



Nahuel Moreno

**Organisational
Issues**

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Foreword

On 16 July 1984 Comrade Nahuel Moreno was invited by the Socialist Youth of MAS to give a talk about organisational issues of the revolutionary party. The text that follows is the corrected transcript.

This work was published in 1988, with an appendix with a selection of quotes from “Guidelines on the Organisational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work”, of the third congress of the Third International, which we have included. It was reissued in 2004, by Izquierda Socialista (Socialist Left).

In 2017, Cehus publishing house published it again, along with the first reissue since 1943 of *The Party*, also by Nahuel Moreno (available at www.nahuelmoreno.org) and a selection of excerpts from *What Is to Be Done?* by Lenin.

In his talk, Moreno made a quick tour of the theory and history of the revolutionary workers’ organisation and its importance, from Marx to the setback caused by the Stalinist bureaucracy. In the second part, he referred exhaustively to the questions of the organisational building of the party, the importance of teams, hierarchical structures and the newspaper, among other aspects. He also approached the issues related to recruitment and its difficulties in a practical and fairly detailed manner. He warned about sectarian traits and how to combat them, as well as the risks of falling into opportunism.

All notes are from the editor.

The editors

April 2021

How to organise ourselves in the new revolutionary situation?

At the last meeting of the National Committee (NC), we analysed the new revolutionary political situation that is opening in our country since the great wave of strikes in June and we voted a series of resolutions to suit the party activity and organisation to this new situation. There is a danger that the adopted resolutions be construed as a formal change of the organisational structure of the party and not for what it truly should be: the adaptation of the organisational forms of the party to a new, revolutionary stage, of intense agitation on the workers' and mass movement that will allow us to qualitatively move forward in our organic embedding in our work, study and housing places. In other words, a new stage in which we aim to take advantage of the favourable objective conditions and the progress we achieved in the recent past to build thousands of teams, circles or party groups in companies, universities, schools and working-class and popular neighbourhoods.

To avoid as far as possible that this true revolution *of party activity* be interpreted as an administrative or bureaucratic "revolution" of our current organisational structures, we need to give the resolutions of the last NC a theoretical and political framework. Such is the purpose of this document.

Chapter I

Theory and history of the workers' revolutionary organisation

The importance of the organisation

In general, the issue of organisation seems something secondary, one that we tend to belittle, that it pales compared to other issues, either “philosophical” (as dialectic or the theory of alienation), or exciting discussions on the economic or political situation (What happens with the imperialist economy? Is or isn't there a revolutionary situation in Argentina or Brazil? “Pure” anti-bureaucratic slates or slates for the defeat the union bureaucrat? And so on). However, the organisational issue is central, to some extent, to the Marxist revolutionary activity. The program and policies answer the question: What are the tasks, objectives or slogans that mobilise the masses towards the socialist revolution today? Instead, the organisational issue answers the questions: What organisation does the mass movement adopt today to struggle? With what organisation will the working class take and exercise power? How does the party which intends to lead the struggle, revolution and workers' power organise at each stage of the class struggle?

The organisational issue is crucial to such an extent that, contrary to what many believe, there were not two but three great leaders of the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik Party. Next to Lenin and Trotsky was Sverdlov,¹ the secretary-general, the organiser of the Bolshevik Party. Yakob Mikhailovich Sverdlov isn't remembered by any treatise on economics, philosophy or Marxist politics. No one is interested in a collection of his complete works — if it exists. But he was the most loved, most respected man of the Bolshevik Party. He was so great he died, he was replaced by four of the top Bolshevik leaders, and the four failed: they could not handle the task.

Lenin, who did not use demagoguery or was prone to praise, defined him, in a speech at his funeral as the “proletarian leader who did more than anybody to organise the working class and to ensure victory” (V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 29, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 95). And in his memorial speech, delivered on 18 March 1919 he clarified the why of these words:

“People who judge by what they see on the surface [...] consider the most striking feature of our revolution to be the determined and relentlessly firm way it has dealt with the exploiters and the enemies of the working people. There is no doubt that without this, without revolutionary violence, the proletariat could not have triumphed. Nor can there be any doubt that revolutionary violence was a necessary and legitimate weapon of the revolution only at definite stages of its development, only under definite and special conditions, and that *a far more profound and permanent feature of this revolution and condition of its victory was, and remains, the organisation of the proletarian masses, the organisation of the working people. And it is this organisation of millions of working people that constitutes the best stimulant for the revolution, its deepest source of victory*” (Ibid, p. 89, highlight by NM).

¹ **Yakob Mikhailovich Sverdlov** (1885-1919). He was instrumental in organising the seizure of power in October 1917. He died in the Spanish flu epidemic at the age of 34.

For Lenin, the organisation is a “*far more profound and permanent feature*” of the revolution than revolutionary violence itself. That is, at a pole there is action, movement, the struggle, the spontaneity of the masses. At the other pole there is the organisation, which structures, provides continuity, permanency to these actions or mobilisations. Without great struggles and mobilisations there is no revolution. But neither is there one without organisation: the struggles dissolve; the heroic actions of the masses are lost...

It is so much so that the party doesn't handle exclusively slogans calling to the struggle and setting a goal for it, but it also puts forth organisational slogans. Now, for example, we agitate the objective of the struggle: wages. We call for a particular form or method of struggle: the general strike; we also agitate how to organise that struggle: mass assemblies in the factories, election of delegates, strike pickets, etc.

The issue of the organisation is very difficult, very complex because it contains in itself a contradiction, which sometimes becomes acute. Any organisation or structure is conservative, precisely because it tends to prevent what exists from disappearing, from being destroyed. But at the same time, the working class adopts or needs revolutionary organisations to fight and defeat the bourgeoisie, to destroy the capitalist system.

Argentine workers, for example, won large and powerful trade unions, with which, for many years, until the crisis made it impossible, only in the last decade, they achieved the goal of defending their living standards. But this organisation had and has tremendous conservative weight in the Argentine proletariat, which allows elements of the extreme right, the Peronist bureaucracy, to be at its head and at the moment the Argentine workers do not pose at all the need for revolutionary leadership in the unions or, even less, a revolutionary workers' party.

The organisational issue is so difficult precisely because of this contradiction. If indeed a revolutionary party will be the leadership of the mass movement, it becomes the problem of problems: What organic relationship to establish between the party and the masses?

The Soviets are an organisational form of the mass movement. They rule with a good or bad political line. The political line is very important but without the soviets, it would not have been possible to take power, regardless of how good the Bolsheviks political line was. They are the army that mobilises in an organised way the masses to take power and rule. But, in turn, there is the party, which is the General Staff of this army, which gathers the most militant and conscious vanguard. And this raises a second problem: What organisational form has to have the party to lead and have an increasingly close relationship with the Soviets and the masses that are in them?

The first problem, the organisation of the masses, is somewhat simpler than the second. The party cannot invent or impose organisational forms on the masses. The masses themselves create them. The great art of the party is to discover them when the first symptoms appear and agitate for them to become generalised. Or, if they don't appear, patiently advise the masses of some organisational form according to the situation and historical experience. Thus, we could raise the slogan of coordinating committees in 1975, relying on the historical experience of inter-factories 20 years earlier. Or today, to raise the slogan of militias of the COB and the peasant Federation in Bolivia, and that both mass organisations take power, drawing on the lessons of the 1952 revolution.

The problem of the organisation of the party, however, is in our hands. The masses can do wonders of heroism and forge magnificent revolutionary organisations to seize power. But if we don't manage to get right our organisational form, that it will allow us to build the General Staff of those struggles and organisations, if we don't manage to firmly organise, to structure with iron bonds our influence and the sympathy that our political line and program awaken among the masses, we and the revolution are lost. Look at the example of Bolivia: plenty revolutionary struggle; plenty of mass organisation to seize and exercise power; plenty of program... but lacking the party as an organic structure with its roots firmly planted in the heart of the revolutionary masses. That is the great problem, of life and death, to be solved in Bolivia. And it also is in Argentina, although we start from a qualitatively superior situation of our party and a slower revolutionary pace of objective reality.

The change in the mass organisations

The workers' and mass movement permanently changes its organisational forms. Some changes have to do with broad historical stages and express the structural transformations of the working class. For example, unions by trade reflected a section of the working class, specialised and closer in their social and productive life to the craft sector than to the modern highly concentrated industrial working class. Trade unions by industry reflect the latter.

On the other hand, some changes have to do with the specific situation of the class struggle. If there is a retreat of the working class, this takes refuge in defensive organisations, the unions. In situations of extreme defeat, it can get to organise itself even in provident societies or cooperatives. But if we are experiencing a revolutionary upsurge, sooner or later organisational forms of power appear, such as the Russian Soviets, the Chilean "industrial belts", or the unions themselves change character transforming themselves into bodies of power, as the Bolivian COB. In parallel, the class organises militias.

We have also seen revolutions of the peasantry, such as the Chinese, Vietnamese and Cuban, where different mass organisations emerged: the guerrilla armies.

The same happens in a factory. Usually, the working class [in Argentina] is organised through the Internal Commission and the delegates committee.² But when there is great internal repression, either from the bosses or the bureaucracy, sometimes they even get to organise through football matches. When there is no struggle, assemblies are held very rarely, or not at all. But when there is a struggle, or it is getting prepared, the assembly becomes the primary organisational tool for all workers. If they go out on strike, the strike committee appears which is very often different from the legal and permanent leadership: the recognised delegates. Picketing strikers also appear and, as it now happens in our country, "soup kitchens" which are a combination of picketing with rank-and-file assembly.

It is impossible to even try to exhaust the enormous wealth of organisational forms that have been adopted and are being adopted by the labour and mass movement through time. But what it is proved is that contrary to the assertions of the bureaucracy of all kinds — from the-Peronist union bureaucracy to the CP — the working class isn't straitjacketed in a fixed organisational form (bureaucratic unions for Miguel,³ "bureaucratic" soviets for Andropov),⁴ but itself changes its organisational forms according to the changes in the stages of the class struggle and the new needs arising.

Change in the organisation of the revolutionary socialist party

It has become a fetish, especially by Stalinism, that the revolutionary socialist form of organisation is one, fixed and immutable: the organisation through small cells. We, poor Trotskyists, who have survived for decades isolated, seeing the years pass by and our organisation remaining small, have fallen victim to this fetish. We have not yet finished breaking with it. We continue to believe that revolutionary socialism is a form of a permanent organisation, always equal to itself.

Actually, it is the opposite. The revolutionary socialist party is hard programmatically and in the principles. But for Marxism, there is nothing rigid or definitive. Even less can be the party of the

2 In Argentinian labour legislation since the 1940s enterprise or workplace committees are called **internal commissions**. In enterprises with a large number of workers, the workers elect their delegates and these form the **delegates committee**; then the **delegates committee** elect a smaller **internal commission**.

3 **Lorenzo Miguel** (1927-2002) was one of the historic chiefs of the Peronist trade union bureaucracy. Head of the powerful metalworkers union (UOM) since 1970. During the government of Isabel Peron, he linked with Jose Lopez Rega to give birth to the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance or Triple-A a death squad that appeared on the scene in 1973. After the coup against Isabel Peron, he was sent to prison, but his close relationship with Junta member Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera protected him.

4 **Yuri Andropov** (1914–1984) was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from November 1982 until his death 15 months later.

permanent revolution. So, the party is extremely flexible when it comes to turning the program and principles into strategies, tactics, slogans and concrete policies to influence the present situation in the class struggle. Whenever there is a change in objective reality, the party changes its slogans, its policies, its tactics and strategies ... and also its organisational forms. This is the true essence of the revolutionary socialist form of organisation: change, adapting to the reality of the class struggle and the tasks and objectives that the party adopts at each stage.

Changes in the organisational form of the party are determined by the combination of two main factors: the state of the class struggle and the state or degree of development of the party itself.

Clearly, the party's organisational structure cannot be the same in a stage of victory of the counter-revolution under a fascist or semi-fascist regime, as in a revolutionary stage. The first would be ultra-clandestine, of small cells of ultra-vanguard, where only militants previously tested and firmly entrenched in the party could participate. The latter would be open, legal, with numerous meetings if necessary, where comrades who have recently approached the party would participate and complete their recruitment process within the organisational structure of the party.

Beyond these broad-brush examples, within the same stage, the party structure will have to be adapted to other processes of objective, social type. It will not be the same organisational form if sectors of the mass movement are quickly turning towards the left or, as it often happens in the first stage of the revolution, this doesn't happen and the masses massively suffer the "democratic" high and flock towards the reformist parties. In the first case, the party shall take an appropriate organisational form to organise around itself those sectors of the masses; in the second, despite the revolutionary situation, it must maintain the structure of the "vanguard party", i.e., of militants who, to a greater or lesser extent, have already defined they will devote an important part of their lives to revolutionary militancy.

Not to dwell on it, the party structure must be adapted to national characteristics, and more specifically to the exploited classes. Obviously, it cannot be the same to take part in the revolutionary process in Nicaragua, as in Argentina. In Nicaragua, there were virtually no unions under Somoza. The unions appeared *en masse* after his fall. The revolutionary struggle developed through a combination of war between armies and urban insurrections organised geographically, by neighbourhoods. Clearly, revolutionary socialism had to adapt its organisation to these national characteristics. Hence the Simon Bolivar Brigade and, if there had there been a party in Nicaragua, it should have been organised around the neighbourhoods.

In Argentina, it is totally different. The classical mass organisations are the unions for almost a century. Within them, the main organisations in the last 40 years are the Internal Commission and the delegates committee. The party is organised accordingly: groups per company to fight for the leadership of these organisations of the masses.

Finally, the party in exceptional circumstances for us, as it is the participation in bourgeois electoral processes, sometimes must adopt an organisational form of geographical and neighbourhood type and even submit to the background, at times, the classical structural integration of its organisms (by company or place of study, over and above the neighbourhoods).

However, the organisational question becomes qualitatively more complex because it is also influenced by the second factor: the party itself. Because when we consider a task or objective for the stage, we not only answer the question: What is happening in the class struggle? But we also answer: What party, what human resources — leadership, middle cadres and militants — do we have to act on it?

