



# **Nahuel Moreno**

**Memorandum for  
the reply of the  
PST(A) to the USec**

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## Memorandum for the reply of the PST(A) to the USec

1975

Translated from original manuscript

**English translation:** Daniel Iglesias

**Cover and interior design:** Daniel Iglesias

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[cehus2014@gmail.com](mailto:cehus2014@gmail.com)



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# Foreword

This material is an internal document of the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* [Socialist Workers Party, PST] of Argentina. It was written by Nahuel Moreno during the controversy developed in the Fourth International in 1974 and 1975 around the slogans of defence of bourgeois democracy raised by the PST given the danger of a possible *coup d'état* against the constitutionally elected Peronist government. This was not an official document for discussion at the XI World Congress of the Fourth International. We publish it as a theoretical-political contribution that touches on an important aspect of the question of democratic tasks and slogans under the bourgeois regime.

The present edition has been translated directly from the Spanish manuscript. Quotation references have been made to the English version of the quoted documents where possible.

The Editors

Buenos Aires, April 2017

## Introduction

This paper should be considered a memorandum to assist the work of the comrade delegate to the faction meeting. It has modifications in relation to the original taken by the comrade delegate, but these do not make to the content. Because of this, it is not contemplated a true factional discussion where one could point out the pro-guerrilla trajectory of the majority, the differences between a backwards and an advanced country and other points. If the minority comrades consider it appropriate, we can do — it would be the best — this historical-political discussion, to show that: first, the majority has been abandoning for Argentina, its program and its guerrilla strategy; second, the ignorance of the majority of the differences between the advanced and backward countries in terms of program and slogans. Our memorandum tries to respond to the attack on the same grounds of the attack and following the order of the concepts of the own majority. It is, therefore, a memorandum of conceptual response and not of political response.

**Nahuel Moreno**

5 January 1975

## CHAPTER I

# Some prior matters

1. With this new declaration, the majority of the Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International, unfortunately, continues the public controversy it began on 12 July last year when it attacked the PST for the alleged signing of a joint document with several bourgeois opposition parties and the CP. In our response to this attack, entitled “In Defence of the PST and the Truth”, we held that “ordinarily the matter would be discussed within the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement”. And we added that, given the public nature of the criticisms made by the majority of the USec, “compelling us, much to our regret, to reply in public”. In spite of this, our critics assert that by “request of the PST, the public discussion continues today”. This is a gratuitous statement since the PST did not initiate the public controversy, nor “requested” at any time to continue it.

This incorrect way of raising the issue has been complemented by an equally incorrect procedure and alien to the tradition of our movement — the organs that sympathise with the majority of the USec spread the public attack against the PST, but none of them did the same, up until now, with our response. This attitude contrasts with the attitude of the minority organs, which did not just publish the majority document but also did so with our response, allowing their readers a full and complete knowledge of the problem under discussion.

2. In their eagerness to obscure the controversy, our critics claim that the PST is responsible for the fact that the majority of the USec has believed that the supposed joint document had been signed by our party. In order to prove this, a series of facts are quoted — which prove precisely the opposite — and other facts are forgotten. This is how they insist we did not attend on three occasions the meetings of the USec to which we had been summoned.

A first fact is omitted — that a USec member visited us shortly after the alleged signature (and prior to the USec meeting in which the public attack was voted) and was given all the explanations about the events and the issue of *Avanzada Socialista* in which the supposed document was published.

A second fact is omitted — that if no member of the PST leadership could attend such meetings was due to the fierce repression we suffered in those months (four murders and the blasting of many premises).

Finally, our critics acknowledge that they received, before the majority of the USec voted for public criticism, a letter stating that we had not signed the document in question. They also acknowledge that the public denial of *Avanzada Socialista* in this respect is also prior to this vote. And, we point out, this denial was preceded by that made by Comrade Coral on television, and which was reported to the USec in the letter to which we refer.

To summarise: before the publication of the public accusation against the PST, its authors received an oral report, two public denials (one in *Avanzada Socialista* and one on television) and a letter categorically asserting that we had not signed the document. If despite all this, we were attacked by that fact, the responsibility is borne by those who attack us. The same happens if they

did not take into account the difficult situation we were going through, which forced us not to attend the USec meetings.

3. This urgency to attack us publicly contrasts with the extremely careful, slow attitude that the majority of the USec has had in other opportunities. When the Bolivian POR [Revolutionary Workers' Party], which adhered to the majority positions, signed the FRA [Revolutionary Anti-imperialist Front] public statement, it took about a year to criticise it publicly. And to date, it has not been criticised for having disseminated from its press organ a passionate defence of the Bolivian army and the armed forces signed by the senior military of that country.

In the same way, the PRT (*El Combatiente*), which once adhered to the positions of the majority of the USec, tired of attacking or belittling the Fourth International for years from its newspaper, without our critics doing anything to repudiate publicly these attacks. We believe that it is necessary to explain why they have these two different criteria to facts whose gravity far exceeds the supposed signature of the document in question.

4. In the period in which the public criticism to the PST was published, our party suffered serious attacks, already described. They were followed by the assassination of three other militants, one of them a member of the party's top leadership, further blasting of premises, arrests and raids. The PST was, undoubtedly, the Trotskyist party most attacked by fascism and the reaction on a world scale. Despite this, several months went by in which the press of the USec and of the sections that sympathise with its majority devoted wide spaces to the criticism of the PST, but did not do the same to defend it and to stand with it against the criminal attacks of the common class enemy.

We do not consider that the fact of being fiercely attacked by fascism means that the political criticisms of the PST which are considered necessary should be stopped. But we want to point out this has not been the attitude of the PST, nor of any minority organisation, in similar cases. Thus, when the French government dissolved the Communist League, the PST press, which by that time already had political differences with that organisation, carried out a solidarity campaign. It is legitimate to ask ourselves — why did the majority of the USec have considered for months that it was more important to attack the PST than to defend it from the blows of fascism and to publicly show solidarity with it?

5. The majority of the USec in its new attack acknowledges that the main quotation it used to make it was not a quotation but an interpretation of our positions. We take note of this public self-criticism, but we wish to emphasise that a serious question posed in our previous reply has been left pending. These are the quotes taken from “editorials” which were not such. We insist that our critics have used quotes from non-editorial articles presenting them as if they were, while they insistently ignore the actual editorials. We demand an answer to this charge.

6. Having raised these issues, we now point out that we believe this new criticism of the majority of the USec raises a series of important differences that actually exist and others which are not real. We believe that in this manner an important principled political-theoretical polemic that affects the future of the world Trotskyist movement has been opened. This polemic revolves around the slogans, program or objectives, as well as the methods to face fascism or reactionary coups. It is linked to other problems, such as with whom it is licit for a revolutionary party to reach agreements. And it ends with the concrete policy of our party in the current Argentine situation.

For the comrades of the majority, the only Trotskyist policy that deserves such name in the face of fascist or reactionary danger is to strive for a workers' front for the sole and exclusive defence of the “seeds of workers' democracy”. They accept that “practical agreements” with other parties, including non-workers' parties, can be reached to defend certain democratic rights in particular, but they point out bourgeois democracy and its institutions can never be defended, not at any time or in any circumstance from the fascist or reactionary danger.

They consider that our party moves away from Trotskyist positions because it defends “bourgeois parliamentary democracy” and “its institutions”. This defence brings us to political agreements with the liberal parties, which are, in fact, transformed into a bloc of class collaboration; bloc that tends towards the “Stalinist antifascist front”, that is, the popular front.

According to the authors of the document, the consequence of all this is that, in practice, the PST plays into the hands of the plans of the government and the bourgeoisie.

Faced with all these positions and criticisms of the majority, we will begin by acknowledging that we indeed hold the first of the differences pointed out. That is to say, we argue that under certain circumstances it is licit to defend “bourgeois democracy” with its “institutions” from fascist or reactionary attack. But, as for the rest of the differences, we assert they do not exist.

Put another way: The PST considers that the only Trotskyist, and therefore just, revolutionary policy to confront fascism and the reaction is the workers’ united front. Rather, the mobilisation of the whole working class. But this front or mobilisation of the working class can have different aims, according to the specific situation of the country in question and the level of consciousness of the proletariat. In some specific circumstances, the goal may be to defend “bourgeois democracy” with “its institutions”. This is a typical case of combined and contradictory development — bourgeois democratic aim; proletarian method of workers mobilisation to achieve this.

In what follows we shall attempt to demonstrate that this conception of the struggle against fascism and the reaction is correct and that all the remaining differences are not such, but have been invented for the purposes of the controversy. And we will end by pointing out the differences regarding the policy for Argentina.



## CHAPTER II

# In certain and specific circumstances, Trotskyists have an obligation to defend bourgeois democracy and its institutions against fascism and the Bonapartist reaction

1. The comrades of the majority of the USec reject “[...] the Social Democratic policy of lesser evilism according to which workers are supposed to defend ‘superior’ or ‘better’ bourgeois ‘forms of government’ against forms of government ‘less good’ or ‘inferior’ forms of Government.” (“Statement of the United Secretariat on the PST”, *Intercontinental Press*, Vol 13, No 2, January 20, 1975, p. 58.)

They consider, therefore, that we moved from a correct position “[...] an occasional technical agreement for the defence of a particular democratic right [...]” to an opportunist position “[...] for the defence of democratic rights in general [...] and *defence of the institutions of the bourgeois parliamentary democracy* [...]” (Ibid., p. 59.)

They further clarify their criticism when they assert that “[...] under these conditions, to counterpose defence of increasingly paralysed bourgeois-parliamentary institutions in decomposition to the rise of fascism is to court certain defeat.” (Ibid., p. 60.)

And the very correct summary they make of the differences is the following:

“It is obvious that it is not simply a question of the ‘guarantee of democratic rights’, but also of the functioning of *the institutions of the so-called democratic parliamentary bourgeois state as a whole*. Obviously, this includes the parliamentary elections, the parliament, the bourgeois state apparatus, the government that comes out of these elections, etc. And Marxist-Leninists know that these institutions *also involve* the defence of bourgeois property, capitalist exploitation, and the apparatus of repression destined to this defence.

