, and food for the workers in action. It was an unequal struggle, but one sustained heroically by the people. The stones kept the bullets at bay. But at night, retreat became necessary as the army mortars fired their first volleys. The impunity of killing from a distance had momentarily tipped the scales in favour of the government forces. Carrying their wounded and dead, the workers barricaded themselves inside their neighbourhood."

"While this was happening in San Pedro, shootings broke out at the University. Army troops attempted to seize the building, while the students fiercely defended it. At 11:00 p.m., the Apostolic Nuncio arrived and, on behalf of the diplomatic corps, secured a truce. In accordance with this agreement, the government allowed the students to leave the house of studies, carrying their personal weapons (not those taken from the army and police, which were to be returned) and guaranteeing that all prisoners would be released. The government also promised to withdraw its troops from the city streets and prohibit firing on the people. Of course, it did not keep its promises. And, of course, the people knew how to punish this official lack of seriousness.

July 19th: The events of the previous day swayed those who were still hesitating. An unwavering resolve swept all of La Paz through the avenues of the city centre. Impressive crowds gather from all four corners of the city and spontaneously march toward the heart of the city. The regular troops deploy in an attack formation. A wind of tragedy blows across the banners of the demonstrators. Fifty thousand souls manage to coalesce in a single instant. As if drawn by a magnet, they head toward Plaza Karillo to demand that the president halt the killings and for the resignation of those responsible for the events of the previous days. The column is led by women and children. It stretches for at least fifteen city blocks. The crowd begins to flow into the plaza. The troops occupy strategic positions and keep their weapons ready. Suddenly, from the Military Circle and the *Radio Illimani* building, shots are fired into the crowd. At first, rifles are used. Very soon, the stammering of machine guns litters the entire plaza with corpses. The crowd cannot retreat. Nor does it want to retreat. As in Spain during the unforgettable days of the Montaña Barracks or Montjuïc, the people demonstrate that they know how to die with dignity. There is no more fear. Not even screams. The machine-gunned crowd swarms in front of the palace as its members fall, cut down by the dozens and hundreds. Minister Pinto⁴⁰ appears on the balcony, and a word rises like a challenge from the blood-soaked streets: MURDERER! Pinto shouts, ordering a cease-fire. The machine guns fall silent and contemplate their work. Carrying the dead and the wounded, the crowd silently makes its way to the embassy district to display their dead and request that they be kept there until they can be given a proper burial. This is because those who died the previous day disappeared without being able to receive the final honours. The doors of all the embassies closed in response to the popular request. The dead people are not received there. Soon, however, those same doors will open to shelter the murderers of women and children, workers and students.

"Mrs María Teresa Solari Ormachea⁴¹ offers her house as a place to lay some of the fallen. Meanwhile, the police hastily seize the corpses still in the hands of the crowd. Demonstrators return to the slums carrying their blood-soaked banners, which they bear as an irrefutable accusation against the regime; the corpses of children and women, who, having led the column, have fallen in the greatest numbers that day.

40 **Celestino Pinto** was one of the police officers who actively acted in the insurrection of July 1946, collaborating with the civilian sectors that overthrew Villarroel and participating in the repression.

41 **María Teresa Solari Ormachea**, teacher, writer and poet. Catholic conservative, fervent anti-communist. She lived in the "Women's Civic Union" and joined the Antifascist Democratic Front. During the insurrection of 1946 she was an interlocutor with military sectors and the Minister of Defence Celestino Pinto.

“Assaulting the police and the military becomes a rallying cry. In every street, there is an ambush waiting for them. And each insurgent begins to win, through their actions, their own rifle or their own machine gun. By this point, the government, too, is nothing but a corpse.”