Very schematically, we can note three stages in the development of a party: the first founding core, often a few individuals; the party of propaganda which has already done its stage of cadre accumulation and has some hundreds of them; the party with mass influence. A developed revolutionary situation, with breaks towards the left of sectors of masses within the reformist and bureaucratic apparatuses, already presents us, objectively, with the potential to develop mass influence, i.e., of dragging after the political line of the party core sectors of the mass movement. But

obviously, our organisational structure will not be the same if the party is one of a few individuals or if it has already gained some mass influence. In the latter case, it is an obligation of the party to hit and structure its organisations in all sectors of the mass movement (although prioritising the sector shaping up as the vanguard of the revolution, for example, the industrial working class in Argentina, miners and factory workers in Bolivia, etc.). If, instead, we are a few comrades, attempting to structure the party in all sectors is fatal, destroys the party. Rather, it is a question to turn all the comrades towards a single sector, so as not to disperse forces and to strengthen the party, its organisations and its mass influence in this sector. In a situation like the one described, if we are a small party, the issue isn't to self-define ourselves as a "propaganda group" and not to take part fully in the revolutionary struggle. It is about doing the same task as a large party would do on the whole of the mass movement, only on a sector of this, the most favourable for rapid organic growth and political influence of the party. Although the task is the same, the organisational form is totally different. But if we are right in the political task and not in the organisational form, we are in danger of disappearing.

On another level, the organisational form of the party depends on something as simple as the existence of cadres capable of building and leading the organisms. This was a serious problem for us, which took us years and years to solve. We tried all kinds of organisational forms— by union, by factory, by neighbourhood ...— and after every six months or a year, they collapsed. The key was given to us by a French rank-and-file comrade, without a high theoretical level, but who possibly reflected the influence of the tradition left by Trotsky when he lived in France. This comrade asked how many cadres capable of running an organism we had and he advised us not to form any organism — be it a cell, a union faction, a neighbourhood or theatre group or whatever — if we did not have a cadre capable of leading it. Without leadership, any organism fails, however perfect it is on paper. The problem of existing cadres is therefore a critical problem — whatever the stage of the class struggle that we are going through — to define the organisational form of the party.

We, for example, decided to organise the party during the election campaign around 600 branches we would open in peripheral working-class neighbourhoods. We could plan this because we had a similar or greater number of middle cadres, able to open and manage the branches. If the party would have had to face the election campaign with only 50 cadres, we would have had to think of another organisational form; possibly concentrating on a few districts with large anchor headquarters or another variant.

Marx

Delving into the elections of the class struggle of his time, mainly the Paris Commune, Marx defined what the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat in the political arena were, as the establishment of a "dictatorship of the proletariat". This meant to destroy the state of the bourgeoisie and to establish a workers' government:

"[...] the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution [...] And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting." (Letter of Marx to Kugelman, quoted by Lenin in "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Volume 25, op. cit., p. 420.)

"[The Commune] was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class [...]" (Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France", *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 22, Lawrence & Wishart, London, p. 334.)

To form a government of the working class a political party of the working class was needed. At that time, the European working class did not vote or, if it did, it voted for the parties of the liberal bourgeoisie (a similar phenomenon to that of the working class in Argentina in relation to Peronism). Intending to attain the fundamental political task of freeing the proletariat from the bourgeoisie, Marx, together with Engels, argued for the organisational concept of the single party

of the working class (similar also to the slogan we have often risen in our country of “Workers’ Party”, or labour party). It was a correct conception for the proposed task, especially when it still had not surfaced in all its splendour the labour aristocracy or the large bureaucracies of the workers’ movement seated on solid apparatuses.

However, as the 19th century passed and mankind entered the 20th century, this conception became something very dangerous, wrong and ended up having fatal consequences. This only served to demonstrate two fundamental laws. The first, general, is that reality is richer than any theoretical construction since it was the very reality of the class struggle that left behind this conception of Marx (along with some others, such as free trade, the inevitable beginning of socialist revolution through the most developed countries and others). The second law is that a rigid and static conception of organisational question is unscientific and can be as reactionary as a rigid and static conception of any human and social phenomenon, from science to the tactics of a revolutionary party.

The social democracy

Following Marx’s conception, the great European socialist parties were founded, which during a whole era played a very progressive role, as much as they achieved the political independence of the proletariat, tearing it apart from tail ending the policy of the liberal bourgeoisie. (Even today we feel the consequences of this progressive stage of the great socialist parties. The economic offensive of world imperialism has managed to produce sharp declines in wages of workers in the semi-colonial world, as well as in the United States and Japan. In Europe instead, the reversal is much less because the working class offers fierce resistance, whose best examples have been the tremendous miners’ strikes in England and of the metalworkers in West Germany. And this can only be explained because the European proletariat retains from that stage a level of consciousness and organisation as class qualitatively superior to other proletariats equally or more powerful, like the Yankee or Japanese).

But these great socialist parties suffered, as it could not fail to happen, the influence of the new social processes. With the emergence of imperialism in the European countries, it developed to the maximum the labour aristocracy: a privileged sector of the working class, with a standard of living higher than their class brothers in their own country and around the world. This labour aristocracy enjoyed such privileges eating the crumbs thrown to them by the imperialist bourgeoisie exploitation of other workers and especially of the colonies. This was further compounded with the higher layers of the socialist parties — which had won legality and participated regularly and systematically in the electoral and parliamentary processes — began to get assimilated in the bourgeois state apparatus. This process could take place because the world capitalist system, when it was still progressive and developing the productive forces, and even in the first phase of its decline already as an imperialist system, could grant major concessions, political and economic reforms to the metropolitan working class. The proletariat of the imperialist countries — and to some extent around the world — lived a reformist, not revolutionary era.

Thus, social democracy was essentially organised to achieve reforms and to participate in elections, not to make the revolution to the bourgeoisie. In their branches, the workers gathered to hear speakers but no one was forced to sell newspapers or to do anything. The party just wanted to win votes. There was no discipline. The social democrats were not interested to act daily in the structure, in the depths of the working class, in the factories and workshops, to organise there, in the daily struggle, the workers and the party itself. It was common that, when a strike, the socialists’ vote was split, a sector in favour and one against ... and both remained in the party.

Thus, the great socialist parties were huge electoral apparatuses, alien to the concrete, daily struggles and the organisation of the working class for such struggles, with the sole exception of the British Labour Party and, to some extent, Belgian and German social-democracy. The mass of socialist workers had a passive role. The only ones who permanently worked were those who integrated the party apparatus, which was controlled by the lawyers, the parliamentarians or candidates, the professionals, the journalists, who were not subject to any control by the party as a whole.

The Bolshevik party

Against the forecasts of Marx, the first socialist revolution did not succeed in the more developed imperialist countries but in the most backward of them, Czarist Russia, with its overwhelming peasant population, which had never known bourgeois democracy but also with the most concentrated proletariat in the world. The need to build the party for the revolution in those objective conditions where the norm was absolute secrecy, where there were no legal unions, much less, periodic elections, explains the emergence of a new type of party, the Bolshevik. It will be a novel form of revolutionary organisation, which could be described by a few key features:

1. It had a structure which Lenin called “conspiratorial”, i.e., centralised and disciplined, suited to act in any situation of the class struggle, to move quickly from legality to the underground and vice versa, adapted to organically centralise all the forces of the mass movement for the seizure of power by insurrection.

2. It did not accept into its ranks all currents and programs by the mere fact they claimed to be of socialism. On the contrary, it established a categorical dividing line between revolutionists and reformists. The party was for the revolutionists and the reformists could form another party.

3. The central activity of the party was not the elections but the class struggle. It is the party of the daily work involved in the everyday struggles of the working class and the exploited masses; it accompanies them, it tries to organise them and it organises in the class and its struggles the party itself. It is in all the struggles of the class, all of them: both in the large as in the small ones. It always tries to head them, guide and organise them or, at least, to be involved in these spontaneous struggles made by the class.

As it can be seen, it is an organisational form diametrically opposed to that of social democracy.

The end of the single party of the working class

The organisational conception of Marx and Engels on the single party of the working class was surpassed by the experience of the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik Party. The historical process of the 20th century itself showed that it was very correct the division between revolutionary and reformist socialists, i.e., in Russia, the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, in two parties, not only different but enemies. Beginning in 1917, this division became global: in all countries, there were communist and socialist parties faced to each other, organised in different Internationals, the Second and the Third. Reality had proven superior to Marx’s conception.

However, and we mention this to show the terrible mistake that means being tied to rigid conceptions on any terrain, the great German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg did not accept the division of the socialist parties or that revolutionaries should have their own organisation. That costed her and her tendency very dearly: they had to face a revolutionary situation without a suitable party and were annihilated by the repression of the bourgeoisie, executed by the government of reformist socialism. Even much more expensive was the cost to the world working class, which saw the German revolution defeated by the lack of such a party to lead them and delayed for decades — plagued by wars with millions of deaths and horrific situations of exploitation and misery — the development and victory of the world revolution.

Based on the Bolshevik experience, we revolutionary Marxists have been able to develop the theory which explains why there cannot be at this stage the single workers’ party. Every class has several parties. Traditionally, the bourgeoisie had them representing the different sectors: industrial, agricultural or financial, monopolistic or non-monopolistic, etc. Currently, to the extent that the big imperialist monopolies are completely cornering the global economic structure, a trend to unity is taking place, which is expressed on bipartisanship. Under the imperialist-capitalist system, only two major parties tend to occupy the political stage. One, of social-democratic type, to drag the workers’ votes; another of centre-right, to do the same with the middle class. In Europe and a few countries in

the semi-colonial world, such as Chile, workers' votes are dragged by reformist workers' parties. In many other countries, workers' votes are dragged directly by bourgeois parties, like Peronism here, Democratic Action in Venezuela, or the Democratic Party in the United States.

The working class is more homogeneous than the bourgeoisie; it is the most homogenous in society. But despite this, it has not ensured sufficient political homogeneity as to have a single party. Like every class, it has different segments. There is an aristocracy, average workers and super-exploited workers, almost marginal. There are sectors with temporary work and others that work permanently. There are those of heavy industry, light industry, services and also the agricultural proletariat. All this gives way to the emergence of different parties.

It also happens, reflecting this structural heterogeneity although not in a mechanical way, different levels of development of consciousness in the working class. As Trotsky said in one of his brilliant analysis, there are sectors of the working class who look backwards and others who look ahead (and, we add, others who don't look anywhere).

Evidently, the workers with petty-bourgeois expectations, who still believe progress can be made individually under the capitalist system and who will end up in any bourgeois party or some kind of reformist labour party, cannot be in the same party with the workers who want socialism but still don't see that to achieve this we need to make a revolution, who will go to a social democratic party, or with the workers who are already revolutionaries and will enter the revolutionary Marxist party.

Whichever way you look, there is no scientific reason to explain or justify having a single party for the working class.

Stalinism

As a result of the civil war, where it died by the thousands, and of hunger, prompting its return to the land, the old Russian working class, which built the Soviets and aligned itself behind the leadership of the Bolshevik party and made the revolution, disappeared. This physical disappearance of about 90 per cent of this working class is the deep explanation for the victory of Stalinism in Russia. Stalin imposed himself on a new working class, freshly arrived from the land; without experience or tradition.

The Bolsheviks had tried different forms attempting to organise in a revolutionary way this new working class; for example, the organisation of workers without a party, bodies for the fight against hunger, etc. But generally, they did not have good results. The consequence of this organisational failure — which was a social failure, given that the working class had been erased from the Russian historical process — was Stalinism.

This brought to Russia a new form of organisation and of linking with the workers' movement, of inorganic type, rigidly bureaucratic whose main objective was the exact opposite to the organisation of revolutionary soviets and the old Bolshevik party. While these were organisations to develop, extend, generalise and concentrate the spontaneous struggles of the workers in a single great revolution, the "soviets" and the "Bolshevik party" of Stalinism were to prevent any struggle, destroy all spontaneity of the masses, and avoid any organisation of the working class.

However, outside Russia, Stalinism continued using one element, only one, of the Leninist legacy: to be where the workers are, to have their cells and militants in factories, to organise where the working class is, to focus on their everyday problems and not in the electoral issue, to take the lead of their small struggles. But the bureaucratic scum uses all this in service to its treacherous, counterrevolutionary policy of class collaboration. It is in the small struggles to better prevent the outbreak of the great struggles, i.e., revolutions. And if they burst, to bring them to defeat. And if they succeed, to turn the new workers' states into tools of the counter-revolution.

In this way, Stalinism covered the flank neglected by social democracy. Hence, in the countries where social democracy plays that role exceptionally well, like in England or Germany, it is very

weak. But where there is a “classic” social democracy, as in France, Spain, Portugal, which is a majority in the elections, Stalinism is a power in the union movement. The Social Democrats betray the workers in the field of electoral politics; the Stalinists in the field of the daily struggle. It is a real division of labour. And there is a Stalinist communist party, the Italian, who fulfils the two functions simultaneously.

Stalinism survived because of many causes but a very important one, one which highlights the decisive weight of the organisational issue, which has prevented it from already collapsing in full despite its tremendous global crisis, is the one we just mentioned. On many occasions, the CP has made incredible betrayals and yet the class did not break with it. The Spanish worker, for example, saw communists fighting beside him and building his highest trade union tool: The Workers’ Commissions. Along with this, they called to approve the monarchy or the Pact of Moncloa. Despite the republican tradition of Spanish workers and the dire consequences for living standards of implementing the Pact of Moncloa, the Spanish CP, although divided and fragmented, and tremendously decreased in its electoral strength, remains at the head of the Workers’ Commissions, and Workers’ Commissions are still a power next to the languid UGT of the Social Democrats. Of course, social democracy completes the other arm of the counter-revolutionary pincer, electorally dragging the working class.

Chapter II

Let's revolutionise the party organisation

The question of organisational forms becomes a priority issue at this time because there has been a change in the objective situation. We have moved from one stage to another: from the state of transition that followed the win of Alfonsin⁵ to a new revolutionary situation.

After the win of Alfonsin, which aroused great enthusiasm, there was a retreat of the vanguard sectors, who felt it like a hard blow: the masses had gone partly towards radicalism; the working-class majority remained Peronist. No party of the left, not even the most tepid, was saved from this tempest of polarisation. After the election result, a stage opened that we called “transitional”, undefined between a course towards deepening the revolutionary process or, conversely, towards stabilisation of the regime and the government.