“The insufficiency of the self-criticism and the confusion that it maintains derive from the fact that the comrades of the PST identify the question of ‘institutionalisation’, that is, the continuity of the democratic parliamentary institutions of the bourgeois state, with the question of defence of democratic rights. It is true that PST’s August 20, 1974, declaration pronounces itself against any *political* support for a bourgeois regime or coalition. This is really the least that one can demand from an organisation that claims allegiance to Trotskyism. But the rejection of ‘support to the policy of a bourgeois regime’ combined with ‘support for the process of institutionalisation’, that is, for the consolidation and strengthening of the institutions of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, leaves the question of the PST’s attitude toward the *bourgeois state* completely open. And it is the question that lies at the centre of the controversy.” (Ibid. p. 58-59.)

In other words, the PST has complied with “the least that that one can demand” from a Trotskyist organisation by not supporting the government politically, but it defends bourgeois

democracy and its institutions. As the latter is to defend a form of bourgeois state, it is, therefore, opportunism.

2. Our party considers that it is a grave ultra-leftist error to ignore the differences that exist between the different bourgeois regimes, dissolving these concrete regimes and their concrete differences in the historical-sociological characterisation that all of them are bourgeois, and therefore exploiters, of class. On the contrary, an authentic Marxist, not ultra-leftist, knows how to distinguish carefully the different regimes or forms of bourgeois government, and knows how to differentiate between the superiors and the inferiors.

Those who cannot appreciate the profound differences between the Petain regime and the French post-war republics, or between Hitler and the current German republic, or between Mussolini and the present Italian republic, or between the Brazilian dictatorship and Goulart, Pinochet and Allende, Banzer and Torres, do not deserve the name of Marxist. It is precisely on these real differences, and clearly perceived by the working class, that the miserable idealisation of the bourgeois democracy made by Stalinism and the masses' own consciousness are based. All these regimes are bourgeois and exploitative; and who does not recognise it is a reformist. But who does not see the colossal differences between them is a stupid ultra-leftist.

3. Marxists must be very careful in pointing out these differences. But from the fact that they do exist, it does not follow a single revolutionary policy — to defend the “superior” or “democratic” bourgeois form against the “inferior”, fascist or Bonapartist form. Sometimes, revolutionists must confront the reaction with the slogan of defending the existing elements of workers' democracy; but at other times, they must do so with the slogan of the defence or of regaining bourgeois democracy. It all depends on class consciousness and the actual existence of an immediate danger of a fascist or Bonapartist coup. If such danger does not exist, agitating the demon of the reactionary coup only serves to confuse the class. But if such danger exists, we will need to look at the level of class consciousness for the slogan to mobilise the class. If the class, or some important sector of it, has come to the realisation that bourgeois democracy is in a state of putrefaction and that the only way out is the seizure of power by the proletariat, the slogan of the defence of bourgeois democracy is reactionary, prevents the mobilisation of the workers. In this case, it will be necessary to use another slogan, also of a defensive type, such as the defence of the elements of workers' democracy gained within the bourgeois state. But if the immense majority of the class is not yet conscious of the putrefaction of bourgeois democracy, if they still trust in it, the slogan to mobilise it can only be the defence of bourgeois democracy.

From this comes a conclusion — a slogan is not reformist, revolutionary or ultra-leftist by its mere historical and class content. What is important is that any slogan can be used in a reformist, revolutionary or ultra-leftist way. The reformist use of a slogan consists in raising an objective that is below the level of consciousness of the masses. If the masses want to seize power and they are proposed bourgeois democracy, this usage falls into reformism because it prevents the masses from mobilising. The ultra-leftist use is the opposite but it has the same results. It consists of raising a slogan that is above the level of consciousness of the masses. If the masses trust in bourgeois democracy and they are asked to fight for power, they also get confused and it goes against their mobilisation.

The revolutionary use of a slogan is defined by the requirement that it fit precisely to the level of consciousness of the masses at that time.

Because the goal of a slogan for immediate action — and in this, it differs from propaganda in general and the program as a whole — is to achieve at a given moment that the masses immediately mobilise. Therefore, the slogans for action must start from that immediate, present, level of consciousness. It is impossible to get the workers to mobilise for what they no longer want, or for what they have not yet come to want. And the most important function of the slogans is, for the revolutionists, to achieve mobilisation; because only the mobilisation, through the experience forged in it, will raise the mass movement to higher levels of consciousness which, in turn, will require new and advanced slogans.

4. If the use of slogans is relative to the level of consciousness of the masses, what is not relative but absolute is the method to use to make reality the goal or slogan raised. There, indeed, the difference between revolutionists and reformists is absolute and permanent — revolutionists always raise the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses; the reformists raise the electoral, parliamentary ways of class collaboration. It may happen, and it has happened frequently, that reformists and revolutionists agree in the immediate goal proposed, that is, in the slogan. But they always differ in method. It is a fairly common error to confuse slogans with methods; error in which our critics fall when from our circumstantial defence of bourgeois democracy they seem to deduce that we have given up the extra-parliamentary action of the workers. And this is not so; there is a non-mechanical relationship between the proposed slogan and the method of struggle. Stalinism has not abandoned the socialist slogans but proposes to achieve them through bourgeois electoral methods. Precisely this is why it is reformist. Revolutionists, in certain circumstances, we must appeal to democratic, bourgeois slogans, but this does not prevent us from putting forward the revolutionary method of mobilisation to achieve them. And that is precisely why we are revolutionists.

Lenin already warned about the danger of confusing the immediate slogans or goals with the methods of action: “The mistake of the Kautskyites lies in the fact that they present in a reformist manner such demands, and at such a time, that can be presented only in a revolutionary manner (but the author lapses into the position that their mistake is to advance these demands altogether...) The mistake of Kautskyism lies in projecting *correct* democratic demands into the past, to peaceful capitalism, and not into the future, to the social revolution (the author, however, falls into the position of regarding these demands as incorrect) (VI Lenin, “The Nascent Trend of Imperialist Economism”, August-September 1916, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1964, Moscow, Volume 23, p. 13-21).

We believe that our critics tend to make the same mistake that Lenin points out. Paraphrasing him, we could say: The mistake of the opportunists is that they turn backwards, towards pacific capitalism, towards bourgeois parliamentarism, the *correct* defence of bourgeois democracy against the fascist danger in the Argentina of 1974, instead of directing it forwards, towards the social revolution, towards the revolutionary mobilisation of the workers (and the majority of the USec are confused to consider such defence is wrong).

5. For a Marxist, this relativity of politics and the immediate and for action slogans is permanent. Let’s look at an example.

We are not in favour, in general, of the 10-hour working day. The whole tradition of the workers’ movement postulates the 8-hour day, and the Marxist conception advocates the reduction of the working day to the minimum necessary for the survival and development of humanity. But in certain circumstances, very common in the backwards countries, we defend momentarily the 10-hour day given the bosses attempt to impose the 12-hour day or the fact that the 12 hours are already imposed. In other words, we know very well the difference between 10 hours of 12 hours.

What would a worker think who sees his 10-hour day threatened, or is fighting to conquer it, of the Trotskyist who told him there was no difference between the two because both 10 and 12 hours of work give a colossal surplus value? What if that Trotskyist would argue that fighting for the 10-hour day is opportunistic because we have to fight for the 8-hour day or the minimum day for the survival and development of humanity? What if, following that reasoning, he refused to support the worker’s struggle for the defence of the 10-hour day against the 12-hour day?

It is clear that, in this case, the dividing line with opportunism does not go through the goal of the struggle, which is common, the 10-hour day, but by the method — negotiating the opportunists, fighting and mobilising the revolutionists.

6. This is common in Marxist politics — we defend a multitude of conquests and institutions in common with opportunism, the bureaucracy and even with sectors of the bourgeoisie, but without ceasing to attack them precisely because they are not consistent in that defence. We defend a union, but we do not get confused or support the union bureaucracy. We defend the USSR, but

not the government of Cain Stalin. We defend the 8 hours of work, but not the politics of the opportunists who advocate the 8 hours. We defend the promulgation of laws of equality between the sexes, without getting confused with the liberal feminists. Finally, we defend the democratic republic, without getting confused or supporting the great reformist and liberal fakers who are full of talk on the republic.

In the latter case, the relativity of our slogans is deepened, because we are defending an institution which is not of our class, bourgeois democracy, against a worse one, fascism or Bonapartism. For this reason, our defence is neither permanent nor constant, but only episodic, until our class rises above this bourgeois “institution” or “consciousness”, towards a revolutionary “institution” and “consciousness”, of class. These workers’ and revolutionary institutions have our unconditional and permanent support and defence, in all circumstances, against the attack of bourgeois reaction; as opposed to the “progressive” bourgeois form, which we only defend circumstantially, until it is surpassed in the consciousness of the mass movement.

Hence, a *sine qua non* for the defence of a bourgeois democratic “superior form” versus a “fascist” or “Bonapartist” form to be really revolutionary is that we do it in a critical way and pointing out permanently that we are in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is to say, if the lagging class consciousness imposes on revolutionists the slogan of defence of bourgeois democracy, we defend it, but without defending bourgeois or reformist, partisan or governmental politics. Precisely, we differentiate ourselves critically; we separate clearly the bourgeois institutions and democracy from its bourgeois and reformist “defenders”. And, sometimes, we defend those to better attack these.

In these precise and concrete circumstances, the socialist revolutionists we differentiate ourselves from the reformists, not in the immediate objective of defending bourgeois democracy — in which we “agree” — but in the methodology we advocate. The reformists and liberal bourgeois propose to defend bourgeois democracy with parliamentary methods; the revolutionists we propose to defend it with workers’ and socialist methods — the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses.