“On July 20th, the Revolutionary Workers’ Committee issued the following manifesto: ‘The government has changed. The butcher of the students and the people (Nogales) has been replaced by Francisco Barrero, the butcher of 1944 in Oruro. The other new ministers are nothing more than the indirect perpetrators of the litany of massacres that have occurred since the Nazi-fascist regime seized power. Consequently, there has been no change of government, but rather a change of beasts within the same pack: the military clique. The people are not interested in this; they firmly desire a total change of the political regime. It is not enough for the men of the MNR to (apparently) relinquish control of the helm of the state. They yearn for the government to be handed over to men who respect human dignity, who possess competence and decency, who, with strong proletarian roots, will give the people more bread, a better life, and the right to free unionisation; that the rifles, machine guns, and tanks be taken to the borders. The proletarian people, and with them the entire Bolivian people, are tired and disgusted with the military caste that has ruled the country with bullets since 1936, when Toro,⁴² the perpetrator of the massacre of Picuiba, seized power. They desire a government of the people and for the people, one that restores guarantees and the right to think and live freely. For all these reasons, the Revolutionary Workers’ Committee calls on the people of Bolivia not to be deceived by the supposed change of government. The blood of hundreds of workers, students, women, and children who have been murdered cries out for vengeance. The murderous bullets of the ferocious Villarroel will not silence their impulse to overthrow the barbaric hordes of the palace. All the people of La Paz, grave of tyrants and cradle of liberty, must unite to destroy, down to its last vestiges, the barbaric bourgeois regime that still, with unspeakable shamelessness, intends to continue plundering our country. Until this happens, the workers and students, the entire people of Bolivia, which thinks like us, must continue in this sacred struggle. The general strike will overthrow the government, supported by the people who must arm themselves by destroying the centres of resistance of the common enemy. Long live the general strike! Direct mass action to overthrow the fascist barbarians! The class struggle has reached its peak: it is urgent to change the social structure of the country; no more governments subservient to international capitalism!’

“La Paz, July 20, 1945, **Revolutionary Workers Committee.**”

This is how the popular movement defeated Villarroel on July 21st after a tremendous struggle with hundreds of deaths, mostly workers, liquidating the government in a not very “imperialist” manner: they were hanged in La Paz’s most important square.

We have deemed it essential to quote at length the only book more or less documented on the insurrection against Villarroel, that of Esteban Rey,⁴³ because both *Octubre* and GCI have harshly criticised our sister party in Bolivia for having fully participated in the insurrection and for having prevented, through the influence our militants had in the mines, the mining proletariat from coming to Villarroel’s defence. We believe that our sister party’s attitude was entirely correct, since liquidating Villarroel’s totalitarian regime through a popular revolution, as was the case on 21 July, is a highly progressive step for the development of the class struggle in Bolivia and the first task to be accomplished in the process of the revolution in Bolivia. That is, to open a democratic period of genuine democratic freedoms, secured by the pressure of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie, which would allow for a frank and resolute confrontation between the various Bolivian classes. **This is precisely what was achieved thanks to the popular uprising of 21 July, the most democratic period in Bolivian history, which allowed our own comrades to participate in parliament.**

42 **David Toro Ruilova** (1898–1977). Bolivian military man, participant of the Chaco War. He led the repression against oil workers in 1934 in what was called the Picuiba massacre. He carried out a coup by proclaiming himself president of Bolivia between 1936 and 1937 in the so-called “Socialist Military Government”. He adopted some partial anti-imperialist measures such as the nationalisation of Standard Oil.

43 It refers to the book *En Bolivia la revolución recién comienza* [In Bolivia the revolution has just begun], Buenos Aires, La Vanguardia, 1947, by Esteban Rey (1915–2003).

GCI and *Octubre* give slight indications – very veiled, since GCI never draws a consistent political conclusion – that it was necessary to support the mining proletariat and lead them in the defence of Villarroel. This stance would have amounted to nothing less than bowing down to the most politically backward sector of the Bolivian proletariat and people at that time, the mining proletariat, since they had not understood or even considered the need to overthrow Villarroel to inaugurate a period of democratic freedoms in Bolivia. This left them lagging behind their class brothers and the sectors of the petty bourgeoisie who had been forced by circumstances – that is, by the process of class struggle – to undertake this gigantic bourgeois democratic task.

What is true in GCI's opinion is that US imperialism welcomed the fall of Villarroel's government and had watched with glee the various coups d'état orchestrated by the highest echelons of the army and air force – echelons linked to the Bolivian exploiters and imperialism – against Villarroel. GCI generalises this fact, forgetting that the first law of a dialectical materialist is not to isolate a characteristic of a phenomenon, but to connect it to all the other characteristics in their connections and interdependencies, indicating what is essential from what is random and indicating when the random becomes fundamental. The essential element in the insurrection against Villarroel is the colossal popular mobilisation that overflows and surpasses the framework and control that US imperialism itself might have tried to impose, if indeed US imperialism foresaw and instigated the coup, which we doubt. The essential element of the insurrection is the free determination and free initiative of the masses, and the reason why these masses fight, since the hundreds of workers who died in their struggle against Villarroel did not die to serve US imperialism, but rather to achieve better living conditions for themselves and their children, and democratic freedoms for the people. It is characteristic of GCI to fail to grasp the contradictory nature of any phenomenon and to distinguish the essential from the accessory. GCI isolates the friction between the Villarroel government and US imperialism from the reactionary and totalitarian character of this government, believing, like *Octubre*, that if it has frictions with US imperialism, it ceases to be totalitarian and reactionary. On the contrary, GCI separates and isolates the revolutionary, progressive, extraordinarily progressive character of the movement that overthrew Villarroel, driven by the free initiative of the masses, from the sympathy with which US imperialism viewed his downfall. Because of this secondary sympathy from US imperialism, GCI labels the mass movement as reactionary. This is the same case as the February 1917 revolution in Russia, which was also viewed with enormous sympathy by Germany. Or the case of Franco, who has or had friction with British, French, and US imperialism, despite his well-defined character.