This stage has passed. The cards have been shuffled and now begin to be dealt again as they had been before 10 October. The symptoms of the crisis of the regime worsen. The workers' rise goes to strike mode and launches millions of workers in the streets. Although most of the workers' movement remains Peronist, this process is expressed in vanguard sectors retaking the course they had before the elections: the left parties, including ours, are strengthened; thousands of supporters who turned away from the electoral defeat of the left, return. Alfonsin was a dam that stopped for a while this semi-natural dynamic but failed to end it. A flourishing situation is repeating, as before the elections, but on a much higher plane. Because the previous year the process went through the bourgeois elections and today it is deeper: it goes through the daily struggles of the working class, which objectively question the capitalist system. And, within them, preparing them, accompanying them or ripening with them, it is emerging new leadership of the workers' movement.

Unlike the previous stage, when we fought on the enemy's terrain, the bourgeois elections, in this stage we fight in our terrain, the class struggle.

In this new revolutionary situation, the party must revolutionise its organisation, under the general lines laid down by Lenin when the Russian Revolution of 1905:

“A revolutionary epoch is to the Social-Democrats what wartime is to an army. We must broaden the cadres of our army, we must advance them from peace strength to war strength, we must mobilise the reservists, recall the furloughed, and form new auxiliary corps, units, and services. We must not forget that in war we necessarily and inevitably have to put up with less trained replacements, very often to replace officers with rank-and-file soldiers, and to speed up and simplify the promotion of soldiers to officers' rank.

5 **Raul Ricardo Alfonsin** (1927–2009) was one of the main leaders of the traditional bourgeois party Radical Civic Union (UCR). Alfonsin was the first elected president of Argentina following the defeat of the military dictatorship known as the National Reorganisation Process.

“To drop metaphor, we must considerably increase the membership of all Party and Party-connected organisations in order to be able to keep up to some extent with the stream of popular revolutionary energy which has been a hundredfold strengthened. [...]

“In war-time, recruits should get their training lessons directly from military operations. So, tackle the new methods of training more boldly, comrades! Forward, and organise more and more squads, send them into battle, recruit more young workers, extend the normal framework of all Party organisations, from committees to factory groups, craft unions, and student circles! [...] Give more scope to all the diverse kinds of enterprise on the part of the most varied groups and circles, bearing in mind that, apart from our counsel and regardless of it, the relentless exigencies of the march of revolutionary events will keep them upon the correct course. [...]

“Young fighters should be recruited more boldly, widely, and rapidly into the ranks of *all and every kind* of our organisations. *Hundreds* of new organisations should be set up for the purpose without a moment’s delay. [...]

“If we fail to show bold initiative in setting up new organisations, we shall have to give up as groundless all pretensions to the role of vanguard. If we stop helplessly at the achieved boundaries, forms, and confines of the committees, groups, meetings, and circles, we shall merely prove our own incapacity” (VI Lenin, “New Tasks and New Forces”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, op. cit. p. 217–219).

The new leadership of the workers’ movement is emerging

We don’t want to dwell on the analysis of the new revolutionary situation, which the party has already made on several occasions. We just want to point out that within it three phenomena of fundamental importance are taking place:

1) There is a powerful wave of strikes, by factories and unions, with a wage character. These strikes raise the possibility of a general strike, which has only been frustrated so far by the betrayal of the bureaucracy and its deals with the government.

2) Everywhere new Internal Commissions and Delegates Committees are emerging, with new leaders of the class and who are not born controlled by the bureaucracy. The new leadership of the workers’ movement is emerging that, inexorably, will replace the old bureaucracy, already mortally wounded (which doesn’t mean it will be revolutionary socialist).

3) We are in the midst of the process of union elections, which give a great opportunity for grouping the new union vanguard to fight for the leadership of the unions.

Of these three processes, the least important, and which goes against the natural development of the new leadership, is the union elections with a fixed date imposed by the government. The lack of maturity of the new vanguard prevents, for the moment that the bureaucracy be defeated in the elections, especially after their pact with Alfonsin. We must use them as a tool to group and unify the new vanguard and, especially, to accompany politically that experience, winning sectors for the party.

Instead, the most important process is the grassroots organisms of the workers’ movement: The Internal Commissions and Delegates Committees. There, the renewal of leadership is total. And those are, traditionally, organisms par excellence of our working class, the true leaders of their daily struggles. Any Internal Commission or any delegate politically won or influenced by the party is a leap forward in our strategic goal: to provide our workers’ movement with revolutionary leadership.

This revolution being experienced within the workers’ movement is what we have been waiting for for decades. We can say that, although not in the superstructure of the unions and the CGT, but rather in the deep structure of the union movement, the Internal Commissions and Delegates Committees, the democratic revolution that the country experienced when the Malvinas war is succeeding, has almost succeeded. The workers’ movement has won its internal legality. Although they will still give their last few swipes, the time of the bureaucracy and its thugs, with its single slates,

its iron dictatorship within the working-class organisation is ended. To take part with everything in this renewal of the grassroots leadership of our class is the fundamental task of our party.

Regaining our political space

The relaunch of the revolutionary situation offers us enormous advantages. The first is that, in them, the masses can quickly make the experience with their traditional parties. They unmask themselves day after day as enemies of the workers. This process can be more or less slow, given the enormous political backwardness of our working class. But it is taking place symptomatically and, sooner or later, will be massive.

An additional advantage, which makes to the decline of Argentina bourgeoisie and its political representatives, is the colossal stupidity of the latter. Rarely we can enjoy a government that digs its own grave every minute. A government that sets up farces that don't even deceive a breastfeeding baby, such as the whole circus mounted by Grinspun⁶ around the foreign debt, where the only thing he achieved is to be left in ridicule.

Neither is it common to have an "opposition" so in crisis and as inept as Peronism. The mere fact that Herminio Iglesias⁷ can fight for the top leadership of the PJ⁸ relieve us from further comment.

Amid this panorama, our party is exceptionally well placed. The great success of the election campaign to place the foreign debt as the central problem, now that reality itself has brought it to the fore, it is returned to us a thousandfold. The same party supporters who withdrew suspecting Alfonsin had taken away all our future, now come back and tell us: "How right you were!". And those who did not agree with us, they begin to agree or at least, if they still don't agree that we must not pay it, they acknowledge we were right to point out it was a critical problem.

Today, armed with this capital and the new slogans for this stage: wages, general strike, new leadership for the workers' movement, permanent denunciation of Alfonsin as an enemy of the workers and agent of the IMF, we can perform a very powerful political offensive. With it, we can quickly regain the political space that we had won and gain even more. To regain the streets with a systematic agitation of these slogans, taking full advantage of any new developments — such as now with the plebiscite about the Beagle channel — with a concrete policy, is a very important task.

This doesn't deny that the masses are not yet coming to the left, toward us. The fundamental process, which the party cannot lose under penalty of going backwards and reversing the revolutionary process itself, is the building of the new political and union leaders of the workers' movement. This building happens in the trade union arena with the new delegates by company and in the political arena by strengthening our party.

The rest of the left is at a disadvantage

The process of the political vanguard is being expressed in the growth of the entire left. The CP has shown it, like the Intransigent Party (PI) and, to some extent, the old Peronist left in their columns at the last demonstration against the IMF. The old class-struggle unionism, meanwhile, doesn't present for now the same dynamic as it was heavily defeated by the failure of ENTRA [National Meeting of Workers] and other groups. But it can join in, as a political current, if it manages to get it structured.

6 **Bernardo Grinspun** (1925–1996) was at the time the Economy Minister in the government of President Raul Alfonsin.

7 At the time this talk was given, **Herminio Iglesias** (1929–2007) was a former Mayor of Avellaneda, former candidate to Governor of Buenos Aires Province, and member of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies. He was well known for his gaffes and insensitive faux pas.

8 **PJ** are the initials for Justicialist Party, the official name of the Peronist party.

But one thing is for them to strengthen as parties and quite another to achieve it as part of the new leadership of the workers' movement which, we insist, is the arena where the far more important fight takes place.

There are two reasons for them finding the latter difficult. One, on the strictly trade union arena, is that none of these "left" currents is firm with the working class in the struggles the class wages against the bosses and the bureaucracy. Sometimes they even place themselves directly against, accusing certain struggles as "destabilising" and supporting the bureaucracy, as does the CP in metalworkers, where they go together with Miguel.

The second reason, the decisive one, is political. These currents don't face Alfonsín and the capitalist social-economic system in full. On the contrary, they all ended up signing the pact with the government. This places them against the grain of the objective process of the mass movement and its vanguard, which is going towards a growing confrontation with the government, the regime and the semi-colonial capitalist system. For many comrades, the wage character of the current struggles hides its deep content, which is anti-capitalist, because they hit the system in a neuralgic point: the surplus-value, the profits of the bourgeoisie and imperialism, and which don't have a solution within this system. We hold that this is, precisely, the essence of the current struggle of the working class. And, for this profound reason, the "left" currents are getting divorced from these daily struggles and the new leadership emerging.

Therefore, although these currents grow as political parties, they don't express this growth directly in the dispute over the political leadership of the new workers' vanguard. They may have factory delegates and win more delegates. But they are not obsessed like us to achieve it. This isn't the focus of their political activity.

In this framework, the CP is by far our most dangerous adversary. They have a method similar to ours: they go to factories, build groups of their party and gain new activists there. But, as we already pointed out, their political and trade union position separates and opposes them to the objective process of the new leadership. And to this, it must be added that leadership like that of Nadra, Fava⁹ and company, who was so treacherous as to openly support Videla¹⁰ and vote for Iglesias surely will be in the short-term preparing a similar catastrophe.

The PI [Intransigent Party], besides the equally remarkable idiocy of its leadership, doesn't go as a party directly to factories to win the new activists. There has been the funny case of honest PI militants asking us to teach them how this thing so mysterious is done. The populist structure of the PI makes them no serious competitor in the political struggle to win the new union leadership.

The old Peronist left is part of the overall crisis of Peronism. It can do little or nothing, if we compare it with the extraordinary integration achieved by Montoneros¹¹ and JTP [Peronist Workers Youth] in the previous stage, from 1969 to 1975. Sectors of Peronist Intransigence and Mobilisation,¹² totally degenerated, go to the elections along with the worst bureaucrats. Others, instead, become government agents, agreeing and becoming caboose of the Radicals. And others, finally, open up great opportunities for us to work with them, and in many places, we are doing so. But this is a

9 **Fernando Nadra** (1916–1995) was one of the top leaders of the Argentine Communist Party.

Athos Fava (1925–2016) was a politician, Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Argentina and in charge of international relations.

10 **Jorge Rafael Videla** (1925–2013) was the general who led the genocidal coup of March 1976 together with Admiral Massera and Brigadier Agosti. Between 1976 and 1978 he served as the de facto presidency of Argentina, of that first Military Junta.

11 **Montoneros** was the main Peronist guerrilla organisation in Argentina. It was born encouraged by Peron himself. In 1973 it supported the brief government of Hector Jose Campora, who was quickly overthrown by Peron. On 1 May 1974, Peron drove them out from the massive rally of the day. It pursued guerrilla warfare between 1970 and 1979. It was primarily composed of young men and women of the middle class.

12 **Peronist Intransigence and Mobilisation (IMP)** was the group founded in 1981 by the Peronist leader Vicente Leonidas Saadi after agreeing with the remnants of the Peronist Revolutionary Tendency, which brought together organisations such as Montoneros, Peronist Armed Forces, Peronist Youth groups, and other groups of the Peronist left. It never achieved quantitative relevance.

phase of their process of breaking to the left with Peronism, not the strengthening of what was the “glorious JP (Peronist Youth)”.

The old class-struggle unionism of Piccinini,¹³ finally, also ends up working as an agent for a government increasingly separated from the expectations of the working class. He will probably achieve some influence among privileged, white-collar, workers. But we deem it very difficult that he deeply delve into the vast majority of the class, subject to fierce exploitation and increasing misery.

In conclusion, we have competitors in the struggle to political win over the new workers’ vanguard. But none of them is a competitor that can defeat us — although we don’t minimise the terrible enemy that Stalinism is. It is up to us to prevent those parties or currents from erecting a new dam between the workers’ vanguard and the socialist revolution.

The party faces a historical opportunity

Our party is, therefore, at one of these historic opportunities that happen only very occasionally. We can win a sector of the new leadership of the factory and trade union struggles of the workers’ movement. This way, we are building new political leadership, on which depends the triumph of the socialist revolution in Argentina.

It is the fourth process of this type that takes place in our country since our current exists. The first, which we can date around 1944, was the liquidation of the old Stalinist and reformist socialist leadership and the emergence of a new workers’ leadership that founded the new Peronist unions. This new leadership caught on politically in the Labour Party, a class party voting for Peron but which remained independent from him. And it uprooted Stalinism from the leadership of the proletariat, using the systematic betrayals the CP leadership — tied to the Kremlin diplomacy and, in this way, to American and English imperialism and the entire block of allies— committed against the working class.

The Labour Party, which gave victory to Peron in the elections by capitalising on the workers’ vote was then liquidated by Peron himself, who forced its dissolution in its bourgeois party, and sent to prison for years its maximum leader, Cipriano Reyes,¹⁴ at the same time bureaucratising the union leadership, transforming them into officials of the Ministry of Labour.

We were a small group, not a big party, and we could not prevent the Peronist process, seated on an exceptional economic situation that allowed the proletariat to win huge concessions from the bourgeoisie through a reformist path, without breaking the framework of the capitalist system. But we did participate in it with all boldness. We achieved the leadership of Anglo-Ciabasa, the country’s largest meatworks — which was also the largest company — and to have a great weight around the guild. The tide toward Peronism passed us over, but it had already been shown what a Trotskyist political line and organisation can do when it joins and takes advantage of favourable social processes.

The second process was the liquidation of the old Peronist bureaucracy of Espejo¹⁵ and company. It developed between 1952 and 1959, first riding on the growing dissatisfaction with the anti-worker policies of Peron in the last years of his government, and then on the heroic resistance

13 **Alberto Piccinini**, labour leader of Acindar steelworks and the metalworker’s union in the town of Villa Constitucion, Santa Fe Province. He led an important succession of struggles particularly the great strike known as Villazo in 1975. He supported the Radical Civic Union.

14 **Cipriano Reyes** (1906-2001) was an Argentine meat industry union leader and politician, founder of the Labour Party. He played an influential role in the birth of Peronism and in the workers’ mobilisation of October 17, 1945.