7. It cannot be otherwise. Suppose that tomorrow fascism is preparing a coup in Italy. The masses follow the CP and socialism, which do not want to make the workers’ revolution, but to maintain bourgeois democracy. What do we say to the 90 percent of Italian workers who want to fight to defend the bourgeois republic? Do we cross our arms until they understand the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Do we say, “let us make an agreement to defend the right to strike or the workers’ organisations, but if you go out to the streets to defend the bourgeois republic, we will not be with you at the rallies and in the barricades because we are against the bourgeois state”?

None of these answers is useful. We will have to say: “Fascism became strong as a result of the crisis of bourgeois democracy and because we did not implement the workers’ government that we Trotskyists advocate; but while we discuss this Trotskyist position that we know you do not share, we, who know clearly that bourgeois democracy is far superior to fascism, we propose to fight together in the streets with armed workers’ militias for what you believe in and for what you are ready to fight and which we consider a superior form of bourgeois government, but bourgeois and exploitative nevertheless, the democratic republic”. And we will add: “that at this time we agree with your socialist and communist leaders and with the liberal bourgeois who also defend the democratic republic, does not mean we trust them; they want to ‘fight’ with speeches in parliament, we want to fight with the mobilisation in the streets and the workers’ militias; ours is the correct method, the method of the Trotskyists; distrust your leaders, if they continue hindering the mobilisation and the militias, if they are not consistent defenders of bourgeois democracy and they are leading us to the triumph of the fascist coup”.

If instead of saying this, we propose to the Italian worker: “Let us sit down and discuss what freedom we defend together”, this communist worker would send us packing, thinking: “I do not understand these ‘Trotskyists’ who want to waste my time discussing ‘what freedom we defend’”,



when fascism means for me the liquidation of the democratic republic that I want, and with it, all liberties”.

Only with this policy, truly Leninist and Trotskyist, we will achieve a dialogue with the socialist and communist workers, which will allow us to raise ever more firmly the need to liquidate bourgeois democracy and establish a workers’ and peasants’ government or — what is the same — the dictatorship of the proletariat. And, more importantly, only in this way we will achieve our fundamental goal — that this worker mobilise in a revolutionary way, that he arm his militias, no matter that at the beginning he mobilises to defend the democratic republic and not to take power. The important thing is he does it, because if he does not mobilise or arms himself, if he does not do all that experience, if he does not see in the streets the betrayal of his reformist leadership and the liberal bourgeoisie to the defence of bourgeois democracy, all our “dialogue”, that is, our propaganda, will be in vain, will fall on deaf ears. But if he does mobilise, the inconsistency of his leaders in the defence of bourgeois democracy will lead him to break with them and he will be with open ears to listen to those “Trotskyists” who, without agreeing with the democratic republic, fought beside him and were his most consistent supporters. Only in this way, that of the experience gained in the mobilisations and the presence in them of the revolutionary party and its propaganda, that worker will rise to the awareness that he must take power. Only then can we say: “Let us not defend this rotten bourgeois republic anymore, it is time for the dictatorship of the proletariat”.

## CHAPTER III

# The position of Lenin and the Bolsheviks

1. The declaration of the USec's majority quotes in passing Lenin and profusely Trotsky in support of their criticism: "Lenin explained that it was perfectly possible to struggle against Kornilov without defending the 'superior' form of government of Kerensky. Trotsky many times explained that the necessity of combating the fascist threat as the heaviest threat weighing on the working class in no way involved defence the 'superior' government of Brüning, not to mention that of von Papen or von Schleider, against Hitler. (Leon Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1971, pp. 95, 108, 135-137, 140, etc.)." ("Statement of the United Secretariat on the PST", op. cit., p. 58.)

In another paragraph, they suggest we have quoted Lenin abusively about defending the "higher" forms against the "lower".

This forces us to carefully determine what the positions of our teachers were in relation to this problem. We must reiterate what has already been pointed out in the previous chapter — it is not permissible to confuse a "form of government" with the governments themselves; it is not permissible to confuse the Third French Republic with its various governments (Clemenceau or Blum). In the circumstances we have discussed, we can defend the bourgeois republic and its institutions, but never the policy of the governments of these republics.

2. As our critics rightly point out, this aspect of the question places the problem of the "bourgeois state" "at the centre of the controversy". Let us then go to Lenin's main theoretical work on the state, *The State and Revolution*. Despite the fact that it is a bitter controversy against the reformists and opportunists, Lenin is very careful to point out: "Far from being indifferent to the forms of state, Engels, on the contrary, tried to analyse the transitional forms with the utmost thoroughness in order to establish, in accordance with the concrete historical peculiarities of each particular case, *from what and to what* the given transitional form is passing." (*Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 25, p. 381-492.)

This careful determination of the different forms of state and its dynamics does not have a merely theoretical but directly political objective: "Approaching the matter from the standpoint of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, upheld democratic centralism, the republic — one and indivisible. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development or as a transition from a monarchy to a centralised republic, as a 'step forward' under certain special conditions" (Ibid.).

It is, therefore, a question of defending or attacking one or another form of government according to its concrete function in concrete circumstances. We defend the federative republic insofar as it means a transition from the monarchy to bourgeois democracy; we attack it if it is an obstacle to this (centralist) democratic republic.

Neither is this a historical analysis relative to the epoch when Marx and Engels raised these questions: "The really democratic centralised republic gave *more* freedom than the federal republic. In other words, the *greatest* amount of local, regional, and other freedom known in history was

accorded by a centralised and not a federal republic. Insufficient attention has been and is being paid in our Party propaganda and agitation to this fact, as, indeed, to the whole question of the federal and the centralised republic and local self-government.” (Ibid.).

Let us remember that *The State and Revolution* was written in August–September of 1917, in the middle of the revolutionary period, when Lenin and the Bolsheviks had raised the Soviet power. So important was the precise distinction of the various “forms” of government that Lenin criticised that “sufficient attention” was not given to this problem in the propaganda and agitation of the Bolshevik party two months before the seizure of power.

Finally, Lenin warns against those who do not take this issue into account: “Engels’ statement that in a democratic republic, ‘no less’ than in a monarchy, the state remains a ‘machine for the oppression of one class by another’ by no means signifies that the *form* of oppression makes no difference to the proletariat, as some anarchists ‘teach’. A wider, freer and more open *form* of the class struggle and of class oppression vastly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes in general.” (Ibid.).

When our critics attack us for our defence of the institutions of bourgeois democracy, arguing that: “Marxists-Leninists know that these institutions *also involve* defending bourgeois property, capitalist exploitation and the apparatus of repression devoted to this defence” (“Statement of the United Secretariat on the PST”, op. cit., p. 59), we cannot but remind them that this repetition of general truths of Marxism resembles very much the “teachings of some anarchists” that Lenin criticises.

3. The experiences of the Russian Revolution are no less sobering than this theoretical work of Lenin on the state. The majority asserts that: “Lenin explained perfectly it was possible to fight Kornilov without defending Kerensky’s ‘superior’ form of government”.

We have already clarified that one thing is the “superior form” and another Kerensky. But we accept that, even in the midst of the Kornilovian coup, Lenin’s policy was not to defend the Kerensky government. Moreover, we may even accept that Lenin did not want to limit himself to the slogan of defence of the democratic republic. He insisted “to independently defend the revolution” (“Rumours of a Conspiracy”, 18-19 August, 1916, *Collected Works*, op. cit., Vol 25, p. 247-255); that is to say, the defence of the February Revolution, that had advanced beyond the democratic republic, since it had given birth to soviets. The slogan of defending the democratic republic would have been a step back in relation to the situation since there were already elements of workers’ power. This was how Lenin characterised the situation in April, months before the Kornilov rebellion:

“The concrete Marxist proposition requires that *institutions* now as well as classes be taken into account.

“Stranglers of the revolution, by honeyed phrases — Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov — are dragging the revolution back, *away from* the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies towards the undivided sway of the bourgeoisie, towards the usual bourgeois parliamentary republic.” (“Notes for an Article or Speech in Defence of the April Theses”, April 1917, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1964, Moscow, Volume 24, p. 32, first emphasis ours.)

It is sufficiently clear — because of the existence of institutions of workers’ power it was not legitimate to think in terms of the democratic republic because that was “to go backwards”. Hence, later, before the Kornilovian coup, the slogan was the “defence of the revolution” — which it was not either, as our critics would like, for the exclusive defence of the Soviets. It was a matter of defending everything achieved up until then, that complex of bourgeois and working class institutions that constituted the dual power, that is, to defend precisely what the masses had achieved and which they *consciously* wanted to defend.

But our critics do not take care to analyse Lenin’s point of view in depth, and, to make matters worse, they make a theoretical sleight of hand — they do not quote or mention the greatest specialist of the Russian Revolution who has existed, Leon Trotsky. They thus try to take advantage

of the special characteristics of Lenin's works, to hide the essence of his true policy and that of the Bolsheviks against Kerensky, the reformists and the bourgeois counter-revolution. Lenin's works respond to the immediate and momentary needs of the class struggle and the orientation of the party. That's why he abuses, he stresses the wording, and he exaggerates both ways. As soon as the Provisional Government rises, he attacks it ferociously and raises the Soviet power. Later, when the danger of the counter-revolution begins to appear, he raises the need to support the opportunists in the face of this danger. Finally, he further refines his policy when the counter-revolutionary coup is already a fact, and he holds the "defence of the revolution" without giving any "support to Kerensky". This policy was focused on attenuating direct criticism of Kerensky and putting the emphasis on indirect attack, through "partial demands" of which the fundamental was to carry out a true revolutionary war against Kornilov. These are sudden changes of course, which respond to the changes in the concrete situation and the need to counterbalance the trends of both signs, opportunist and sectarian, which these changes originated within the party. But what is clear is that, for Lenin, everything depended on the concrete circumstances, not on immutable principles as our critics maintain.