But this is not all, since GCI's mistake or error in categorising the insurrection against Villarroel fails to reveal the social basis of this profound and capital error. The Villarroel government was the staunchest ally the Peronist government had in all of Latin America. The close ties between the Argentine military government and the Bolivian military coup were no secret. Peronist newspapers labelled the insurrection against Villarroel as a coup by US imperialism against a genuinely “nationalist” government, just like GCI and *Octubre*.

e) The contradiction of GCI in the characterisation of Latin American mobilisations

GCI believes that the most intense revolutionary mass mobilisation in Latin America, in this post-war period, was the Peronist one: the Peronist spokesmen think the same!

A brutal contradiction arises from this statement. According to its last plenary session, three months ago, the GCI has 26 members and around 10 industrial workers; as they confessed in 1948, they had fewer than 29 members (*Discussion Bulletin on GCI-GOM-UOR Unification*, No. 1). All this – that is, all this organisational and numerical meanness, despite their claim that their positions are the only correct ones in all of Latin America – has penetrated and lived to the beat of the Argentine proletariat, and that this has carried out the most colossal revolutionary mobilisation in Latin America. The Bolivian POR, with its completely false characterisation of the insurrection against Villarroel, since it participated, according to its own comrades, not in a revolutionary but a “pro-imperialist” mobilisation, is one of the Trotskyist groups throughout the world that has been most capable of dragging the masses. If we fail to overcome

that classic Argentine bravado – a reflection of a petty bourgeoisie and a proletariat influenced by it, that believes itself superior to its poorer brothers in the Americas because of the country’s greater capitalist development – is what leads to such outrageous statements, we would conclude that for our parties to transform from small groups, like the Bolivian POR before the July uprising and like the GCI is and continues to be, into large mass parties, participation in “pro-imperialist” movements is necessary, not “revolutionary” ones. The Bolivian POR transformed into a large mass movement thanks to its intervention in the July uprising, while GCI remains a minuscule group despite all its interventions “in the colossal revolutionary mobilisations of Peronism...”

Chapter IV

Our Program

a) Federation of States or a single Latin American state?

GCI, referring to us, says:

“They reject the national task of the struggle for a great Latin American state, and instead consider each Latin American country separately.

“The struggle for this program is subject to the program and methods of the proletariat’s class struggle, the only possible way to resolve bourgeois tasks under the conditions of imperialism and the unification of Latin America into a single National State, a task achievable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat and the establishment of the United Socialist Soviet States of Latin America” (GCI Letter to the IS, already cited).

The contradiction in the position of GCI is evident and demonstrates once again the ideological servility of this group, since it tends to reconcile in one phrase its position – which, of course, is that of *Octubre!* – with the slogan of the *Transitional Program*, defended by Trotsky. It is obvious, even to a school-child, that a federation of states, as proposed by our *Transitional Program*, is not the same as what is proposed by GCI and *Octubre*, one single large National State. But for GCI, it is indeed the same thing, since it starts from a premise: what Trotsky thinks is our thinking, and our thinking is Trotsky’s. The curious thing about GCI is that it attacks us and not Trotsky, when all we do is defend the classic positions of Trotskyism regarding the program in Latin America. No one denies GCI the right to disagree with Trotsky on any point, and even on some point of the *Transitional Program*, but what must be pointed out as a polemical disloyalty is hiding the true thinking: the struggle for a single state against federation, which we defend, behind the classic formula of Trotskyism, which is federation.