15 **Jose Gregorio Espejo** (1911-1980) was an Argentine trade unionist, belonging to the Food Industry Workers Union (SOIA), who served as General Secretary of the CGT from 1947 to October 20, 1952, when he was forced to resign.

to the *gorilla*¹⁶ coup. This new leadership also crystallized in a political expression, almost a party: the 62 Organisations.¹⁷

It was the time of our entryism into Peronism; a policy never understood in the international Trotskyist movement. We always distinguish two segments within Peronism. One, we consider totally rotten, despicable since birth, the Peronist Party — and let us not even talk about the “women’s branch”! We have always considered them to be reactionary by-products, fifth-order phenomena. The other segment, which always interested us, was the trade union movement. There we made entryism, and we’re proud of it.

Today, the 62 Organisations are nothing. But at that time gravitated to them all the grassroots Peronist groups, thousands of extremely militant activists, the cream of the workers’ movement, who fought from 1956 against the *gorillas* and recovered the trade unions. *Palabra Obrera* [Workers’ Word], together with grassroots Peronists in the Movement of Workers Groups, founded many of these groups and recovered from the military comptrollers several of the most important unions. Afterwards, all this movement was organised by the 62 Organisations, and within them, we were a power.

We remained a group of just over 100 comrades, immersed in the working mass overwhelmingly Peronist. However, we did wonders. We were the strongest in the UOM (Metalworkers Union) of Avellaneda, Matanza and Bahía Blanca and second in Federal Capital and other regional branches. The large metalworkers’ strike of 1956 was led by us. The defeat of this strike prevented us from becoming a mass workers party, although we had mass influence in the trade union arena. So great became our influence our handful of militants managed to sell up to 10,000 weekly newspapers.

Again, Peronism through the new bureaucracy of Vandor,¹⁸ Framini¹⁹ and company closed the way to us.

There is a third process, aborted, of change of leadership that took place between 1969 and 1975, from the Cordobazo.²⁰ Starts with Sitrac-Sitram²¹ and continues with Tosco,²² Piccinini and the coordinating committees of the Rodrigazo²³ in 1975. By this time, we estimate that about 25 per cent of the working class already had a new leadership opposed to the bureaucracy.

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

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

18 **Augusto Timoteo Vandor** (1923-1969) was a bureaucrat Secretary-General of the Metalworkers Union (UOM). After the military coup that defeated Peron, he promoted within the Peronism a participatory faction willing to agree with the de facto government and proposed a “Peronism without Peron”. A month after the Cordobazo, in June 1969, he was executed by a small Peronist armed group, which years later would join Montoneros.

19 **Andres Framini** (1914–2001), was an Argentine union leader and politician. In 1962 he was elected governor of the province of Buenos Aires but the result was not recognised by the Government of President Arturo Frondizi, who in turn was overthrown by a military coup a few days later. He was secretary-general of the Textile Workers Association (AOT) between 1951-1955 and 1959-1968. On two occasions, 1955 and 1961-1963, he joined the executive leadership of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT).

20 **Cordobazo** refers to the workers’ and students’ semi-insurrection in Argentina on 29 May 1969 in the city of Córdoba, one of the most important industrial cities in the country and which led to a national revolutionary rise. Its most immediate consequence was the fall of Juan Carlos Onganía. Military, Radicals and Peronists launched a political agreement to divert the rise towards an electoral opening, which took place in March 1973. (See in www.nahuelmoreno.org *After the Cordobazo*, with texts by Moreno, the PRT-LV and the PST).

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

22 **Agustin “Gringo” Tosco** (1930–1975) was a union leader of the Light and Power union, a member of the CGT of the Argentines and one of the main actors in the Cordobazo. traveling mate of the CP.

23 Rodrigazo is the name given to a group of economic adjustment policies announced in Argentina on 4 June 1975, and their immediate aftermath. The main measures were: 150% devaluation of currency for the commercial exchange rate;

This new leadership also had a clear political sign: it was pro-guerrilla. We also played a large role in its construction, for example in the coordinating committees of the northern suburbs of Great Buenos Aires. But, as we shall see, we did not take full advantage of this opportunity.

The new leadership aborted in the most disgraceful way. Its pro-guerrilla, elitist character ended isolating it from the rank-and-file. The 1976 coup physically exterminated or forced it into exile. However, the genocide could not cut the process in another sense: the Peronist union bureaucracy did not stop rotting; the hatred of the rank-and-file did not stop growing.

On this fertile ground broke out the revolutionary stage we are living, fully opening this fourth change in the workers' leadership. But this time, the opportunity is qualitatively superior, one of those that only occur every 30, 40 or 50 years because of a combination of circumstances:

1) Because it takes place in a revolutionary stage, not reformist as the previous ones. The decline of the country is such that it turns the economic struggles of the class into anti-capitalist struggles. The revolutionary upsurge opened by the Malvinas [war] has returned and deepened its course after an interregnum of only half a year after Alfonsín's win.

2) The old bureaucracy is already a stinking corpse, without any possibility of being reconstituted as it was in earlier times.

3) Peronism is experiencing an apparently unresolvable crisis.

4) Our competitors "on the left", as we have seen, are hamstrung by their policy of support to the government and the regime and/or of a shameful reactionary branch of a Peronism in decomposition.

5) For the first time we face this situation with a strong party, spread nationwide, with hundreds if not thousands of old and new cadres, and with a long tradition and experience signposted by the glorious names of the *Grupo Obrero Marxista* (Marxist Workers Group), *Palabra Obrera* (Workers' Word) and *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (Socialist Workers Party).

We are at a crossroads

The situation of the class struggle and of the party itself put us at a crossroads. There is an iron law for revolutionary socialists: if we are not a sect, every great untapped opportunity is equivalent to reversal and crisis. Any evolutionary project of gradual development is false. If we follow the rhythm and the organisational form that we have, we will not go "slowly but surely" forward; we will go backwards fast and surely. And, what is more serious, we will not respond to a problem of life and death for the revolution in Argentina: either our party becomes a mass party or again we will lose this great revolutionary historical opportunity, which is the greatest our country has ever lived. If we say no to building here and now the big party of the revolution, firmly rooted, welded to the mass movement and the workers' vanguard, the alternative is a new coup and a new genocide, far worse than the dictatorship we have just defeated.

We need, therefore, an urgent partisan revolution. Not in our policy, this has been proven correct. But indeed, in our activity and organisation. Since the revolutionary period opened, we have gone through two stages in the activity and party organisation: legality for the elections and the "transitional" one. Now we have to fully move onto a third stage, of the new revolutionary situation.

We faced the electoral stage with a party that, in the underground, for whatever reasons — justified or not — was organised essentially in the centre of the large cities. And, in the big cities, mainly in Buenos Aires, as in others, such as Cordoba and Rosario, we were much persecuted. It became a party almost of Buenos Aires and, as it was the era of easy money, focusing on the unions as banking, where it was easier to get a job because it was the branch that was developing more.

100% increase in utility and transportation prices; 180% rise in the price of fuel; 45% increase in wages. The name Rodrigazo stems from the fact that the policies were announced and implemented by Celestino Rodrigo, the Minister of Economy of Argentina appointed by President Isabel Peron in May of that year.

When we realised that the dictatorship was finished, that a stage of extensive democratic freedoms was coming and elections were inevitable, we adopted a transcendent, bold organisational decision, to adapt the party to the new situation. Without this resolution, the analysis would have been for nothing. The resolution was: to get out of the three small premises, super clandestine, the party had and to open 200 to 300 branches in the most working-class, peripheral, neighbourhoods. These premises became the central organisational form of the party, and they gave us an extraordinary outcome.

When we entered directly into the election campaign, we took the task of opening 200 or 300 branches more, in any way. The leap was immense. We grew so much and the party became so strong that premises were opened without us paying any rent: they were provided by workers, collections were taken in the neighbourhoods, and so on. The culmination of this leap was the rally in Luna Park stadium. We got to sell 60,000 newspapers. We don't know whether we had 10, 15, 20 or 22 thousand militants.

To adopt this organisational form, we took into account the reality of the country and the workers' movement and the situation of the party. We could open the premises because in the workers' movement there was a beginning of a rupture of a fringe with Peronism, which gave us the raw materials to do so. And also, because the party had the necessary cadres. Let us recall that, at the end of the campaign of opening branches, virtually every one of them was run by a single comrade: the cadre or, to start familiarising ourselves with the Leninist terminology, the "chief" of the branch.

Thus, we entered the second stage, the "transitional" one caused by the elections. It would seem that already one or two months before them our reversal had begun. As Peronism and Alfonsin were consolidating, major symptoms were appearing that no fragment of the masses was coming towards us, along with those who had come starting to leave us. There was considerable doubt within the party. Almost all the cadres believed that we were not losing. A few members indicated that to the meetings at our premises increasingly fewer comrades were coming. But these hypotheses, they were just that, were not sufficient to decide a new organisational change. You had to take into account that it is very dangerous to change the organisational forms from one day to the next, without sufficient precision on the characterisations, in an irresponsibly way, when we were still immersed in the electoral campaign. Imagine what would have happened to the party if we had begun the close premises before the elections.

The electoral defeat manifested the two phenomena we had not detected in previous weeks: we had not managed to retain around the party any sector of masses and, reflecting this, we were losing hundreds and thousands of members. We can discuss whether we lost a few thousand or over 10,000. But the truth is the branches emptied at supersonic speed.

On account of this double phenomenon, objective and subjective, we changed our organisational form from 30 October. In the entirety of the mass movement reigned "democratic" drunkenness expectations in the new regime and government. And we had been reduced to a number of organised militants who, in the best hypothesis, hovered at a few thousand. We analysed we had been left at (or returned to) the category of "vanguard party". We adopted an organisational form of regression. We went to larger premises. We gathered the comrades to better withstand the downpour. We took as an essential task the consolidation of the party building through politicisation.

We are now entering the third stage. We believe the downpour is over. There is discontent against the government, which has proved weak and with serious symptoms of crisis. Strikes break out. A new workers' leadership emerges at the establishment or section level. It looks like the sectors we had influenced during the election campaign are returning to us. New sectors are likely emerging — still a minority — in the workers' and mass movement who are breaking with Peronism which deepens its crisis or who start to be back quickly from this short Alfonsinist spring. What is new: we are starting to win for the party the best of the working class. And we come out from our reversal with about 1,500 cadres.

We can no longer continue to be locked in the branches. We have to go out again to repeat, yet on a much higher level, the formidable experience that was to open the branches, to hold a rally in

Luna Park stadium and to sell 60,000 newspapers. We have to repeat, corrected and expanded, this stage, which we claim as the most brilliant and colossal in the history of our party. Where we were millimetres away from becoming a party with mass influence.

It is very common for large movements on death row to do their last show of strength before disappearing from the historical process. And the recent election has likely been the last or next to last samples of Peronism and radicalism as mass movements.

It is an opportunity as we had no other. We are at the stage where we can and must multiply the sale of the newspaper in new companies, neighbourhoods, schools and universities. As the shadow follows the body, behind the paper must follow the party organisms in those places where we sell them. Previously it was newspapers and neighbourhood branches. Now we have ahead of us newspapers and building the party and youth groups in thousands of factories, offices, schools, universities and workers' and popular neighbourhoods.

The party groups

We are facing, then a task similar, in a sense, to the opening of branches. When we opened them, we did it based on a deep socio-cultural analysis of the working class. Today, between overtime, travel, etc., nearly all workers are outside their house no fewer than 12 hours. Long travel, long working hours, and brutal work ravage them. We would not have been Marxists if we had ignored this reality, opening large premises in the town centres and calling for workers to come to them. We did the opposite: we went where the workers are, where they lived, where on Saturday afternoons or Sundays they could chat with us without this meaning an additional sacrifice. The fact that the central activity was the election was the second reason for us to adopt the organisational form of branches.

Now we must do the same. We must go where the workers are. Now it isn't to open the premises in the neighbourhoods, although surely, we will also do so. This is primarily to organise the workers where they fight and where the new leadership emerges: in the workplaces. Our major focus is to organise party groups in workplaces. We have to adapt our organisation to our class: where they work, where they live, wherever it is convenient for them. Which also is where it should be more convenient for us. Thus, it becomes much easier for the comrades to adopt the discipline of the activity in favour of the party.

Before we had adopted this orientation in the leadership, some comrades had begun to discuss it and test it. In the Somisa steelworks in San Nicolas, for example, the party had 80 or 100 workers very firm, with strong dues, doing the tasks we proposed to them and some were delegates. But increasingly fewer of them were coming to the meeting in the branch. The secret was that they were working up to 16 hours per day, leaving work exhausted.

How many militants did we have in Somisa? There were two criteria: if we organised them at the factory, we had several dozens. If we did at the meeting in the branch, they were six or seven.

Right at the time when the comrades were discussing this, we had been reading about the situation of the American proletariat. We found statements by a union representative at the General Motors plant in Lordstown, which we found interesting and enlightening:

"The 8-hour day doesn't truly exist. There are 16-hour, 12-hour days, six days a week. It is impossible to have a social life. The only social life we can have is within the factory" (*New York Times*, 19 September 1983).

This was a global phenomenon: the rise of brutal capitalist exploitation. We understood what was happening with our 80 or 100 Somisa comrades: they did not come to the branch because they were smashed and brutalized by the work and had no time or desire to come. We quickly agreed: we had to hold meetings at the factory, not even after the end of the shift.

This is the approach we must take to build party groups: do it wherever the comrades want, in the factory, at the time of resting or in the toilets, in a cafe after work, in the neighbourhood... If in

a factory the comrades gather daily for 15 to 20 minutes, in the week we have a very good meeting of two and a half or three hours.

There the problems of the workplace and the union will be discussed, as well as all the problems of the class struggle and national and international politics.

And what an extraordinary unity will this party group have because its members work together every day! What better chance to fight against the bourgeoisie, there, specifically, in this section or this factory? Only thus will the party start to be the collective, political and union, organiser of the workers' vanguard.

If we build these groups, we are making a truly human organisation. This means that not everything will be the same, but on the contrary very diverse. No group will be similar to another, as in a school, where no class is the same as another or any other student equals another. There are bad and good students. There are also some mediocre. There are good and bad classes. Some learn much and do little mess. Others learn little and do much mess. Others learn much and also make much mess. And there are some average, underperforming and doing a little mess. We will have good, mediocre and bad groups. Some will be good to begin with and then they will decline. Others will be the last the totem pole and then will give us a surprise. If all groups have the same average of newspapers sold, paid as dues the same amount of money, had the same insertion or union influence, etc., then something very strange is going on. All are equal. If, however, there are profound differences, we have a party alive, which begins to be of masses and reflects the changing and diverse process of our class.