In general, not tactically, what Lenin teaches as a policy against the counter-revolution is the following: "It would be a profound error to think that the revolutionary proletariat *is capable of 'refusing' to support the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks against the counter-revolution* by way of 'revenge', so to speak, for the support they gave in smashing the Bolsheviks, in shooting down soldiers at the front and in disarming the workers. First, this would be applying philistine conceptions of morality to the proletariat (since, *for the good of the cause*, the proletariat will always *support not only the vacillating petty bourgeoisie but even the big bourgeoisie*); secondly—and that is the important thing — it would be a philistine attempt to obscure the political substance of the situation by 'moralising'" ("On Slogans", July 1917, *Collected Works*, op. cit., Vol 25, p. 185-192, emphasis ours).

We do not understand how our critics, who have abundantly quoted Trotsky's *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (and who have accused us of misrepresenting the contents of the famous quote about the deal with "the devil's grandmother"), have not paid attention to this paragraph of Lenin, although it is Trotsky himself who quotes him, in support of his positions, precisely in that work. In addition, we cannot fail to note that the use of the long quotation from the resolution on Argentina at the Tenth World Congress, as an argument, seems strangely similar to the method criticised by Lenin. Indeed, there it says: "Curious 'democracy' that develops the white terror from the highest governmental circles!" ("Argentina: Political Crisis and Revolutionary Perspectives", Resolution of the Tenth World Congress, *Intercontinental Press*, Vol 12 No 47, 23 December 1974, p. 1791.)

This denunciation, which is true, does not change and cannot change the political essence of the problem of what we must do if this "curious democracy" is attacked by the counter-revolution. To resort to it as an argument amounts precisely to "a philistine attempt to obscure the political substance of the situation by 'moralising'".

Trotsky is who best explains the contradictory nature of revolutionary politics in the face of counter-revolutionary coups — we defend the democratic camp against the counter-revolution without entering the government or supporting its policy.

"The Bolsheviks did not remain neutral between the camp of Kerensky and that of Kornilov. They fought in the first camp against the second. They accepted the official command as long as they were not sufficiently strong to overthrow it. It was precisely in the month of August, with the Kornilov uprising, that a prodigious upswing of the Bolsheviks began. This upswing was made possible only thanks to the double-edged Bolshevik policy. While participating in the front lines of the struggle against Kornilov, the Bolsheviks did not take the slightest responsibility for the policy of Kerensky. On the contrary, they denounced him as responsible for the reactionary attack and as incapable of overcoming it. In this way, they prepared the political premises of the October revolution, in which the alternative Bolshevism or counter-revolution (Communism or Fascism)



evolved from a historic tendency into a living and immediate reality”. (L. Trotsky, “Ultra-Lefts in General and Incurable Ultra-Lefts in Particular”, 28 September 1937, *The Spanish Revolution (1931–1939)*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 296-297.)

Finally, summing up the true Bolshevik position, Trotsky says: “We did not enter the government of Kerensky in Russia. *While we defended Kerensky against Kornilov, we did not enter his government.*” (“Revolutionary Strategy in the Civil War”, 14 April 1937, *The Spanish Revolution (1931–1939)*, op. cit., p. 253, emphasis ours.)

4. Lenin’s “mania” for the higher forms of bourgeois government has its most dramatic and elevated expression during the two or three weeks prior to the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks. It is well known that in the weeks leading up to October, Lenin was concerned about the hesitations suffered by the Bolshevik leadership. Day after day he insisted they had to take power immediately. He did not agree with Trotsky’s position of waiting for the congress of the soviets, winning its majority and taking power in its name. He held that the dictatorship of the proletariat could not be postponed for a single day; that they had to seize power without the Soviets, simply with the party.

In this situation, the Bolshevik party discusses the revision of the party program. There were those who proposed that, on the eve of the Soviet republic, the minimum program (which included the bourgeois republic) had to be eliminated. And Lenin, in this critical situation refused to abandon these slogans:

“We do not know whether our victory will come tomorrow or a little later. (I personally am inclined to think that it will be tomorrow — I am writing this on October 6, 1917 — and that there may be a delay in our seizure of power; still, tomorrow is tomorrow and not today.) We do not know how soon after our victory revolution will sweep the West. We do not know whether or not our victory will be followed by temporary periods of reaction and the victory of the counter-revolution — there is nothing impossible in that — and therefore, after our victory, we shall build a ‘triple line of trenches’ against such a contingency.

“We do not know and *cannot know* anything of this. *No one* is in a position to know. It is, therefore, ridiculous to discard the minimum programme, which is *indispensable* while we still live within the framework of bourgeois society, while we have not yet destroyed that framework, not yet realised the basic prerequisites for a transition to socialism, not yet smashed the enemy (the bourgeoisie), and even if we have smashed them we have not yet annihilated them. All this will come, and perhaps much sooner than many people think (I personally think that it *will begin* tomorrow), *but it has not yet come.*

“Take the minimum programme in the political sphere. This programme is limited to the bourgeois republic. We add that we do not confine ourselves to its limits, we start immediately upon a struggle for a higher type of republic, a *Soviet Republic*. This we must do. With unshakable courage and determination we must advance towards the new republic and *in this way, we shall reach our goal*, of that I am sure. But the minimum programme should under no circumstances be discarded, for, first of all, there is *as yet* no Soviet Republic; secondly, “attempts at restoration” are not out of the question, and they will first have to be experienced and vanquished; thirdly, during the transition from the old to the new there may be temporary ‘combined types’ (...) for instance, a Soviet Republic together with a Constituent Assembly.” (VI Lenin, “Revision of the Party Programme”, 6 October 1917, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 149-178, emphases by Lenin.)

This is the real Lenin. The passionate defender of the bourgeois republic — yes, bourgeois! He not only defended it from the counter-revolution but from the hurried revolutionaries, advocating combining one of its institutions, a constituent assembly, with the Soviet republic. And he raises it because he does not know — and stresses that nobody can know in advance — how the revolution will develop, how they will defend themselves from the capitalist siege and how the situation will evolve. And he raises it on 6 October 1917, while he struggles to push the party to take power “tomorrow”. This is the Lenin of the concrete analyses for concrete policies who would turn in his

grave if he saw how someone aims to enclose his teachings in sterile and empty sentences of the type: revolutionaries never defend bourgeois democracy in general nor its institutions.

## CHAPTER IV

# Trotsky's position

1. It is no accident that the majority only uses Trotsky's writings on Germany, ignoring his positions on Austria, France, Spain and the other countries where the problem of fascism was raised. In this way, they omit considering the specifics of the German situation in the early 1930s — the highest level of workers' consciousness and organisation of the world proletariat; the existence of the only communist party of masses in the western world. And thus they ignore the specifics of Trotsky's position, generalising it as immutable principles for all countries threatened by the reaction.

The comrades of the majority of the USec try to use Trotsky's positions on Germany to show that fascism is always being fought with the same goals — the defence of workers' democracy and not of bourgeois democracy:

“It is precisely to avoid such confusion that Trotsky clarifies the objectives of the workers united front in the struggle against the rise of fascism by making a *distinction* between the defence of ‘germs, elements of proletarian democracy within bourgeois democracy’ and the defence of the bourgeois democratic institutions of the bourgeois state.” (“Statement of the United Secretariat on the PST”, op. cit., p. 59.)

Trotsky raised such a position in relation to Germany for one simple reason: the German reality was characterised by the existence of two great mass Marxist parties. One of them, the Socialist, was for bourgeois democracy. The other, the communist, was revolutionary and was for the workers' revolution, although it maintained an ultra-leftist position. The existence of a mass revolutionary party is an objective index of the level of consciousness of the working class. It would be ridiculous for Trotsky to seek to make the workers' anti-fascist unity of action on the basis of points that did not join the ranks of both parties. He did not raise the dictatorship of the proletariat because this would prevent unity of action with the socialist workers who were for the democratic republic. And he did not raise bourgeois democracy because a quarter of the German proletariat, if not more, influenced by the CP, hated and repudiated it. Even more so when the ultra-leftism of the Stalinist leadership accentuated the differences between the two workers' parties around “bourgeois democracy”. It was illogical, and reactionary, for Trotsky to lower the level of consciousness of that quarter of the German proletariat to achieve a joint action, when it could be achieved by a very powerful common sentiment, the defence of “the workers' political organisations, trade unions, newspapers, printing plants, clubs, libraries, etc.” (L. Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, op. cit., p. 72.)

It is very important to note that, despite all this specific and unique situation in Germany, Trotsky denounces the Stalinist ultra-leftism for not being able to distinguish the deep differences that exist between bourgeois democracy and fascism.

2. When the objective situation in Germany changes with the triumph of Nazism, Trotsky begins to propose a policy that is very appropriate to remember because it illustrates the differences that we hold with the comrades of the majority in relation to the politics of our PRT(U)

[Revolutionary Workers' Party (Uruguay)] comrades. Our critics attack the Uruguayan comrades and accuse them of having spoken in favour of a front or bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie to regain free elections. In order to substantiate their attack they quote the following paragraph:

“In view of this situation and the way the consciousness of the working class has advanced as a result of the colossal general strike that fought in defence of the last remnants of their democratic rights, which were devastated by the coup plotters, we believe the struggle began in June (1973) must continue. It must move forwards to overthrow the dictatorship, raising a program that addresses the most urgent demands of the workers and drags behind it the whole popular movement, including sectors of the own bourgeoisie that oppose the dictatorship. We believe this program [...] is synthesised in the slogan of free elections in which all parties can participate.”

A first criticism of the majority to this position is that the Uruguayan comrades are proposing a class bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie. The PRT(U) never did such a thing and this follows from the paragraph in question, although it may be formulated with little clarity. It speaks of a program that “drags” the popular movement and sectors of the bourgeoisie that oppose the dictatorship. The very word “drag” — which means that the workers and their program are ahead and the other sectors behind — indicates by itself that the accusation of advocating a bloc or front is at least an abusive interpretation of this quote.