It is correct to say that imperialism has brought several problems to the category of common and fundamental to all Latin American countries; we could add, to colonial countries of the world, but this does not prevent the existence of tremendous differences in economic development between the various Latin American and colonial countries. Not only are there economic differences among Latin American peoples, but rather cultural, linguistic, and racial differences of fundamental importance. All these differences prevent the Latin American peoples from being united, by their own will, in a single “great Latin American State.” It is utter madness to believe that the Brazilian people, with an economy, culture, language, and race entirely different from those of Argentina and Uruguay, for example, would agree to integrate into a single great Latin American state, as GCI desires. The Brazilian people, like the Argentinians, the Uruguayans, and all the Latin American peoples, will agree to liberate themselves from imperialist exploitation, from the landowners, and from the bourgeoisie, and that is what unites them and what compels the unification of all the Latin American peoples in a gigantic federation.

“It is inaccurate to say that this struggle for a Latin American federation is a struggle for the structuring of a national market across all of Latin America; it is a struggle against imperialism,

since the economic union of Latin America destroys its dependence on imperialism” (*Draft Political Resolution*, already cited).

With complete clarity, from this quote of ours, it is evident, as we have pointed out, that the revolution throughout Latin America is unified because it has a principal enemy: imperialism, primarily US imperialism. However, unity for the struggle and subsequently for the harmonious development of the Latin American economy does not mean that we should forget the profound differences among the Latin American peoples, differences that we respect, accepting the emergence of as many nation-states as the people desire, whether they are equal to, larger than, or smaller than those currently existing. For us, the Leninist Bolsheviks, this is the meaning of the much-touted national self-determination, which the GCI seems to ignore – like so many other teachings of Bolshevism – and which, with Olympian contempt for it, seeks to force the Latin American peoples, whether they agree or not, to become part of a single, great Latin American state. This contempt has a firm class basis; it is a reflection of the most cherished aspirations of the Argentine bourgeoisie, which, through its ideologue Bunge,⁴⁴ has expressed its desire to create a great South American nation-state, which would allow the national bourgeoisie to monopolise the market over much weaker bourgeoisies. This very veiled aspiration of the national bourgeoisie, which has found its expression in Bunge’s timid theory, is reflected in the detriment of the Argentine petty bourgeoisie and the proletarian sectors influenced by it. GCI does nothing more than transmit this idea from the petty-bourgeois sectors of the Argentine proletariat to our ranks. We will have the opportunity to address the connection between this theory of the great national state of the Argentine bourgeoisie and British imperialism later.

b) The indigenous problem

GCI’s contempt for national self-determination is even more evident in its complete disregard for and neglect of the indigenous problem, along with the Bolivian section. The PSR and we have stated:

“Independently of the agrarian problem, the indigenous problem exists in some Latin American countries. We have an obligation to give due importance to the indigenous problem, that is, to the problem of the majority (or minority, we now add) of the population in some countries whose language and customs are entirely different from the official language or customs. Our sections must immediately dedicate themselves to studying this serious and decisive problem to see what programmatic importance it has.”

We expressed the same view in our *Latin American Theses*.⁴⁵

c) The struggle against imperialism

Faced with the subjugation of Latin American countries to imperialism, the POR has proposed a comprehensive strategic line: “breaking of all pacts that bind them economically and politically to imperialism,” with its immediate tactical applications: “Breaking of the Rio de Janeiro Pact”, “Withdrawal from the Pan-American Union”, “Breaking of the Anglo-Argentine trade agreement”. GCI has never, in its program of concrete struggle or in any of its articles as a circumstantial phrase, proposed strategic or tactical solutions like ours.

The most important programmatic solution for the GCI at this time is expressed on page 45 of the Internal Bulletin and on the last page of its newspaper, *Voz Proletaria*:

“To the imperialist policy of preparing for war and subjugating Latin American countries, let us oppose the program of permanent revolution.”

44 **Alejandro Ernesto Bunge** (1880–1943), was an Argentine economist and bourgeois ideologue, he was a reference point of industrialism and economic nationalism. He defended the creation of a large South American economic space under the hegemony of the Argentine bourgeoisie, presented as a project of regional integration.

45 *Ibid.*, note 21.

This is not a phrase thrown out at random in just any article; on the contrary, it is the entire concrete program of GCI for this moment of war preparation that Latin America is experiencing. Permanent revolution as a concrete program? The most general and abstract theory for understanding the character of revolution in our time, transformed by GCI's ignorance and political abstentionism into an immediate political task, a slogan!

But it is not only the lack of the most basic political knowledge that led GCI to such an abstract and ridiculous programmatic approach, but something much more important. GCI, which has powerful magnifying glasses to see the pettiest clashes between imperialism and the Perón government and its ilk, is completely [...]

[Archival material ends here.]