All we have to ask of the new groups is to work for the party, even a little bit every day. Hence our definition of what it is at this stage the party militant, much like the one the III International had:

“In order to carry out daily party work, every party member should as a rule always be part of a smaller *working group* (...) Organic links are forged between the various parts of the organisation and among individual members by day-to-day collective work in the party organisations. (...) Obviously, (...) membership in the Communist Party involves as a rule: formal admission, possibly first as a candidate, then as a member; regular payment of established dues; subscription to the party press, etc. Most important, however, is the participation of *every member* in daily party work.”

The newspaper

The great tool for building the party and the new groups is the newspaper. Hence, we started our “coming outwards” by proposing a leap in the placement of the newspaper.

There is no possibility of building party organisms on any basis other than the political unity of those who compose them around the political line of the party. We cannot meet to just meet. We meet to act. No group can survive if it doesn't have a specific, practical activity in the sector in which it operates. A group in a factory or neighbourhood meets to discuss and arm all the comrades in the political line of the party and to know what each militant has to do the next day in that factory or neighbourhood. How many contacts of the party do we have? How many union activists respect us and are willing to discuss with us how to organise the factory or what to do in the union? Who is responsible for contacting and talking to these activists? What do we propose to each of them? What do we intend to do with the Internal Commission and the Delegates Committee? What activities does the group pursue to carry forward the national and international campaigns of the party? What can we do in the company or the neighbourhood, for example, for Nicaragua? And for human rights? And against the IMF?

The meeting has to answer all these questions and distribute among the comrades all the activity. Peter speaks with and sells the paper to such and such workers who look at us with political sympathy. Paul, who is very smart with union matters, chats with the best activists and also sells them the newspaper. Mary, who still doesn't dare to speak in the factory but is very orderly, leads the finance and administration of the newspaper and tries to sell the newspaper in her neighbourhood

or her families. And all of them discuss the paper and its political campaigns with all readers, looking for on what issue we can win them to participate or propagandise the party positions. If at the factory a talk about Nicaragua doesn't come about, perhaps it happens in the neighbourhood. And maybe, who knows, we get a great chat with fellow factory workers to explain why we should not pay the foreign debt if we want wage increases. The possibilities of activity are endless, but they all have one thing in common: the newspaper. Precisely because the newspaper is the mouthpiece of the party's political line, and in this way, it organises all our activity.

Therefore, the construction of new party groups is mediated by the placement of the newspaper. In general, it will be much easier to hold a meeting if those we want to attend know our policy and trajectory through the newspaper. And no one is truly being won or in the process of being won for the party if he doesn't want the party to grow, to spread, to become stronger, starting with the first step, that more and more people read our paper.

Having just started, we are already on the brink of making a mistake, in some places we have already committed it: to put meetings ahead of the increase in sales of the newspaper. We bust our souls trying to get the new comrades to the meetings or reuniting the old comrades before coming out with our all to multiply the number of newspapers. So, we find it difficult to gather the old and almost impossible to win the new.

We must do it the other way around. We go out with our all with the newspaper. We sell them like crazy in the terms of activity, but always thinking, characterising and planning the work. And so, we will be finding comrades who, sometimes on their own and sometimes because we propose it to them, offer to take a newspaper to sell to a friend or acquaintance. There appears the human material with which to start building the team. As soon as we have two, three or four comrades of the same factory, neighbourhood, school or university, the meeting becomes a real need, not something imposed by us.

Hence, we give paramount importance to two key tasks: picketing and the registration of newspaper readers.

Picketing should be systematic, week after week as far as possible always the same comrades. The workers of a factory have to get used to seeing, at least once a week, the socialists selling their press at the door. In this political situation, our paper becomes a point of reference for sectors of the working class, although they may not yet agree with us. Already there are numerous anecdotes of sectors of factories who talk about our paper at their break. Some workers wait to buy the newspaper from us. There are not many thousands yet but may become so. We have to be there. If we don't have enough resources to picket all the factories, we select those we can touch, but we do the picketing systematically. To picket every week a different factory helps little.

As the placement of the newspaper progresses, the registration of who buys it has to advance. The pickets at railway stations and shopping centres are very good for the party to win the street, make their political presence felt. But the most important is the structural picket, where we have to finish knowing the full name and address of the buyers. In the neighbourhoods, it is easier. In the factories, it is more difficult but not impossible. It is therefore very important for the same comrades to always be there. Maybe we should not ask the name of the comrade buying the newspaper for the first time. But it would be a fatal mistake to underestimate those who bought it a second time. That comrade is almost certainly already a party supporter; he can potentially be a militant.

The paper is thus the tool, the means for the building of the party, its groups, in factories and neighbourhoods. The activity starts there. Then, of course, there is a dialectic. We will gain new comrades who will themselves sell more papers. We will build party groups that will sell so much more. But, as the Chinese say, every journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. And the first step is to sell the newspaper.

The cadres or “chiefs”

As we have already pointed out, no body or group of the party may exist without a comrade able to build it and run it. This comrade is what we call “cadre” or “chief”. Specifically, we will manage to organise as many groups as cadres the party has or recruits who are capable of doing the task.

Party cadres not always occupy the same place. Many who were the vanguard for the central task of a stage often become rear-guard when the party stage changes and, with it, its central task. Others don't, and they will remain at the forefront. And new cadres will appear who did not link with the previous central task but are lions for the new task.

Each stage change demands a new test and selection of party cadres. In the stage we are entering, the testing and selection begins with the sale of the newspaper and culminates with the construction of the new party groups. We have to test all the comrades who nominate to be cadres and many who have not nominated— out of timidity or because we didn't explain the task well — but just the same we think they can be up to it.

This doesn't mean the comrade who doesn't sell 20 newspapers from the word go isn't a cadre. He may start with a few and work up. He may be poor in selling newspapers personally but very adept at getting new comrades to sell them. Any combination may happen. The only thing in common must be enthusiasm, the passion to increase newspaper sales week after week. The political understanding of the need to do so isn't enough; without this passion no advance is possible.

And least of all will we demand of them to gather a new party group from the beginning. Yes, we will demand more readers and that they be registered. From there, how they recruit some; committing them to want to be party members, to start distributing the newspaper, or to do anything else for the party even if they still don't dare to sell, to start paying dues; and finally, how they manage to form a team of four or five comrades who start meeting consistently. In this we cannot be dogmatic either, first, they sell and then they meet. It is possible that from going to a factory every week, we start getting three or four comrades who want to talk to us because they buy the paper from us, but they don't yet sell. In this case, we very patiently have to make that meeting become a new party group where everyone goes out with some activity and selling the newspaper. The variations are endless; our greatest danger is dogmatism.

These will be the vanguard cadres of the party at this stage. Those who go out, towards the class and the masses. Those who come to our branches to arm themselves politically for the activity and come out buzzing towards the factories, neighbourhoods, schools and universities. Those who feel that their place, their natural environment is neither the party branch, nor the internal life, but the working class or the students, what is outside of the party.

This doesn't mean that only they are cadres. They are the vanguard, the *crème de la crème* of the party at this stage. But a cadre is any comrade who dedicates to the party all his efforts, who sacrifices himself every day giving countless hours of their lives to the activity of the party. Cadre is the comrade who sells very few newspapers but loves to paint and goes without sleep for painting slogans. Or who every day arranges our premises, gets chairs, has it neat and tidy. Or he's a great administrator who keeps the accounts and has them very well controlled and follows up all comrades to get them up to be up to date with dues and newspaper money. Or who keeps organising *peñas* [folk gatherings], raffles, football matches or whatever to get money for the party. Or who is a great street seller of newspapers at stations and malls, he doesn't enrol or recruits anyone but he sells dozens of newspapers and makes the presence of the party felt. Or who guarantees the mimeograph is available at any time we need to print something. Or a thousand other activities.

Finally, some comrades are cadres by their own weight, because they are very good in a specialty, although they may be somehow lazy and sacrifice less than the rest. Cadre is a great leader of a union or neighbourhood, perhaps somehow undisciplined, looking after his “patch”, but recognised as a leader in the factory or neighbourhood. Also, a cadre is a great propagandist for the outside, who helps the party a lot by giving talks because he traps all who hear him. Or for the inside,

who gives very good courses and thus helps to train the militants. Or other variations, like good writers and so on.

Hierarchy of the party structure

From what has been said so far, the difference between a cadre and a rank-and-file base emerges clearly. Some are very active, put body and soul for the party in any tasks and /or play a prominent role in the class struggle or some specific party tasks. The others are comrades who carry out their daily activities in their place of work, study or neighbourhood, sell some newspapers and pay dues to the party, but they aren't yet involved in the party all their free time or don't excel in any activity. Many of the rank-and-file militants will end up being cadres over time. Some of the cadres will cease to be. And we will also recruit formed cadres, because they have been trained in other organisations or because the class struggle itself has formed them. In any case, as the party grows and becomes of masses, we will have more and more rank-and-file militants, many more than cadres.

Cadres and rank-and-file militants have, in a sense, the same rights. They all have party organs in which to discuss and vote; they all have the same vote to elect delegates to party congresses, and so on. But this doesn't mean that the party doesn't have a hierarchy among its militants. For us, the comrade who sacrifices everything for the party isn't the same as those who don't.

The cadre has different needs from the rank-and-file militants. The cadre seeks in the party not only the policy responses to the class struggle, but also internal responses of all kinds: organisational line, theoretical courses, and so on. If, for example, in the outward process, we win in a neighbourhood a comrade who sells us three or four weekly newspapers and who's willing to contribute financially, he's a rank-and-file militant. But if that comrade begins to gather two or three of the newspaper's readers and manages that together they sell 15 or 20 newspapers, he's becoming a cadre. Immediately he's going to ask us all kinds of orientation: How to organise meetings? What topics to discuss? How to prepare an international, national or activity report? What activity would he assign to the comrades he meets? The comrade has begun to lead.

Of these two elements, the degree of commitment to the party and the needs that this pose, the party hierarchy emerges. A cadre has more hierarchy than a rank-and-file militant. Similarly, a regional leader has more hierarchy than a rank-and-file cadre, since he acts and tries to guide all cadres and members of the party region and this poses greater problems: to develop a policy for the whole region, in the union, neighbourhood and student fronts; to follow up the relations with political parties in the area; to ensure party courses and schools; to have and ensure an overall plan of finances; to have an apparatus; and so on. And what is their most important task — training cadres.

And thus upward, where the most hierarchized comrades can be found: the national leaders. And even more hierarchical: the international leaders.

This hierarchical structuring is similar in one sense but opposite in another to what happens in an army. In the bourgeois army the rise in the hierarchy is achieved bureaucratically and by a decision of the highest hierarchy: The Commander in Chief. And no one goes lower in hierarchy unless for some dishonourable action or something of the sort. In the party, there are no permanent hierarchies. Anyone goes lower if not performing, and anyone rises if performing. A militant is more or less hierarchized by his performance for the party and the class struggle at every moment. But also, the ranking is done democratically. It is the rank-and-file of the party, not the leadership, who elect delegates to the congresses. And those congress delegates elect the leadership.

The hierarchy of the militants is earned by individual effort and ability but takes shape through the organisms of the party. What are hierarchical in the party are its organisms: The Central Committee is the organism of national leaders; the regional leadership that of the region and so on.

In the stage of retreat, defensive, of the party that we have just left behind, our grassroots organisations, the local branches, gathered together in its assemblies cadres and rank-and-file militants, with no differences whatsoever. This was natural because — being locked in a building—

no major differences between them were visible. But in this new era, it's categorically necessary to have a hierarchy of cadres. We have to go towards two very different meetings: the cadres and rank-and-file teams. The meeting on the premises must of the cadres and for them. They must, in addition to the meeting itself, have special treatment: an internal newsletter for them and not for all members; courses and schools for them, and so on. The rank-and-file have their own meetings in their neighbourhoods, factories and schools (and if they want to, also in the branches), under the direction of one or two cadres.

Like any categorical line, especially if it is in the organisational field, this can lead to serious mistakes, of which we're already alerting now. It is a very grave mistake to separate comrades from the traditional meetings in the branch because we don't consider them cadres. And this, for different reasons:

1) Because our outwards expansion, towards the building of new rank-and-file groups of the party, is still in its early stages. It's a very bad thing to remove a comrade from an organism if there isn't already another organism in which to incorporate her. If we do so, we'll lose many valuable comrades.

2) Because our outwards expansion being still weak, we have no criteria, objective evidence as to who responds as cadre and who doesn't. We would be dividing cadres and rank-and-file militants in the laboratory of our heads, instead of making it in the laboratory of party activity and the class struggle. This way we will lose many potential cadres, who could become so if we guide them and help them in their activity, who want to be but are not there yet.

3) Because, as with any process, it has a transition. The revolution is to ensure that our meetings become cadres' meetings because of their content: we discussed, we plan, we vote and the activity is controlled as if they were all cadres. But nobody is separated from the meetings of cadres for now. Those who are not up for the standard of the meeting will notice it and they will naturally want to change to another kind of meetings, of rank-and-file, where they will feel comfortable.

4) Because we are very poor to correctly locate the comrades, as we shall see later. And we shouldn't dismiss anyone as cadre until we have made all the efforts and offered them all possible variants, placements and stimuli for them to get excited and take in full the activity of a cadre.

Therefore, in this transition, the hierarchy of cadres should be done according to a fundamental criterion: enthusiasm, passion for the activity. First of all, a passion for selling the newspaper. And also, the passion for any activity in the class struggle and the building of the party.

The great task of the leadership: placing, giving initiative and motivating cadres and militants

It happens quite often that we dismiss as cadres comrades who are active all day and every day or are brilliant in some aspect of party work just because they don't do well the core activities of the stage: now, for example, to sell newspapers and build party groups. We are against doing this. If cadres don't perform for the party, it's not their responsibility but the regional leadership's, who have failed to place them in an activity where they perform, or to excite them, motivate them for activity.