The second criticism made to the Uruguayan comrades is to have raised the slogan of reconquering “free elections”. Indeed, the Uruguayan comrades raise that and we agree with them. In one sense, their situation is similar to that of Germany after the rise of Hitler and so it is worth recalling Trotsky's position on the matter. In passing, it will be useful to unmask that the authors of the document have deliberately concealed such a position. On page 5, they reproduce the following quote from Trotsky:

“It is true the growth of the discontentment of the intermediary strata and the growth of the resistance of the workers will create a crack in the bloc of the possessing classes and will spur their ‘left flank’ to seek contact with the petty bourgeoisie. The task of the proletarian party in relation to the ‘liberal’ flank of the possessors will consist, however, not in including them both in a bloc of ‘all classes’ against Fascism, but, on the contrary, in immediately declaring a decisive struggle against it for influence on the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie.” (“Fascism and Democratic Slogans”, 14 July 1933, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1932-1933)*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972, p. 299.)

And here Trotsky's quote is abruptly and mysteriously cut off. It is unfortunate because it immediately goes like this:

“Under what political slogans will this struggle take place? The dictatorship of Hitler grew directly out of the Weimar Constitution. The representatives of the petty bourgeoisie have, with their own hands, presented Hitler with the mandate for a dictatorship. If we should assume a very favourable and quick development of the Fascist crisis, then *the demand for the convocation of the Reichstag with the inclusion of all the banished deputies may, at a certain moment*, unite the workers with the widest strata of the petty bourgeoisie. If the crisis should break out later and the memory of the Reichstag should have had time to obliterate itself, the slogan of new elections may acquire great popularity. It is sufficient that such a road is possible. To tie one's hands in relation to temporary democratic slogans which may be forced upon us by our petty-bourgeois allies and by the backwards strata of the proletariat itself would be fatal doctrinairism.” (Ibid, emphasis ours.)

As we see, Trotsky proposes as the main slogan against Nazism to revive a bourgeois to the marrow “institution” as the German parliament (Reichstag) that anointed Hitler and the other slogan is the same as the Uruguayan comrades “free elections”.

Are there substantial differences between this position and that of the Uruguayan comrades? They raise free elections; Trotsky raised the Reichstag democratisation or new elections. They do it to fight the military dictatorship, Trotsky to fight fascism. They want to drag behind this slogan the popular movement, Trotsky wants to do it with the “petty bourgeoisie” and the “backwards strata of the proletariat itself”. We reassert the correctness of the policy of the Uruguayan comrades, especially when they have arrived at it without any knowledge of this work of Trotsky.



3. In Austria, Trotsky radically changes the immediate objectives of the struggle against fascism. It could not have been otherwise since in that country there was not a strong communist party but only a great socialist party. This was an indication that the consciousness of the working class was not revolutionary, but bourgeois democratic. Trotsky adapts himself to this consciousness different from the German. He proposes to fight fascism in defence of “bourgeois democracy”, no longer to defend “all the elements of proletarian democracy”. And the united front between the two parties is not the fundamental axis of the anti-fascist struggle. Or, in another sense, the united front policy is different — it is not the agreement between both parties, but the demand of the ultra-minority Austrian PC to the ultra-majority socialist party that it actively fight against fascism and, we repeat, in defence of “bourgeois democracy”.

“Yet today, what Austria is living through demonstrates in action that democracy is flesh of the flesh of capitalism, and decomposes with it. The Austrian crisis is the expression of the decay of democracy. The gentlemen of democracy need expect no other appraisal on our part.

“We understand only too well, however, that theoretical diagnosis alone is altogether insufficient for the purpose of replacing democracy with a soviet régime. The matter touches the living consciousness of a class. If in the course of a joint struggle against the Fascists the majority of the proletariat understands the need for a soviet dictatorship, there will be no stopping the Communists. But if despite all the lessons it has received, the majority of the workers, even after smashing the forces of counter-revolution, decides to repeat once more the experiment of formal democracy, the Communists will be compelled to go along with the experiment in the form of an opposition.

“Today, at any rate, the overwhelming majority of Austrian workers follows the Social Democrats. This means that there cannot even be the talk of the revolutionary dictatorship as a *present* task. What is on the agenda today is not the *antithesis of bourgeois and soviet democracy but the antithesis of bourgeois democracy and Fascism*. We accuse the Austro-Marxists not of fighting for democracy but of not fighting for it.” (“Austria’s Turn Next”, 23 March 1933, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1932-1933)*, op. cit., p. 151, emphasis ours.)

Austrian Stalinism was at that moment against the “bourgeois democracy”. Criticising one of its declarations, Trotsky said:

“a) The declaration demands that the bourgeois republic be replaced by a workers’ democracy. What is a “workers’ democracy”? A fight can be conducted either for the re-establishment of the bourgeois democracy or for the proletarian dictatorship. The slogan “workers’ democracy” is an impermissible enigma in revolutionary politics.

“b) The declaration nowhere says that whatever the political slogan may be (democracy or dictatorship), it can be realised under the present circumstances only with the help of the armed strength of the workers.” (“What Must the Austrian Social Democratic Opposition Do?”, 3 May 1933, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1932-1933)*, op. cit., p. 228, emphasis ours.)

4. For France, Trotsky has a position virtually similar to the previous one. He takes into account the level of consciousness of the working class and the traditions of the country to raise:

“We are thus firm partisans of a workers’ and peasants’ state, which will take the power from the exploiters. To win the majority of our working-class allies to this program is our primary aim.

“Meanwhile, as long as the majority of the working class continues on the basis of *bourgeois democracy, we are ready to defend it with all our forces against violent attacks from the Bonapartist and Fascist bourgeoisie.*” (“A Program of Action for France”, June 1934, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1934-1935)*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1974, p. 31, our emphasis.)

But he does not stop with this analysis. He proposes to fight for a bourgeois “institution” “superior” to other bourgeois institutions and that has to do with the bourgeois democratic revolutionary tradition of France:

“However, we demand from our class brothers who adhere to ‘democratic’ socialism that they be faithful to their ideas, that they draw inspiration from the ideas and methods not of the Third Republic but of the Convention of 1793.

*“Down with the Senate, which is elected by limited suffrage and which renders the power of universal suffrage a mere illusion!*

*“Down with the presidency of the republic, which serves as a hidden point of concentration for the forces of militarism and reaction!*

*“A single assembly must combine the legislative and executive powers. Members would be elected for two years, by universal suffrage at eighteen years of age, with no discrimination of sex or nationality. Deputies would be elected on the basis of local assemblies, constantly revocable by their constituents, and would receive the salary of a skilled worker.” (Ibid.)*

As we see Trotsky has no “programmatic” scruples — as our critics would say — no only to defend the democratic republic, but even to propose as a slogan of struggle modifications that elevate it to a “form of government” superior to the existing republic.

5. In Spain, in the midst of a civil war, Trotsky insists on this same position of struggle and defence of bourgeois democracy, not of defending exclusively “all the elements of proletarian democracy”.

*“However, we always added: We can and must defend bourgeois democracy not by bourgeois democratic means but by the methods of class struggle, which in turn pave the way for the replacement of bourgeois democracy by the dictatorship of the proletariat. This means in particular that in the process of defending bourgeois democracy, even with arms in hand, the party of the proletariat takes no responsibility for bourgeois democracy, does not enter its government, but maintains full freedom of criticism and of action in relation to all parties of the Popular Front, thus preparing the overthrow of bourgeois democracy at the next stage.” (“Is Victory Possible in Spain?”, 23 April 1937, *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, op. cit., p. 257, our emphasis.)*

6. Summarising in general his position on bourgeois democracy and its institutions, Trotsky states:

*“These doctrinaires refuse to understand that we carry on half, three-quarters, or, in certain periods, even 99 per cent of the preparation of the dictatorship on the basis of democracy, and in doing this we defend every inch of democratic positions under our feet. But if one can defend the democratic positions of the working class, then perhaps one may fight for them where they do not yet exist?*

*“Democracy is a weapon of capitalism, our critics tell us; yes, but a contradictory one, just as capitalism as a whole is contradictory. Democracy serves the bourgeoisie, but within certain limits, it can also serve the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. The unfortunate thing is that the Bordigists do not grasp democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat as historical institutions which can replace one another dialectically, but as two naked principles of which one embodies good, the other evil.” (“Critical Remarks About Prometeo’s Resolution”, 15 January 1931, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1930-31)*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 135, emphasis ours.)*

And to conclude and leave no doubts, we present this last paragraph where, polemising with the ultra-leftism of the Stalinists of the third period, Trotsky sums up his struggle against those who refused to distinguish bourgeois democracy from fascism and to fight for it:

*“One cannot listen to these arguments without a bitter smile. Before 1934 we explained to the Stalinists tirelessly that even in the imperialist epoch democracy continued to be preferable to Fascism; that is, in all cases where hostile clashes take place between them, the revolutionary proletariat is obliged to support democracy against Fascism.” (“Is Victory Possible in Spain?”, 23 April 1937, *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, op. cit., p. 257, emphasis ours.)*

## CHAPTER V

# We have never said that the fascist or reactionary coup is defeated or fought with an agreement or bloc between classes

1. The majority of the USec does not limit itself to discuss the real differences that we have on the program, the slogans and the objectives that we must raise in front of the reaction. In order to look good in the controversy, they also invent differences. Here is one of those inventions:

“But sliding from the question of an occasional technical agreement for the defence of a particular democratic right to the search of an agreement with the ‘liberal’ bourgeoisie for the defence of democratic rights in general, they statement passes imperceptible to the search for political accords for *the defence of the institutions of bourgeois parliamentary democracy*.” (“Statement of the United Secretariat on the PST”, op. cit., p. 59.)

“*Regular* meetings with the bourgeois opposition parties and the CP are in turn becoming *institutionalised* meetings. In political terms that is called an interclass political bloc ‘against those who resort to violence’ in Argentina, and who thereby threaten ‘the process of institutionalisation’.” (Ibid., p. 59.)