It is quite common for us to be unilateral, formal, dogmatic, administrative. That we aspire for all cadres and militants to do the same task and in the same way. And, in this way, we let them move away or not perform for the party valuable comrades who are not good at or don't know how or don't feel comfortable doing that task. If in a team of cadres, we find that they all do union work, for example, all sell the same number of newspapers, etc., something is very wrong. We either have already let go of other cadres who had different characteristics, instead of placing them where they can perform. Or we're forcing everyone to do the same, and the majority of the comrades feel bad, depressed, uncomfortable, and still active only through discipline and morale, many of them approaching crisis.

This same thing may also be moved to the new party groups that we are forming. If the rank-and-file cadre has not seen the regional directorate organising it with a correct method, he will move this same bureaucratic or administrative method to new comrades in the new groups. There, the harmful results will be seen even faster, precisely because they are new and have not yet reached the level of discipline of the cadres. Simply, the comrades will think, “I’m no good at what the party is asking me”, and move away.

The great task of the leadership, at whatever level, party, regional or of the group, is to organise the activity of cadres and militants. This means: place them, give them initiative and motivate them.

Place means to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each comrade and to propose to them a task accordingly. Not to require from the shy to agitate at railway stations. Not to require from the opener, who is a messy whirlwind, to make the same systematic work of a comrade follower, who works in-depth and bites like a bulldog. No to impose on the comrade who sells 20 newspapers in the neighbourhood, which is happy talking to Doña Clotilde, the greengrocer, that she let go of everything and go picket at factory gates, where she doesn’t sell anything.

Give initiative means that once we detect what a comrade is good at, and chatting with him we agree on the task to be done, we encourage him to think, propose, plan. We want him to have ideas. Surely his ideas will be much better than ours. And, if they are not, he is making the experience. We have to be careful to avoid like the plague regimenting the activity of the comrades, imposing on them to do things that we come up with and how they come to our mind.

Motivate, has a dual meaning. First, that the comrade carries out the task with pleasure, that he feels happy, accomplished. That he himself see that he is progressing as he advances in his activity. And that he is doing for the party what he wants to do. Second, that the comrade sees that his activity is useful to the party, that his views are heard and useful for the party. We specialise in insensitivity. In throwing buckets of icy water on comrades who are happy because they have done something and we don’t pay them attention, don’t highlight before the team the initiative from this comrade, don’t congratulate him on that activity, we don’t help them to draw conclusions and see how best to move on. Why is that? Because this task had departed from the “sacred scripture” of the moment.

For example, if a comrade wants to organise a football tournament between local or regional factories, rather than motivating and encouraging him to do so and get to think about how the party can take advantage of it to strengthen the bonds of fellowship, informally discuss the ongoing activity on the factories, bring more supporters to integrate them the party, chat about the situation in factories, etc., we probably think the opposite: we try to discourage him because this doesn’t help us immediately to increase the number of newspapers sold or build new groups. This comrade will never again have another idea, and if he does, he won’t propose it.

As we see, this task of organising by placing, giving initiative and motivating comrades is the opposite of the administrative methods we often use. For the administrator, each comrade is a number and the same goes for every newspaper placed. A report is rendered: we have so many cadres, so many militants, so many groups and sell so many newspapers ... and that’s it! For the true organiser, each cadre, group, militant and reader of the newspaper is a human being or human organism and, for that matter, different from each other, unlike numbers, which are all the same.

Only by training them and helping to train all the cadres with this criterion, we will be able to make progress towards building a mass party.

A major obstacle: our sectarianism

To advance on the path that we propose we have a huge obstacle: our sectarianism. Our party has not always been sectarian. We were in the beginning when we were a very small group but by going to the working class we learned and overcome sectarianism. From then, until the construction of the PRT (La Verdad), we had other deviations. For example, we were workerist and didn’t give importance to the work on the student sector, limiting ourselves greatly in our chances of winning

revolutionary intellectuals to multiply the formation of cadres. Sectarianism starts when the party gets bigger, with the PST, which thrived principally by the student vanguard who fought Onganía and later, the hundreds, even thousands, who emerged after the Cordobazo and with the 1973 elections. As early as 1973 or 1974 we discovered an infernal law: the more we grew, the more sectarian we became.

We had read wise Marxists to talk about the totality which the German Social Democracy was, to explain why they should not break up with it or why it had many members who did not want to break up with it. The German Social Democracy was a microcosm, which drew millions of votes, had theatres, clubs, trade unions, dance halls, libraries, sexual liberation clubs. In its bosom, there were answers to almost all the concerns and needs that a person could have. Here [in Argentina], too, socialism, anarchism and Stalinism were microcosms in their times of glory. They had choral societies (i.e., music bands and choirs) as well as clubs and libraries.

These microcosms are immersed in the real world, the capitalist, horrible, hostile society. Life inside them is much nicer than on the outside: it would seem we had accomplished socialism already. A centripetal trend is formed; we want to live within the party.

It's an unfortunate trend: believing that everything is already solved when nothing has been resolved, since capitalist society is still there, alive and well, ready to destroy with a lash the microcosm. This is what happened to the German Social Democracy: Hitler destroyed it and its clubs, libraries and unions.

This same trend emerged among us when we became a party of several thousand. Within the party, the comrades found a microcosm, a socialist islet in the capitalist ocean. That is partially true: we have different moral and human relations, free, supportive and fraternal, diametrically opposed to those happening outside the party. If a boy and a girl like each other, they can have a direct and frank relationship, without going through all these procedures required by a hypocritical bourgeois pseudo-moral. If there are comrades on strike or unemployed, the party and the militants are in solidarity with them...

This pushes them towards living within the party and not to go out to a "hostile", non-fraternal world. They begin to like meetings more than the class struggle. We use our own language that no one who doesn't have several months of the party at least understands. It is very common, for example, in meetings where there are brand new comrades, we say "structure" rather than a place of work, study or home. We prefer a party of the party to a magnificent dance in a working-class neighbourhood. We tend to chat with party comrades and not workers from the outside. And a thousand other examples.

To make matters worse, we are not the German Social Democracy. Being a sectarian party with millions of votes and tens of thousands of activists is serious but much more understandable. But being a sectarian party of a few thousand members and still not having mass influence is a tragedy. And every time we gained 500 new members, there was a new sectarian nudge. Instead of continuing to grow, we would get to live inside and make of the new 500 comrades 500 new sectarians.

Sectarianism is manifested, as we have seen, in the administrative way of allocating tasks to the cadres and militants. We don't allocate them taking into account their relationship with society and the class struggle, i.e., answering the question: What can this comrade do in his factory, neighbourhood or school? We allocate them depending on what we assume are the objectives voted by leadership: everybody to picket factories, for example.

But it is also expressed in our relations with the political phenomena and currents that exist in society. Because of this sectarian trend. we could not do strong, intense work on the thousands of new workers' and students' leaders, honest and extremely militant who were nucleated in the JTP [Peronist Youth Workers], the Montoneros and class-struggle unionism in the previous stage. For us, anybody outside the party or who didn't agree we were right from the word go was a petty-bourgeois, counterrevolutionary, enemy of us and the working class. We were able to win for our

party too few comrades out of those thousands of vanguard fighters; although in this balance we must not hide the key reason for our failure: the overwhelming power of Peronism.

This sectarian trend becomes manifest itself again now as we grow. It is very difficult for us to make the comrades take with enthusiasm the work to go to the PI, CP, *Franja Morada*.²⁴ It doesn't cross our mind that the Revolutionary Socialist Party which already has some strength, like us, must have members in all other organisations. And if we open dialogue with someone from another organisation, we get anxious to win them quickly and individually, calling them harshly if we fail, instead of letting them mature, treat them with respect and respect their own rate of development. We have to fight this sectarian tendency. If we don't overcome it, the party stagnates and ends up going backwards.

The fight against sectarianism is impossible if we don't have absolute security and trust in our positions and our class. If our positions are correct and if the words of Marx are true, "The liberation of the workers is the task of the workers themselves", we have to know that most of the comrades of other parties with whom we deal in our daily activity, sooner or later they will be of our party. Every worker, every wage earner, every plebeian or with progressive concerns student will come, or at least may come to our party. If not next month, it will be in a year, two, three ... At the end of the road, we're going to meet because the path of our party is what deep down, with more or less awareness, they are all looking for and want to go along.

We're not talking about the old cadres ankylosed in the Stalinist or trade union apparatus, or the scum of the Peronist or Radical apparatus. They already have their interests, which are measured in most cases in pesos or dollars. But we do talk about those sympathetic to them or who are members or grassroots cadres of them because they honestly believe that thus they fight against imperialism and the oligarchy, or for democratic freedoms and against the genocidal, or for an improvement in the workers' standard of living, or even for socialism. Some might even have been in our party but they see us with no prospects because we are small, we get few votes, don't have the support of any workers' state...

Our party has everything in common with these comrades. We want the same thing they want. We don't consider them our enemies because they are with another organisation (or they are anti-party). Our enemies, of the working class and the revolution, are their parties and leaders, not them. They are our comrades in the struggle.

Let's imagine a Stalinist kid, full of concerns. He's on the CP because he thinks it's the best party of the left, which is further to the left. Or perhaps he already realises it isn't so left but believes it is the only one who can achieve positive results. Or he's there because the CP defends Nicaragua. If we have confidence in our class, in our comrades in the struggle, for us this Stalinist kid is formidable. He is a strong candidate to become a militant of our party, once he makes the experience with his party... As long as we are not sectarian with him.

What would a sectarian discuss? That Stalinism betrayed the Spanish revolution, that the Argentine CP was Videla's partner, that Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy, gave the order of Annunziata to Stalin, that Stalin betrayed the Chinese revolution. This kid doesn't know who Victor Manuel or Chiang Kai shek is. From the Spanish Civil War, he only knows the songs. And on the political line of the CP towards Videla, he's not convinced that it was so because otherwise, he would have already broken up with it.

A non-sectarian would start by having clear but fraternal political relations and would propose to him the unity of action. **Clarity:** We strongly disagree with the policy of your leadership. **Fraternity:** We are fighters of the working class and to me, you're a comrade in the struggle. **Unity of action:** How can we work together? Do we do something together for Nicaragua? Do we support a strike together? Do we fight together against the expulsion of that secondary school comrade of yours who was expelled because he sold *¿Que Pasa?*²⁵

24 **Franja Morada** (Purple Sash) is an Argentinian university political current born in 1967 and politically linked to the bourgeois UCR. It led the Argentina University Federation (FUA) several times

25 *¿Que Pasa?* [What Happens?], newspaper of the Communist Party of Argentina from February 1981 to October 1989.

If we come on as sectarians, that kid is going to believe we're pedants, caught up with ourselves, who don't achieve anything, who are just argumentative, and we only want to win arguments (which would be true in this case). It is a serious flaw. Never does a revolutionary socialist give the impression that he wants to win an argument. Always he tries to show that he wants practical arrangements to do something to advance the workers and mass movements.

But to do that, you have to trust that Stalinist kid. We have to say to ourselves: "What magnificent kid! The Stalinists won him, but I'll be more skilled than them". We don't get angry; don't overwhelm him in polemics. We discuss, yes, permanently, but riding on the proposals for common action. Sooner or later the historical process will go in our favour and will bring the Stalinist kid to our ranks.

Let's not mention how terrible can sectarianism be if, instead of a militant, we set out to argue to win the discussion with the hundreds of thousands of rank-and-file Peronist workers, hundreds of pro-Alfonsin workers, supporters of the CP or IMP (Peronist Intransigence and Mobilisation) with whom we dialogue in our daily activity.

Recruiting and the opportunist danger

Only by overcoming sectarianism will we succeed in what, in general terms, is the great task we propose: to recruit for the party. The other side of sectarianism is opportunism: we don't introduce ourselves to the world as MAS. We only do it when the comrade is already close to the party. If he is part of another party or tells us he wants nothing with parties, we don't do the political fight and fall into confusing, unclear relationships, or directly in deviations. For example, if he's a union activist we do only unionism with him. Thus, we cannot recruit.

How to recruit? This simple: every person you want to recruit is told: "Look, I want you to come to the party". Anywhere we go, as soon as we greet, we add: "I'm from the MAS". We should not be ashamed to say we are from the MAS, or to offer the newspaper, or to ask for money for the party. Many, to our surprise, are going to respond, "That's what I was expecting, that you offered me your paper or invited me to your party". Neither is it sectarian if they say no. We remain as fraternal as usual and, once a month, we repeat it: "Are you sure you don't want to come to the party?"

It is essential to create these anti-opportunist and anti-sectarian reflexes within the party. The reflex that, with anyone we talk, with we introduce ourselves as MAS and offer them the newspaper. Everyone needs to know we are of the MAS and that we want to win them for the MAS.

Recently there was a big strike where the party participated with everything and directed it. Throughout the strike, we made little of the ongoing meeting of the workers at the soup kitchen and did not do propaganda, courses and chats of the party. There was no one to say: "Comrades, what is supporting you with everything is my party, I'm speaking on behalf of my party, I propose you come to my party." The comrade from the leadership who went started to give courses and lectures but it all appeared as something very mysterious: everyone knew he was from the MAS but the only one not saying he was from the MAS was him.

We discussed it and we told him: "we recruit... by recruiting". The next day, at the course he said, "Look comrades, I'm giving courses because I am from the MAS and the plan that I have, frankly, is to recruit all of you for my party when we finish the course." The answer was: "We had been expecting that for a while ..." That was the first large recruiting we made in recent times.

We must ensure that reflex, like the CP or the PI, the first thing they do is ask, "Are you a member? No? Then, become a member." Stalinism adds: "Come to our branch, meet with us." We have to have this same obsession: to win for the party.

For that, we must be nimble. We ensure that people trust us, that they feel comfortable with us. We're not burdensome. We don't issue imperatives. Because it is very common that first, we're too shy to propose the recruiting and, once we propose it, we start to pursue them. We don't make the effort to see whether they really want to come to the party or not, whether or not they want to

do something for the party. Often comrades don't come into the party or leave it because we pester them more than evangelists. They don't notice that we act according to what they want to do and what they think, not what we want and we think.

When he isn't convinced that we shouldn't pay the foreign debt, we argue and argue with him. We should do the opposite: find another subject; maybe he comes around with human rights, or to oust the bureaucracy, or because he sees that we fight against Alfonsín and he hates Alfonsín because he's a *gorilla*. And he may become a great comrade for the party even when for a time in every meeting he pesters us that we have to pay the debt because debt is a matter of honour.

Many comrades don't want to come to the party or meetings. Since they respect us or are our friends, they give us the round around to avoid telling us no. At heart, they hope we'll tell them that if they don't want to come, then don't come and we remain as friends and as comrades as ever. We don't know how to do this either. We always go to one of two extremes: either we have a tremendous fear to tell them to come to the party or we pester them unbearably to enter.

Something else we don't know how to do is to recruit groups. When we came into contact with a group we also go to extremes: either we want to win them one by one, individually, or we never rise to the group as a whole to come to the party, or we commit both errors simultaneously.

If we want to recruit a group individually, for instance, five or six workers who meet us at the end of a factory shift and buy the newspaper from us because they see we support them against the bosses and the bureaucracy, we destroy the group. We win one but the group is divided. Sooner or later, others will learn that one meets separately with the party. They don't understand why. Distrust begins. "Why didn't they invite us all? Why do they meet behind our backs? Do they want to use us without us noticing?" In this climate, we cannot recruit anyone.

But all too often we go to the other extreme: for fear of losing, we don't bet on ourselves to win the whole group. We think: "If I propose it now, of the five or six comrades only two or three will accept. Better wait a little longer, until they all are ripe." Often, we lose them all.

We learned from the American comrades of the Socialist Workers Party that you never win without losing. (Look at the importance an International has! Among other things you learn a lot.) There is an opportunity to recruit, as for anything else. Every person and every human group have a process: if they come towards us and we don't catch them in time, they leave or, exceptionally, they're left spinning in a vacuum. But within the group, not everyone has the same dynamic and or matures at the same time to be recruited. We must have the courage and the serenity of knowing that when we tell the group that we want to recruit them, we will lose something.

If we have a group of five comrades, we choose the time for raising their membership in the party and we tell ourselves: "There are five. I ask them to come to the party. If I lose only one, it's excellent. If I lose two it's good. If I lose three it's bad enough but better than nothing; winning only two isn't a disaster. End of problem: I'm going to define the situation." Later, calmly, we must take stock to learn. We wanted to win four and only won two. Why is that? Did we hurry? Did we miss the best time and raised it too late? Did we have a poor characterisation of the comrades? Did we do the political work poorly? Were they only union relations or of friendship? And so on. Thus, we learn and next time we'll do better.

Appendix:

Third Congress of the Communist International

Guidelines on the Organisational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work

These theses were approved on 12 July 1921 by the Third Congress of the Communist International (Third International). Therefore, they correspond to a time when under the impact of the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 the old reformist socialist parties (which were of masses) split giving birth to the new revolutionary communist parties. While one can disagree, over 60 years later, with one or several of these theses, they are a “classic” text, that all scientific socialists should know when developing a political-organisational response to new the needs and possibilities posed by the revolutionary situation in our country. Such is our goal to publish this selection.

All highlights as per the original document. The text is taken from the Prometheus Research Library (<http://www.prl.org/prs/prs1/guidelines1.html>).

(Excerpts)

I. General

1. The organisation of the party must be adapted to the conditions and purpose of its activity. The Communist Party should be the vanguard, the front-line troops of the proletariat, leading in all phases of its revolutionary class struggle and the subsequent transitional period toward the realisation of socialism, the first stage of communist society.

2. There can be no absolutely correct, immutable organisational form for communist parties. The conditions of the proletarian class struggle are subject to changes in an unceasing process of transformation; the organisation of the vanguard of the proletariat must also constantly seek appropriate forms corresponding to these changes. Similarly, the historically determined characteristics of each individual country condition particular forms of adaptation in the organisation of the individual parties.

But this differentiation has definite limits. Despite all peculiarities, the *identity* of the conditions of the proletarian class struggle in the various countries and in the different phases of the proletarian revolution is of fundamental importance to the international communist movement. This identity constitutes the common basis for the organisation of the communist parties of all countries. (...)

3. Common to the conditions of struggle of most communist parties and therefore to the Communist International as the overall party of the revolutionary world proletariat is that they must still struggle against the ruling bourgeoisie. For all the parties, victory over the bourgeoisie—wresting power from its hands— remains at present the key goal, giving direction to all their work.

Accordingly, it is absolutely crucial that all organisational work of communist parties in the capitalist countries be considered from the standpoint of constructing an organisation which makes possible and ensures the victory of the proletarian revolution over the possessing classes.

5. (...) successful leadership absolutely presupposes the closest *ties with the proletarian masses*. Without these ties the leadership will not lead the masses but will at best trail after them.

In its organisation, the communist party seeks to achieve these organic ties through democratic centralism.

II. On Democratic Centralism

6. Democratic centralism in the communist party organisation should be a real *synthesis*, a *fusion* of centralism and proletarian democracy. This fusion can be attained only on the basis of the constant common *activity*, the constant common *struggle* of the entire party organisation.

Centralisation in the communist party organisation doesn't mean a formal and mechanical centralisation but rather a *centralisation of communist activity*, i.e., building a *leadership* which is strong, quick to react and at the same time flexible.

Formal or mechanical centralisation would mean centralisation of "power" in the hands of a party bureaucracy in order to *dominate* the rest of the membership or the masses of the revolutionary proletariat outside the party. (...)

III. On Communists' Obligation to do Work

8. The Communist Party should be a *working school of revolutionary Marxism*. Organic links are forged between the various parts of the organisation and among individual members by day-to-day collective work in the party organisations.

In the legal communist parties, most members still don't participate regularly in daily party work. This is the chief defect of these parties, which puts a question mark over their development.

9. When a worker's party takes the first steps toward transformation into a communist party, there is always the danger that it will be content simply to adopt a communist program, substitute communist doctrine for the former doctrine in its propaganda, and merely replace the hostile functionaries with ones who have communist consciousness. But adopting a communist program is only a statement of the will to become communist. If communist activity isn't forthcoming, and if in organising party work the passivity of the mass of the membership is perpetuated, the party isn't fulfilling even the least of what it has promised to the proletariat by adopting the communist program. Because *the first condition* for seriously carrying out this program is the *integration of all members into ongoing daily work*.

The art of communist organisation consists in making use of everything and everyone in the proletarian class struggle, distributing party work suitably among *all* party members and using the membership to continually draw ever wider masses of the proletariat into the revolutionary movement, while at the same time keeping the leadership of the entire movement firmly in hand, not by virtue of power but by virtue of authority, i.e., by virtue of energy, greater experience, greater versatility, greater ability.

10. Thus, in its effort to have only really active members, a communist party must demand of *every* member in its ranks that he devote his time and energy, insofar as they are at his own disposal under the given conditions, to his party and that he always give his best in its service.

Obviously, besides the requisite commitment to communism, membership in the Communist Party involves as a rule: formal admission, possibly first as a candidate, then as a member; regular payment of established dues; subscription to the party press, etc. Most important, however, is the participation of *every member* in daily party work.

11. In order to carry out daily party work, every party member should as a rule always be part of a *smaller working group* — a group, a committee, a commission, a board or a collegium, a fraction or cell. Only in this way can party work be properly allocated, directed and carried out.

Participation in the general membership meetings of the local organisations also goes without saying. Under conditions of legality, it isn't wise to choose to substitute meetings of local delegates for these periodic membership meetings; on the contrary, *all* members must be *required* to attend these meetings *regularly*. But that is by no means enough. Proper preparation of these meetings in itself presupposes work in smaller groups or work by designated comrades, just like preparations for effective interventions in general meetings of workers, demonstrations and mass working-class actions. The many and varied tasks involved in such work can be carefully examined and intensively executed only by smaller groups. Unless such constant detailed work is performed by the entire membership, divided into numerous small working groups, even the most energetic participation in the class struggles of the proletariat will lead us only to impotent, futile attempts to influence these struggles and not to the necessary concentration of all vital, revolutionary forces of the proletariat in a communist party which is unified and capable of action.

12. Communist *nuclei* are to be formed for day-to-day work in different areas of party activity: for door-to-door agitation, for party studies, for press work, for literature distribution, for intelligence-gathering, communications, etc.

Communist *cells* are nuclei for daily communist work in plants and workshops, in trade unions, in workers cooperatives, in military units, etc.— wherever there are at least a few members or candidate members of the Communist Party. (...)

13. Introducing the general obligation to do work in the party and organising these small working groups is an especially difficult task for communist *mass parties*. It cannot be carried out overnight but demands *unflagging perseverance, careful consideration and much energy*.

It is particularly important that, from the outset, this re organisation be carried out with care and extensive deliberation. It would be easy to assign all members in each organisation to small cells and groups according to some formal scheme and then without further ado call on them to do general day-to-day party work. But such a beginning would be worse than no beginning at all and would quickly provoke dissatisfaction and antipathy among the membership toward this important innovation.

It is recommended as a first step that the party leadership work out in detail preliminary guidelines for introducing this innovation through extensive consultation with several capable organisers who are both firmly convinced, dedicated communists and precisely informed as to the state of the movement in the various centres of struggle in the country. Then, on the local level, organisers or organisational committees which have been suitably instructed must prepare the work at hand, select the first group leaders and directly initiate the first steps. The organisations, working groups, cells and individual members must then be given very concrete, precisely defined tasks, and in such a way that they see the work as immediately useful, desirable and practicable. Where necessary one should demonstrate by example how to carry out the assignments, at the same time drawing attention to those errors which are to be particularly avoided.

14. (...) The old framework of the organisation cannot be blindly smashed before the new organisational apparatus is functioning to some extent.

Nevertheless, this fundamental task of communist organisational work must be carried out everywhere with the greatest energy. This places great demands not only on a legal party but also on every illegal one. Until a widespread network of communist cells, fractions and working groups is functioning at all focal points of the proletarian class struggle, until every member of a strong, purposeful party is participating in daily revolutionary work and this participation has become second nature, the party must not rest in its efforts to carry out this task.

15. This fundamental organisational task obligates the leading party bodies to exercise continual, tireless and direct leadership of and systematic influence on the party's work. This demands the most varied efforts from those comrades who are part of the leadership of the party organisations. The leaders of communist work must not only see to it that the comrades in fact have party work to do; they must assist the comrades, directing their work systematically and expertly, with precise

information as to the particular conditions they are working in. They must also try to uncover any mistakes made in their own work, attempt to constantly improve their methods of work on the basis of experience, and at the same time strive never to lose sight of the goal of the struggle. (...)

17. In a communist organisation the obligation to do work necessarily includes the duty to *report*. This applies to all organisations and bodies of the party as well as to each individual member. General reports covering short periods of time must be made regularly. They must cover the fulfilment of special party assignments in particular. It is important to enforce the duty to report so systematically that it takes root as one of the best traditions in the communist movement.

IV. On Propaganda and Agitation

20. In the period prior to the open revolutionary uprising our most general task is revolutionary propaganda and agitation. This activity, and the organisation of it, is often in large part still conducted in the old formal manner, through casual intervention from the outside at mass meetings, without particular concern for the concrete revolutionary content of our speeches and written material.

Communist propaganda and agitation must above all root itself deep in the midst of the proletariat. It must grow out of the concrete life of the workers, out of their common interests and aspirations and particularly out of their common struggles.

The most important aspect of communist propaganda is the revolutionising effect of its content. Our slogans and positions on concrete questions in different situations must always be carefully weighed from this standpoint. Not only the professional propagandists and agitators, but all other party members as well, must receive ongoing and thorough instruction so they can arrive at correct positions.

21. The main forms of communist propaganda and agitation are: individual discussion; participation in the struggles of the trade-union and political workers' movement; impact through the party's press and literature. Every member of a legal or illegal party should in some way participate regularly in all this work.

Propaganda through individual discussion must be systematically organised as *door-to-door agitation* and conducted by working groups established for this purpose. Not a single house within the local party organisation's area of influence can be left out in this agitation. In larger cities, especially organised *street agitation* in conjunction with posters and leaflets can also yield good results. Furthermore, at the workplace, the cells or fractions must conduct regular agitation on an individual level, combined with literature distribution. (...)

22. In conducting propaganda in those capitalist countries where the great majority of the proletariat doesn't yet possess conscious revolutionary inclinations, communists must constantly search for more effective methods of work in order to intersect the non-revolutionary worker as he begins his revolutionary awakening, making the revolutionary movement comprehensible and accessible to him. Communist propaganda should use its slogans to reinforce the budding, unconscious, partial, wavering and semi-bourgeois tendencies toward revolutionary politics which in various situations are wrestling in his brain against bourgeois traditions and propaganda.

At the same time, communist propaganda must not be restricted to the present limited, vague demands or aspirations of the proletarian masses. The revolutionary kernel in these demands and aspirations is only the necessary point of departure for our intervention because only by making these links can the workers be brought closer to an understanding of communism.

23. Communist agitation among the proletarian masses must be conducted in such a way that workers engaged in struggle recognise our communist organisation as the courageous, sensible, energetic and unswervingly devoted leader of their own common movement.

To achieve this the communists *must take part in all the elementary struggles and movements of the working class* and must *fight for* the workers' cause in every conflict with the capitalists over hours, wages, working conditions, etc. In doing this the communists must become intimately involved in the

concrete questions of working-class life; they must help the workers untangle these questions, call their attention to the most important abuses and help them formulate the demands directed at the capitalists precisely and practically; attempt to develop among the workers the sense of solidarity, awaken their consciousness to the common interests and the common cause of all workers of the country as a united working class constituting a section of the world army of the proletariat.

Only through such absolutely necessary day-to-day work, through continual self-sacrificing participation in all struggles of the proletariat, can the “Communist Party” develop into a *communist* party. Only thus will it distinguish itself from the obsolete socialist parties, which are merely propaganda and recruiting parties, whose activity consists only of collecting members, speechifying about reforms and exploiting parliamentary impossibilities. The purposeful and self-sacrificing participation of the entire party membership in the school of the daily struggles and conflicts of the exploited with the exploiters is the indispensable precondition not only for the conquest of power, but, to an even greater extent, for exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only the *leadership of the working masses in constant small-scale battles* against the encroachments of capital will enable the communist parties to become vanguards of the working-class vanguards which in fact systematically learn to lead the proletariat and acquire the capacity for the consciously prepared ouster of the bourgeoisie.

24. Particularly in strikes, lockouts and other mass dismissals of workers, the communists must be mobilised in force to take part in the movement of the workers.