The only truth of these paragraphs is the word “imperceptible”. There is no evidence which can be corroborated by the “senses” that our party has “slipped” into “an interclass political bloc [...] against those who resort to violence” and threaten “the process of institutionalisation”. Our position is crystal clear: with non-working-class parties, we never form fronts or blocs for strategic, programmatic or long-term objectives; nor do we sign common political programs, nor do we hold joint rallies of a political nature in general. With those parties, we only come to “tactical, circumscribed, limited agreements”. These tactical agreements are essentially useful for propaganda on a well-delimited problem, and to a lesser extent and exceptionally for some practical result. They have, therefore, a relative effectiveness since for our party only “the mobilisation of the working class solves all the problems”.

This position of our party is so clear that the comrades of the majority have found themselves in need of using the bourgeois press as proof of their inventions. They have also resorted to fabricating evidence by falsifying our quotations, taking them out of context, interpreting them freely or cutting them in half.

There are several examples in the paragraphs we have quoted. There is the talk of “regular meetings with the bourgeois opposition parties and the CP” that become “institutionalised meetings”. This is an abusive deformation of the facts. Three meetings in two years, that is, an average of one meeting every eight months, can they be called “regular meetings”? And where is the “institutionality” of these meetings? Do they have a fixed date, agenda, statutes, “regularity”, leadership, program, or some other permanent element transforming them into an “institution”?

Another case. It appears in quotation marks that our so-called “interclass political bloc” is directed “against all those who resort to violence” in Argentina. Here we are dealing with a forgery. Never, ever has the PST pronounced itself against violence in general, nor has it raised the slogan “against violence”. The purpose of this forgery is to imply that the PST adheres to petty-bourgeois

pacifism, which repudiates violence even when it is exercised by the masses. We challenge the authors of the paper to say what publication of the PST they took these words from, and, if they exist, to quote the complete sentence. Otherwise, they should explain why it appears in quotation marks.

Third Case: In the document, there is a furious attack on a supposed speech by Comrade Coral in one of the encounters with the government, based on the version of that speech by a bourgeois journal, *El Cronista Comercial*:

“Let’s put it frankly: it is more the speech of a social-democratic parliamentarian than the speech of a Marxist revolutionary leader. Not a word to condemn the severe limitations of trade union freedoms and the right to strike that ‘madam president’ had just decreed! Not a word to condemn the lying calls to class collaboration, which identify with ‘subversion’ the intransigent defence of the class interests of the proletariat, contained in the speech of Maria Estela Peron!”

What comes next is unbelievable. First, the recognition that they are not sure that Coral has committed such sins:

“But, even without knowing whether Coral has really uttered the scandalous speech published in that [bourgeois] press [...]”

The least we can ask is: why do they not wait to make sure before launching such heavy-calibre accusations? Is it not absolutely dishonest to launch such a diatribe to be published by the entire Trotskyist press in the world without being sure Coral has actually said what is attributed to him?

But there is more. Second, they acknowledge that:

“It is true that *Avanzada Socialista* of 10 October 1974 publishes a statement from the Executive Committee of the PST regarding the October 8 meeting, a statement far more correct than what the bourgeois press attributes to Coral.”

But what they do not say is that this statement (so “correct” that our critics do not criticise it) was — as *Avanzada Socialista* reported — the official position of the PST, issued to journalism before the start of the meeting and basis for Coral’s speech. This, of course, left a margin for doubt more than ample over the veracity of the version by *El Cronista Comercial*.

As a finishing touch, they end up conveniently omitting the verbatim version given by *Avanzada Socialista* in the next issue (No. 125, 15 October 1974) of the complete speech by Comrade Coral.

Let’s look at some of its paragraphs:

“[...] when four ordinary workers, young militants of our party were murdered in Pacheco, we did not hear any condemnation from the government, nor did we see the government using the power of the state to punish those responsible.

“*The only formal response from the government to these developments were the amendments to the Penal Code, which were first used to repress the strike of the Matarazzo workers; and the recent ‘State Security Law’, which has made certain kind of strike and opinions crimes. While internationally ideological barriers are being broken down— for the sake of profitable business deals— within our country itself the violence is being used as a pretext to draw ideological exclusionism in order to repress the protests of the worker’s movement and the spread of socialist ideas.*

“But not all the subversion can be ascribed to the terrorists and the guerrillas. The terrorists and the guerrillas have no monopoly on subversion. There are also subversive wages, subversive hunger, subversive working conditions, and subversive slums. A wage of one hundred and thirty thousand pesos a month, for example, is a subversive wage, madam.

“[...] But with all due respect, madam, I must express our fundamental disagreement with the idea you put forward in your speech opening this meeting. ‘*The government has achieved*’, you said, ‘*harmony between workers and management, except in those sectors where the forces of disorder are active*’. We disagree absolutely with this. Outside agitators or not, it is impossible for harmony to exist between super-exploited workers who earn a wage of one hundred and thirty thousand pesos



a month and bosses who continue levels of profit secured for them by the military dictatorships. There can be no harmony between workers whose wages have been rigidly frozen, and bosses who are allowed to raise their prices in the name of the sacred capitalist principle of ‘profitability’. The only harmony that does unfortunately exist is between the bosses and the trade union bureaucrats who are united by the Social Pact, which was not discussed by the workers in their workplaces or in their unions.” (*Avanzada Socialista*, No. 125, 15 October 1974, and *Intercontinental Press*, Vol 13, No 1, p. 28-29, emphasis ours.)

Is this the “speech of a social-democratic parliamentarian”? Do the comrades of the majority think Coral does not say “a word to condemn the severe limitations of trade union freedoms and the right to strike”? Or that he does not say “a word to condemn the lying calls to class collaboration, which identify with ‘subversion’ the intransigent defence of the class interests of the proletariat, contained in the speech by Maria Estela Peron”?

Given this verbatim version of Coral’s speech, is it not an unspeakable disloyalty to base the attack on the version of a bourgeois journal? This cannot be hidden under infantile arguments such as that, even if it is a slander of the bourgeois press, its greater circulation in relation to *Avanzada Socialista* obliges us not to attend meetings with the government. With the same criteria, we should never speak in a bourgeois parliament because there is the same danger that the bourgeois press will distort our positions.

With a ridiculous argument such as this, they intend to hide the real fact — the PST has transformed its interviews with the government in an important forum of agitation of the workers’ and socialist positions, and of relentless denunciation of capitalism and the Peronist government. Do the comrades of the majority understand now why our comrades are murdered, and why our premises are blown to pieces almost always after our participation in these meetings?

This Byzantine argument about the danger of the misrepresentations of the bourgeois press not only conceals this fact; it has a second function — to conceal that the authors of the document have become accomplices of the slander of the bourgeoisie, with the sole, petty and miserable goal of winning a controversy.

We could fill several pages with many more similar cases, but we will stop at the two most significant.

2. It is known that our editorial staff auto-critically explained the reason that led to the publishing of the alleged joint document of the eight parties. According to the comrades of the majority, this explanation means “only one thing: in principle, the PST leadership continues to think that the signing of the common document with the CP and some bourgeois parties, including the main bourgeois party of the country, ‘to defend the process of institutionalisation’ was correct”.

Let’s look at this forgery in detail. In the first place, this explanation is from the staff of *Avanzada Socialista*, not from the leadership of the PST.

Second, the article that the comrades of the majority reproduce literally says that “faced with this threat” of the “fascist groups supported by the government, the trade union bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie” “we consider it not only permissible but obligatory to make limited, tactical, temporary agreements with any sector that comes out for the defence of democratic rights. [...] One of the eight parties proposed that a joint declaration be made and it presented a draft. Our party proposed a series of changes that were partially accepted. At the time we went to press, the editorial staff thought that the document bore the signature of the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores*. Actually, it was not signed because there was still disagreement with it.” (*Avanzada Socialista*, 26 June 1974 and *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 12, No. 27, 15 July 1974, p. 960, emphasis ours.)

But, although they quote it literally, the comrades of the majority repeat it changed. Where the wording of *Avanzada Socialista* says “limited, tactical, temporary agreements” for “the defence of democratic rights”, they read that the “PST leadership” would approve the “signing of a common document” for the “defence of the process of institutionalisation”.

This falsified and in bad faith interpretation is doubly serious if we take into account that the leadership of our party has made public, in the previous response, the reasons why the document was not signed:

“We found the draft to be totally unacceptable both for what it included (support of a bourgeois government and its institutions) and for what it left out (mobilisation of the working class in defence of democratic rights).” (Supplement of *Avanzada Socialista* No. 119, 4 September 1974, and *Intercontinental Press*, Vol 12, No. 31, 9 September 1974, p.1149.)

Can it be interpreted that for “the leadership of the PST” “it was correct” to “sign a common document with the PC and some bourgeois parties”, “for the defence of the process of institutionalisation”? Perhaps in matters such like this lies the secret of why the press of the majority sections publishes the attacks on the PST by the majority of the USec, but not the response to those attacks.

3. There is another “proof” invented by the majority. It is more sophisticated than the previous one and is developed in three stages. First, they make an extensive quotation, from which the essential part is omitted, then they reduce by removing some phrases, and finally they directly falsify it. The quote is from an article in *Avanzada Socialista* where it is posed: “How must the process of institutionalisation be defended?” And it is quoted so by the comrades of the majority:

“The fact that in defending of democratic rights our position coincides with non-working-class and non-socialist currents and parties *does not mean that we agree with them in anything else or in the method to defend these democratic rights*. Our party will always agree with Balbin and the FAS<sup>1</sup> lawyers in opposing by all means the suppression of the daily *El Mundo*. Balbin does this in the name of the bourgeois liberal Constitution he supports; we do it in the name of workers democracy and socialism.

“These convergences with bosses’ sectors can be expressed in the form of limited agreements, documents, statements, etc. A recent example was the rally organised by our party in condemnation of the Pacheco Massacre in which, besides the left, almost all the democratic forces participated. All these various types of public actions, from joint communiqués to rallies, *are positive and help to create the social consciousness and climate needed to defend civil liberties or condemn fascism*. Moreover, they safeguard and reinforce the legal rights of the revolutionary party.” (*Avanzada Socialista*, 4 July 1974.)

In the French translation, the authors of the document take a subtle first step to further falsification, changing our word “positive” (in Spanish) to “useful” (in French). The aim of this false translation is to emphasise the word, since “useful” is much more than “positive”, at least in Spanish.

But even so, with this modification and in addition incomplete, the quote is absolutely clear.

First: the PST “coincides” in the defence of democratic rights with “non-working-class and non-socialist parties”.

Second: with these parties, we do not “agree” on the “method” of “defending democratic rights” or “in anything else”.

Third: because we do not “agree” on the “method”, the “convergences with bosses’ sectors can be expressed in the form of limited agreements, documents, statements, etc.”

Fourth: these actions do not serve to combat or defeat fascism, but only to “help to create the social consciousness and climate” for it.

1 After the triumph of Cámpora and the Peronist party in the elections of 11 March 1973, the PRT-ERP promoted the FAS (Anti-imperialist and for Socialism Front). It nucleated fellow CP road mates such as union leader Agustín Tosco and several small guerrilla, ultra-left and trade unionist groups. The PST criticized its popular-frontist orientation and of capitulation to the Peronist guerrilla. At the FAS plenary in August 1973 in Tucumán, a PST delegation suggested that they jointly pursue a policy of class independence with the Tosco-Jaime formula, which the FAS had claimed. Tosco’s refusal closed that possibility. The FAS called for the blank vote, languished throughout 1974 and disappeared. [Editor.]

That this is the, not only correct, interpretation but opposite to the one made by the majority is proved precisely by the paragraph that follows immediately after the one quoted, and which the authors of the document omit. There, it is clarified that with declarations (“paper”) and rallies (“tribune”) with non-working class parties, practically nothing is achieved:

“But it would be *naïve* or, even worse, a *legalistic cretinism*, to believe that those freedoms can be defended simply with a piece of paper or from a tribune. In our country, moreover, it would be to completely ignore recent history. Here, the famous ‘institutional process’ is a direct son of the Cordobazo. It was the great workers’ and popular mobilisation that awakened and encouraged the drowsy democratic conscience of the bourgeoisie. Since then, each conquest, each inch gained, has been the product of great struggles, strikes, demonstrations, occupations and combative days. Precisely, the greatest badge of honour of our party, the only one of the revolutionary left which knew how to get to the front of the “institutionalisation”, that is, of the struggle for democratic conquests, is to have taken part in each and every one of these struggles, strikes, demonstrations, occupations and combative days.” (Ibid.)

But the authors of the document, instead of extending the quote to inform better, decided to omit the paragraph where it is said precisely that our agreements or “coincidences” with bourgeois parties to defend democratic rights do not serve to defeat the reaction, because this can only be achieved with “struggles, strikes, demonstrations, occupations and combative days”. This is the first step of the manoeuvre.

The second step appears two pages later where the paragraph quoted is repeated, the continuation of that paragraph which we transcribed above is still not quoted and, in addition, they remove the whole first part, where it is said that we do not “agree” with the “method” of “non-working-class and non-socialist” parties.

The third and final stage of the forgery appears later, on page 60 of the document. There it says:

“[...] The orientation that sees regular meetings with bourgeois parties, signing of common declarations and communiqués with these parties, and organising common meetings with these parties as *the useful condition* ‘for creating the kind of social consciousness and the climate to defend public freedoms or condemn fascism’ (*Avanzada Socialista*, 4 July 1974).” (“Statement of the United Secretariat on the PST”, op. cit., p. 60.)

Here the forgery is complete. First, because although it is not quoted it is implied that the PST favours and participates in “regular meetings” with bourgeois parties and argues that they are useful for propaganda against fascism. And the truth is that the PST says that the positive are “public actions”, not “meetings” themselves; meetings which, on the other hand, are not “regular”.

Second, because although not shown in quotation marks, it completely changes the meaning of what the PST proposes with a subtle change of words. We say that “public actions” with bourgeois parties: “*are positive and help* to create the social consciousness and climate to defend public freedoms or condemn fascism”.

Our critics say that these public actions, to which they add on their own the “regular meetings”, are: “the *useful condition* for creating social awareness and the climate to defend public freedoms or condemn fascism”.

That is to say, they changed “are positive and help to” by “useful condition for”. However, they “are positive” means only that, that is, they are not negative, they do not harm, but collaborate with the stated objective. And that they “help to create” means that they are not, at all, the essential factor of the formation of an antifascist conscience. This is why we say “help” and not directly “create”. But our critics transform this into “useful condition” (“*la condition utile*” in French). No longer is it *one* condition that helps, now it is the condition *for*. From one condition among others, which assists in creating an antifascist conscience, it has been transformed into the necessary and sufficient condition to achieve this conscience. From there to hold that the PST has as strategic, central and fundamental task the agreement and common rallies and communiqués with the

bourgeois parties there is but one single step. Step which our critics do not hesitate to take, on the silver bridge of this and other forgeries. These forgeries allow them, without any proof, to accuse us of having, in fact, a “popular frontist” policy of confronting fascism.

The PST has fought its entire life, and more than ever these past few years, against the front-populist politics of class collaboration. The limited and sporadic agreements with bourgeois parties, accompanied by systematic calls for the independent mobilisation of the working class, permanent denunciations of the Stalinist popular frontist policy, and constant attacks on the Peronist government and the bourgeois parties is a policy opposed by the apex to that of the popular front. The gratuitous accusation made by our critics tries to conceal a fundamental fact — the axis of all our politics goes through the political independence of the workers’ movement and its permanent mobilisation.

4. We will finish this sad task by pointing out that, as a culmination of these disloyal manoeuvres, the authors of the document carefully conceal the true positions of the PST, even though they are known. In the same issue of *Avanzada Socialista* where the above article is published, that is to say in the issue of 4 July 1974, there is an editorial — which, as such, is the one that holds the official position of the PST — that fills the whole page previous to that of the article in question, highlighted with a box and with the word “Editorial” in its heading, which reads as follows:

“But not even thousands of democratic pronouncements as those of these days will prevent the reaction from getting stronger, inside or outside the government, or in both places, until the hit is stricken. We must come out to face the oligarchy and imperialism, doing what was not done in the 1955 gorilla experience or in dozens of reactionary triumphs in Latin America. If we do not want them to succeed, unlike what happened in those tragic examples, we have to achieve a worker and revolutionary mobilisation much stronger than the one of the reaction and imperialism.

“A worker and popular mobilisation stronger than the one of the reaction can only be achieved through the control of the workers on the main springs of the country.”

Why has this paragraph not been quoted where the PST states its position? Why in this or the previous answer not a single phrase from the editorials of *Avanzada Socialista* has even been quoted? Our critics have every right to disagree on the legitimacy of reaching tactical and limited agreements with bourgeois parties, or in certain cases on the usefulness of the slogans of defence of bourgeois democracy in the struggle against fascism. But deliberately concealing the true policy of the PST, falsifying and distorting the quotations made and resorting to the calumnies of the bourgeois press are methods that go far beyond the limits imposed by revolutionary morality to a discussion between comrades of a movement.



## CHAPTER VI

# The Argentine situation

1. The summary the majority makes of the Argentine situation is journalistic and incomplete; lacking precise class characterisations. It consists of these seven points.

First: “The replacement of the dictatorship of Lanusse” is attributed to the struggle of the mass movement beginning with the Cordobazo. Another factor quoted was the “armed confrontation [...] between the military bourgeois forces” by “sectors of the masses as well as some groups of the vanguard”.

Second: The bourgeoisie and imperialism “by promoting the ‘process of institutionalisation’ through the ‘great national accord’” to avert “the risk of a global confrontation” and to “control the workers’ movement”.

Third: “The *sine qua non* for the success of this Peronist project was the acceptance of ‘Social Peace’ by the whole working class in exchange for ‘free elections’...”. Minority sectors of the workers’ movement did not come to play and “were beginning to act independently”.

Fourth: “Under these conditions, the reestablishment of the Peronist regime inevitably involved a *growing violent and terrorist* repression, not only against the Peronist far left and the groups engaged in the guerrilla struggle but also against all independent sectors of the workers’ movement and the working class”.

Fifth: “The situation was characterised by the X Congress of the International as “the Peronist regime of the new bourgeois-democratic period”, and this analysis remains valid; at the same time, it is a “curious ‘democracy’ that develops the white terror starting from the highest government circles”.

Sixth: “This ‘institutionalised’ and systematised repression under the direct control of Lopez Rega, the ‘strong man’ of the Peronist regime, reveals the hypocritical and fraudulent nature of the claims by the Peronist leaders.”

Seventh: “The PST’s participation in the institutionalised meetings between the government and the so-called ‘centre-left’ opposition [...] provides left cover for the anti-workers and anti-revolutionary repression of the Peronist regime.”

2. This summary, which is correct as to the facts —although not in its assessment of the PST’s actions, has omissions and deficiencies that are startling. Let’s consider a few.

First: The majority fail to say whether, the “new period of bourgeois democracy” is superior to us, the Trotskyists to the military regimes; and whether the masses achieved great gains in relation to the governments of Lanusse or Onganía.

The PST believes that yes, that the present Argentine regime is qualitatively different from the military dictatorship, as well as the regimes of Pinochet, Bordaberry, Geisel or Banzer, which are brutal Bonapartist dictatorships supported by oligarchy and imperialism. This characterisation does not negate the right-wing and ultra-reactionary course of Peronism in office, but it combines

with it — we have a bourgeois democratic regime in which the government is in the hands of a party that is turning more and more towards the right and the reaction.