It is the greatest error for communists to invoke the communist program and the final armed revolutionary struggle as an excuse to *passively* look down on or even to oppose the present struggles of the workers for small improvements in their working conditions. No matter how small and modest the demands for which the workers are ready to fight the capitalists today, this must never be a reason for communists to abstain from the struggle. To be sure, in our agitational work we communists should not show ourselves to be blind instigators of stupid strikes and other reckless actions; rather, the communists everywhere must earn the reputation among the struggling workers as their ablest comrades in struggle.

26. In the struggle against the social-democratic and other petty-bourgeois leaders of the trade unions and various workers parties, there can be no hope of obtaining anything by persuading them. The struggle against them must be organised with the utmost energy. However, the only sure and successful way to combat them is to split away their supporters by convincing the workers that their social-traitor leaders are lackeys of capitalism. Therefore, where possible these leaders must first be put into situations in which they are forced to *unmask themselves*; after such preparation they can then be attacked in the sharpest way.

It is by no means enough to simply curse the Amsterdam leaders as “yellow.” Rather, their “yellowness” must be proved continually by practical examples. Their activity in joint industrial councils, in the International Labour Office of the League of Nations, in bourgeois ministries and administrations; the treacherous words in their speeches at conferences and in parliamentary bodies; the key passages in their many conciliatory hack articles in hundreds of newspapers; and in particular their vacillating and hesitant behaviour in preparing and conducting even the most minor wage struggles and strikes—all this provides daily opportunities to expose and brand the unreliable and treacherous doings of the Amsterdam leaders as “yellow” through simply formulated motions, resolutions and straightforward speeches.

The cells and fractions must conduct their practical offensives *systematically*. The excuses of lower-level union bureaucrats, who barricade themselves behind statutes, union conference decisions and instructions from the top leadership out of weakness (often even despite good will), must not hinder the communists from going ahead with tenacity and repeatedly demanding that the lower-level bureaucrats state clearly what they have done to remove these ostensible obstacles and whether they are ready to fight openly alongside the membership to surmount these obstacles.

28. Communists must learn how to be ever more effective in drawing *unorganised*, politically unconscious workers into the sphere of lasting party influence. Through our cells and fractions we

should induce these workers to join trade unions and read our party press. Other workers associations (cooperatives, organisations of war victims, educational associations and study circles, sports clubs, theatre groups, etc.) can also be used to transmit our influence. (...) For many proletarians who have remained politically indifferent, communist *youth and women's organisations* can first arouse interest in a common organisational life through courses, reading groups, excursions, festivals, Sunday outings, etc. Such workers can then be drawn permanently close to the organisations and in this way also induced to aid our party with useful work (distributing leaflets, circulating party newspapers, pamphlets, etc.). They will overcome their petty-bourgeois inclinations most easily through such active participation in the common movement.

29. In order to win the *semi-proletarian layers* of the working population as sympathisers of the revolutionary proletariat, communists must utilize these intermediate layers' particular conflicts of interest with the big landowners, the capitalists and the capitalist state, and overcome their mistrust of the proletarian revolution through continual persuasion. This may often require prolonged interaction with them. Their confidence in the communist movement can be promoted by sympathetic interest in their daily needs, free information and assistance in overcoming small difficulties which they are at a loss to solve, drawing them to special free public educational meetings, etc. Meanwhile, it is necessary for communists to cautiously and untiringly counteract opponent organisations and individuals who possess authority locally or have influence on labouring small peasants, cottage workers and other semi-proletarian elements. The most immediate enemies of the exploited, whom they know as oppressors from their own experience, must be exposed as the representatives and personification of the whole criminal capitalist system. Communist propaganda and agitation must intensively exploit in comprehensible terms all day-to-day events which bring the state bureaucracy into conflict with the ideals of petty-bourgeois democracy and the "rule of law." (...)

V. On the Organisation of Political Struggles

31. For a communist party there is no time when the party organisation cannot be politically active. The organisational exploitation of every political and economic situation, and of every change in these situations, must be developed into organisational strategy and tactics.

Even if the party is still weak, it can exploit politically stirring events or major strikes that convulse the whole economy by carrying out a well-planned and systematically organised radical propaganda campaign. Once a party has decided that such a campaign is appropriate, it must energetically concentrate all members and sections of the party on it.

First, the party must make use of all the ties it has forged through the work of its cells and working groups to organise meetings in the main centres of political organisation or of the strike movement. In these meetings the party's speakers must make the communist slogans clear to the participants as the way out of their plight. Special working groups must prepare these meetings well, down to the last detail. If it isn't possible to hold our own meetings, suitable comrades should intervene as major speakers during the discussion at general meetings of workers on strike or engaged in other struggles.

If there is a prospect of winning over the majority or a large part of the meeting to our slogans, an attempt must be made to express these slogans in well-formulated and skilfully motivated motions and resolutions. (...)

Depending on the situation, we must make our operational slogans accessible to interested layers of workers with posters and flyers, or else distribute detailed leaflets to those engaged in struggle, using the slogans of the day to make communism comprehensible in the context of the situation. (...) Detailed leaflets should if possible be distributed only in buildings, plants, halls, apartment buildings or wherever else we can expect they will be read attentively.

(...) Most of the space in our party newspapers, and the papers' best arguments, must be placed at the disposal of such a particular movement, just as the entire organisational apparatus must be wholly and unflinchingly dedicated to the general aim of the movement for its duration.

33. Communist parties which have already achieved a certain amount of internal cohesion, a tested corps of functionaries and a considerable mass following must do their utmost through major campaigns to completely overcome the influence of the social-traitor leaders over the working class and to bring the majority of the working masses under communist leadership. The way the campaigns are organised will depend on the situation — on whether current struggles enable the party to move to the forefront as the proletarian leadership, or whether temporary stagnation prevails. The composition of the party will also be a decisive factor for the organisational methods of campaigns. For example, the so-called "Open Letter" was used by the VKPD [United Communist Party of Germany] in order to win over the crucial social layers of the proletariat more effectively than was otherwise then possible for a young mass party to do in the individual districts. To unmask the social-traitor leaders, the Communist Party approached the other mass organisations of the proletariat at a time of increasing impoverishment and sharpening class antagonisms, demanding openly before the proletariat an answer as to whether these leaders—with their supposedly powerful organisations—were prepared to take up the struggle together with the Communist Party against the obvious impoverishment of the proletariat, for the most minimal demands, for a measly crust of bread. (...)

34. If the Communist Party attempts to take the leadership of the masses into its hands at a time of acute political and economic tensions leading to the outbreak of new movements and struggles, it can dispense with raising special demands and appeal in simple and popular language directly to the members of the socialist parties and trade unions not to abstain from the struggles necessitated by their misery and increasing oppression at the hands of the employers. Even if their bureaucratic leaders are opposed, the ranks must fight if they are to avoid being driven to complete ruin. (...) It must be proved day in and day out that without these struggles the working class will no longer have any possibilities for existence and that, despite this fact, the old organisations are trying to avoid and obstruct these struggles.

The plant and trade-union fractions, continually pointing to the communists' combativeness and willingness to sacrifice, must make it clear to their fellow workers in meetings that abstention from the struggle is no longer possible. The main task in such a campaign, however, is to organisationally consolidate and unify all struggles and movements born of the situation. (...) The organisation's primary job is to place what is common to these various struggles in sharp relief and bring it into the foreground, in order to urge a general solution to the struggle, by political means if necessary.

(...) If the movement assumes a political character as a result of becoming generalised and as a result of the intervention of employers' organisations and government authorities, then the election of workers councils may become possible and necessary, and propaganda and organisational preparation must be initiated for this. All party publications must then intensively put forward the idea that only through such organs of its own, arising directly from the workers' struggles, can the working class achieve its real liberation with the necessary ruthlessness, even without the trade-union bureaucracy and its socialist party satellites.

35. Communist parties which have already grown strong, particularly the large mass parties, should also take organisational measures to be continually armed for political mass actions. (...)

Unless the party organisation maintains the closest ties with the proletarian masses employed in the large and medium-sized factories, the Communist Party will not be able to achieve major mass actions and genuinely revolutionary movements. (...)

VI. On the Party Press

36. (...) Above all, every communist party must have a good, if possible, daily, *central organ*.

37. (...) the press of our mass parties will most quickly win unconditional respect through its intransigent attitude on all proletarian social questions. Our paper should not pander to an appetite for sensationalism or serve as entertainment for the public at large. It cannot yield to the criticism of petty-bourgeois literati or journalistic virtuosi in order to make itself “respectable”.

38. The communist newspaper must above all look after the interests of the oppressed struggling workers. It should be our best propagandist and agitator, the leading propagandist of the proletarian revolution.

Our paper has the task of collecting valuable experiences from the entirety of the work of party members and then of presenting these to party comrades as a guide for the continued review and improvement of communist methods of work. (...)

39. (...) It is not enough for a communist to be an active salesman and agitator for the paper; he must be an equally useful contributor to it. Every socially or economically noteworthy incident from the plant fraction or cell — from a shopfloor accident to a plant meeting, from the mistreatment of apprentices to the company financial report — is to be reported at once to the newspaper by the quickest route. The trade-union fractions must communicate all important resolutions and measures from the membership meetings and executive bodies of their unions, and they must report on any characteristic activity of our opponents succinctly and accurately. (...)

The editorial staff must treat this information, coming as it does from the life of the working class and workers organisations, with great warmth and affection. The editors should either use such material as short news items to give our paper the character of a vital working collective acquainted with real life; or they should use this material to make the teachings of communism comprehensible by means of these practical examples from the workers’ daily existence, which is the quickest way to make the great ideas of communism immediate and vivid to the broad working masses. (...)

40. The militant communist press is in its true element when it directly participates in campaigns led by the party. If the party’s work during a period of time is concentrated on a particular campaign, the party paper must place all of its space, not just the political lead articles, at the service of this campaign. The editorial department must draw on material from all areas to nourish this campaign and must saturate the whole paper with it in a suitable form and style.

VII. On the General Structure of the Party Organism

43. The extension and consolidation of the party must not proceed according to a formal scheme of geographic divisions but according to the real economic, political and transport/communications structure of the given areas of the country. Stress is to be placed primarily on the *main cities* and on the *major centres of the industrial proletariat*.

In beginning to build a new party there is often a tendency to immediately extend the network of party organisations over the entire country. Limited as the available forces are, they are thereby scattered to the four winds. This weakens the ability of the party to recruit and grow. (...)

45. (...) In the local party organisation the members are to be assigned to the various working groups for the purpose of doing daily party work. In larger organisations it may be useful to combine the working groups into various collective groups. As a rule those members who come into contact with one another at their workplaces or otherwise on a daily basis should be assigned to the same collective group. The collective group has the task of dividing the overall party work among the various working groups, obtaining reports from the heads of the working groups, training candidate members within their ranks, etc.

46. The party as a whole is *under the leadership of the Communist International*. (...)

47. The *central leadership of the party* (Central Committee or the Enlarged Central Committee) is responsible to the party congress and to the leadership of the Communist International. The narrower leading body as well as the enlarged committee, are as a rule elected by the party congress. (...) serious differences of opinion on tactical questions should not be suppressed in the election of the

central leadership. On the contrary, representation of these views in the overall leadership by their best spokesmen should be facilitated. The narrower leading body, however, should be homogeneous in its views if at all feasible and must — if it is to be able to lead firmly and with certainty — be able to rely not only on its authority but on a clear and even numerically fixed majority in the central leadership as a whole.

By thus constituting the central party leadership more broadly, the legal mass parties in particular will most quickly create for their central committee the best foundation of firm discipline: the unqualified confidence of the membership masses. Moreover, it will lead to more quickly recognising, curing and overcoming vacillations and disorders which may show up in the party's layers of functionaries. (...)

48. To be able to lead party work effectively in the different areas each of the leading party committees must implement a *practical division of labour* among its members. Here special leading bodies may prove necessary for a number of areas of work (e.g., for propaganda, for press work, for the trade-union struggle, for agitation in the countryside, agitation among women, for communication, Red Aid, etc.). Every special leading body is subordinate either to the central party leadership or to a district party committee. (...)

50. The *directives and decisions* of the leading party bodies are *binding* on subordinate organisations and on individual members.

The accountability of the leading bodies, and their obligation to guard against negligence and against misuse of their leading position, can be fixed on a formal basis only in part. The less formal accountability they have, for example in illegal parties, the more they are obligated to seek the opinion of other party members, to obtain reliable information regularly and to make their own decisions only after careful, comprehensive deliberation.

51. Party members are to conduct themselves in their public activity *at all times as disciplined members* of a combat organisation. When differences of opinion arise as to the correct course of action, these should as far as possible be decided beforehand within the party organisation and then action must be in accordance with this decision. In order, however, that every party decision be carried out with the greatest energy by all party organisations and members, the broadest mass of the party must whenever possible be involved in examining and deciding every question. (...) But even if the decisions of the organisation or of the party leadership are regarded as wrong by other members, these comrades must in their public activity never forget that it is the *worst breach of discipline* and the worst error in *combat* to *disrupt* or, worse, to *break the unity of the common front*.

It is the supreme duty of every party member to defend the Communist Party and above all the Communist International against all enemies of communism. Anyone who forgets this and instead publicly attacks the party or the Communist International is to be treated as an opponent of the party.

VIII. On the Combination of Legal and Illegal Work

53. Corresponding to the different phases in the process of the revolution, *changes in function can occur* in the daily life of every communist party. Basically, however, there is no essential difference in the party structure which a legal party on the one hand, and an illegal party on the other, must strive for.

The party must be organised so that it can at all times adapt itself quickly to changes in the conditions of struggle.

(...) It would be the gravest error for the party organisation to prepare for and expect only insurrections and street fighting or only conditions of the most severe repression. Communists must carry out their preparatory revolutionary work in *every situation and always be on combat footing*, because it is often almost impossible to predict the alternation between a period of upheaval and a period of quiescence; and even in cases where such foresight is possible it cannot generally be used

to reorganise the party, because the change usually occurs in a very short time, indeed often *quite suddenly*.

59. The communist organiser regards every single party member and *every* revolutionary worker from the outset as he will be in his *future historic role as soldier* in our combat organisation at the time of the revolution. Accordingly, he guides him in advance into *that* nucleus and *that* work which best corresponds to his future position and type of weapon. His work today must also be useful in itself, necessary for today's struggle, not merely a drill which the practical worker today doesn't understand. This same work, however, is also in part training for the important demands of tomorrow's final struggle.