Second: This lack of precise characterisation of the regime causes the comrades of the majority to ignore the existence of the danger that of a *coup d'état* to liquidate the democratic gains of the masses and the workers' movement, that is, to sweep away and wipe out the "new period of bourgeois democracy". The PST believes that this terrible threat exists, although not as immediate as weeks or months, and constitutes the most serious political problem the masses and our party are facing.

Third: The summary takes into account and defines the attitude of the vanguard of the workers' movement, but does not say a single word about the situation of the whole of the workers' movement. It acknowledges that the worker's movement as a whole does not act or think in the same way as the vanguard when it points out that it is "largely minority on a national scale". But it totally ignores the level of consciousness and the attitude of the working class as a whole. This ignorance, this lack of analysis of what the class as a whole thinks, feels and does is unpardonable, because it is one of the fundamental or perhaps the fundamental element to formulate a correct policy.

Fourth: As a result of this deficiency, the majority make the analysis of Peronism as a government and of the GAN [Great National Accord] as a regime, but they forget Peronism as a mass movement and the mass support of the GAN. However, there are figures that clearly indicate these phenomena. Peronism rose to the government with 70 percent of the votes. The GAN, with its project of "institutionalisation of the country", was voted by 98 percent of all Argentines over the age of 18. More than 90 percent (95 percent is the close figure) of the workers voted for Peronism. Peronism, then, has a much greater support in the workers' movement than Mitterrand has in France, for example, and much more than twice the support the Italian Socialists and CP have.

The authors of the document should clarify whether they think that this situation remains the same or has undergone some qualitative change. That is, does this working class majority, which not follow the vanguard in its autonomous actions, still support the government or not? The PST believes the crisis of Peronism in the workers' movement has begun, but it has just begun, and very slowly — it will be a long stretch to completion. And we do not know whether, when this crisis reaches its culmination, the workers will turn directly towards the positions of revolutionary socialism, towards an independent workers' party, or they will remain stalled for a period in some popular frontist variation "to the left" of Peronist populism. Does the majority believe the crisis of Peronism is at its beginnings or at its completion? Is there any possibility that a popular front of masses will emerge as the product of this crisis?

Fifth: This ignorance about what the workers' movement is doing and what it seeks is manifested in the fact that, although they refer to the "Social Pact" as a government plan, the majority "forgot" to analyse it from the point of view of its relation to the working class. They fail to say that, because of it means (wage freeze amid an accelerating inflation), it has been and will continue to be the immediate source of the greater workers' struggles. This failure leads to an even more serious one: ignoring the struggle of our class in general — not of minority, vanguard sectors — against the freezing of wages. However, this struggle provoked three massive waves of strikes during 1974 and led to an important partial defeat of the "Social Pact" and the wage freeze. This class struggle did not deserve a single line of the document of the majority of the USec as if it had no importance.

Sixth: An almost incredible oversight is the failure to mention the guerrillas. However, they exist and are active. The PRT (*Combatiente*) and the ERP [Revolutionary People's Army] launched a relentless struggle against the Peronist government shortly after its inauguration. The Peronist left, more recently, also turned to guerrilla actions against the government. The guerrillas are a part of the national reality that deserves to be named and to dwell in it. Is it a correct policy to attack in an armed way a government that had — and still has — the political support of the vast majority of the workers' movement and a large part of the population? Is the argument that the guerrilla should not be held responsible for the increase in repression valid since it is inherent in the

capitalist system? Is it not part of the Marxist analysis to point out that if the workers' movement does not react against the repression, it is because it is carried out in the name of the defence of a government that workers regard as their own and that is being physically attacked by a small irresponsible elite? Is it not necessary to characterise that guerrilla action accelerates repression, causes a premature repression, disproportionate to the level of workers' struggles, and allows the bourgeoisie to isolate the vanguard sectors which cannot find support in the masses to resist it because the masses support the government?

Seventh: It does not make clear that the most serious contradiction of the Argentine reality is the one existing between the level of combativity and union organisation of the proletariat and its rotten union and political leadership. This contradiction cannot be left out of any serious analysis since it is the contradiction between the very high union consciousness of the Argentine workers and their backwards political consciousness, their Peronist fanaticism.

## CHAPTER VIII

# A true Trotskyist policy

1. It is impossible to have a correct revolutionary policy in our country without taking into account the overall situation, of which the “oversights” of the majority are an essential part. Hence it sounds ridiculous the policy of our critics to “resolutely orient ourselves towards the line of the united workers front and the propaganda for and implementation of self-defence against fascist terror by the workers’ organisations themselves”.

“United workers front”? Who with? With the ultra-minority Communist Party of Argentina? No, of course, the united workers’ front involves mass organisations, not small parties. A united workers’ front with the Peronist unions, the only mass organisations that do exist? But it happens that a whole “sector of fascism” is nourished by the Peronist unions that in turn support the government same as the workers do. So then, a united workers’ front with the Peronist unions against the Peronist unions?

“Self-defence” by the “workers’ organisations themselves”? Again, what “workers’ organisations”? Do we ask the Peronist unions to “self-defend” from their own fascist thugs or from those of government vigilante gangs, when the unions are part of the government?

We want the authors of the document to tell us the name and surname of those “workers’ organisations”, which we assume of masses, with which we have to achieve the workers’ front and promote self-defence. Precisely the key of the situation is that the Argentine workers do not think, or feel the need *for the time being* to defend itself from fascism. They do not intend to do so precisely because of their extreme political backwardness, manifested in their support for the Peronist government and movement, makes them blind, *for the time being*, to fascism as their main enemy. And they do not feel the need to defend themselves because, *for the time being*, fascism does not attack mass workers’ organisations or the workers’ movement, but only ultra-vanguard sectors. The working class is, *for the time being*, indifferent to the fascist danger.

Finally, there is another “oversight” that seems to be a rather deliberate ignorance to the effects of the controversy. They fail to take into account the “process of institutionalisation” in relation to the consciousness of the workers’ movement. One thing is the process of institutionalisation as posed by the bourgeoisie, correctly defined by our critics, and another thing is how the workers’ and mass movement understand it, feel it, and want it and voted it. For the workers and the masses, “institutionalisation” is the process of conquering democratic rights, as well as supporting the Peronist government, which they consider their government. If this is not understood, nothing is known about the current consciousness of the Argentine workers’ movement. And if nothing is known, it is absolutely impossible to have a correct policy.

2. A true revolutionary policy must take into account all these elements “forgotten” by our critics. They cause our party to have a political course where different lines of action are combined.

First: A frontal battle against the “Social Pact”, calling on the working class to organise waves of strikes to achieve wage increases, to break the “wage freeze” and to defeat the “Social Pact”. This call to struggle is accompanied by the denunciation of the government as the executioner



who applies the Pact. Through this “practical” way we are unmasking the government, and what is equally important, we push the working class to mobilise in a massive way after a goal which the class is in a position to achieve now.

The cornerstone of all our politics was precisely that — to seek the point felt by the entire working class to put the class in permanent movement against the capitalist regime and the Peronist government. This point, a real lever to mobilise the class, we found it, given the high level of union consciousness and the very low political level of the class, in the frontal attack on the “Social Pact”. If in the struggle against it the working class achieves successes, this policy will lead us to the subsequent confrontation with the government and the fascists, to a political maturation of our class. The facts are telling us we were right since the biggest workers’ mobilisations have been around the wage freeze of the “Social Pact”.

Second: An impassioned defence of the “process of institutionalisation” as understood by the masses not as understood by the bourgeoisie and, above all, by the Peronist government. The workers, by voting for this “process”, voted for having ever greater democratic rights. We agree with the workers and with the sense they gave to their vote. And we point out to them that they must fight so that the process does not go backwards but rather advances. We act thus inspired by the method of the transitional program, which teaches us how to appropriate equivocal words and slogans — “peace”, for example — to support the meaning given to them by of our class.

Third: As long as Peronism continues to have massive support from the working class, we will continue talking and attending meetings with it. In these meetings we will try to accelerate its crisis by making demands on behalf of the working class and denouncing it for the “Social Pact”, the repression, and the protection of the fascist groups, the reactionary course and its policy objectively favourable to the preparation of a reactionary coup, accusing it of not knowing how to defend “democracy”. This is nothing more than following the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky. The first, when he launched the policy of “partial demands” to Kerensky because the Russian workers trusted him. The latter, when he proposed the same in relation to Roosevelt because the American workers believed in him. (And if Kerensky was by far a government more advanced than Peronism, Roosevelt, representative of the imperialist monopolies, was by far a more reactionary government.)

Fourth: As the conditions to raise a true united workers’ front against fascist gangs mature, we will continue to make “limited, tactical agreements” with any current to defend any freedom or set of freedoms attacked or to be won. At the same time, we will continue to raise united fronts and militias with the independent unions and workers’ parties of the left. (This approach, which we have been making publicly for months — and has only received negative responses to date — is a true party campaign, systematically ignored by our critics.)

Fifth: We will continue to fight for union democracy in combination with the fight against the “Social Pact” as the best way to wipe out the trade union bureaucracy.

Sixth: We will continue to be the champions in denouncing the danger of a reactionary coup and in raising the need to mobilise the workers’ movement to confront it. Within this policy comes the defence of constitutional continuity against the reactionary coup. That is, we will continue to defend the “current bourgeois democratic period”, as long as the masses continue to believe in it.

Seventh: This entire political course has one axis — to achieve the political independence of the workers’ movement and to avoid any fall into popular frontism.

Eighth: We will continue denouncing the guerrilla because by ignoring and despising the consciousness of the masses, what they want and feel, the guerrilla launches terrorist actions against the government voted by the workers, and they are ignored or repudiated by the vast majority of workers. And because this irresponsible action causes the acceleration of repression and the prospects of a reactionary coup, which can be unleashed on a workers’ movement that is not yet politically prepared to resist and defeat it.