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## 7 FAU Letters and Two Trade Union Documents

Uruguayan Anarchist Federation

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February 18, 2021

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## ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS

- It is essential that all unions review their organizational structure, working methods and functioning, taking advantage of recent lessons.
- It is necessary that a national plenary of trade unions functions on a permanent basis, that it organizes its work according to a Representative Board (with a Secretariat and an adequate regional structure).
- After the discussion of this document, it is necessary to discuss it in plenary in order to elect Representative Table according to the reality of the trade union movement.

The Secretariat must ensure the decisive gravitation of the workers' unions that held the central weight of the strike. It must also ensure that all the classist currents acting in the labour movement are represented.

## Contents

<b>Preamble</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SOME CRITERIA FOR WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL (1)</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SOME CRITERIA FOR THE WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL. (2)</b>	<b>17</b>
1. . . . .	17
2. . . . .	18
3. . . . .	20
<b>BEWARE OF DETOURS, THE FOCUS IS ON THE STRUGGLE.</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>SOME CRITERIA FOR WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL (3)</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>SOME CRITERIA FOR WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL. (4)</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>SOME CRITERIA FOR WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL (5)</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>THE LONG MARCH TOWARDS THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE.</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>LETTER TO THE CNT</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>THE THREE "F" DOCUMENT</b>	<b>51</b>
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	51
THE JUNE 27TH COUP . . . . .	52
THE STRIKE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT. . . . .	55
LESSONS FROM THE STRIKE . . . . .	56

THE CURRENT SITUATION . . . . .	58
PERSPECTIVES . . . . .	59
ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS . . . . .	62

- With the dissolution of parliament, the oligarchic attack is directed against the trade unions, the university and education, the student associations, the opposition political parties and movements, not necessarily to destroy them but to condition and limit them. The decree called “Security at Work” has this purpose. The unions will not allow themselves to be regulated by the dictatorship and the employers. The tactic of confrontation will have to be processed by appreciating the force available. We are not afraid of elections by secret ballot, as we have always done and are willing to do. But we will not allow ourselves to be swamped. We will never give up the methods of struggle that the labour movement has coined in 100 years of experience and in the general strike.
- To adapt the unions’ methods of struggle and organisational guidelines to the reality of the repressive levels established by the system. To assume the responsibilities that derive from the intensity reached by the class struggle at all levels. Not to fall into the tactical dispersion, to unite and combine the forms of the trade union struggle according to the circumstances.
- Street mobilisation must be part of the actions to be undertaken, ensuring that they are properly prepared.
- Insofar as the regime has a monopoly on propaganda, it is necessary to develop (give it the value it has) the agitation and propaganda front AT ALL LEVELS OF THE POPULAR MOVEMENT.

AT ALL LEVELS OF THE PEOPLE’S MOVEMENT, IT IS NECESSARY TO FIGHT FOR THE MENTALITY OF RESISTANCE WE HAVE MADE AN EXPERIENCE. WE HAVE FOUGHT A BATTLE. THERE WILL BE OTHER BATTLES. WE ARE INVINCIBLE. WE ARE A PEOPLE THAT DOES NOT LET ITSELF BE SWEEPED AWAY.

Repeal of Trade Union Regulations and all repressive legislation, an end to persecution and the legalisation of the CNT

- Reimbursement of all those dismissed, summarized and dismissed for union reasons.
- Wage adjustment in accordance with the indices established by the CNT for July (73), updated to the indices of cost containment and subsidies for the fundamental products of the family basket. Measures against unemployment and creation of new sources of work.

It is a task then, in the short term, to unite the militancy in the understanding and assimilation of the lessons of the general strike, on a common – minimal – appreciation of the perspective, on the character of the present and future struggle. This is even fundamental to fight against dismissals and prisoners.

Therefore we want to emphasize:

- The dictatorship seeks to broaden its social base; this must be prevented. The trade unions should, by proceeding as broadly as possible, coordinate their efforts with the various social sectors that are defined against the dictatorship. The realization of the reactionary character of Bordaberry's team in economic and political terms requires that those who are committed to the dictatorship be severely punished. Within the framework of this characterization is that the working class must promote the creation of a FRONT OF POPULAR RESISTANCE that brings together all the forces that oppose the dictatorship and agree to carry out the programmatic changes that the People's Movement has already approved: nationalization of foreign trade, banking, land, refrigerators, etc. Here we must bear in mind the interests that unite us and the different degrees of alliance that can determine and lead us towards the objective of the working class and the people.

We present these texts which are relevant in several ways.

On the one hand, "7 letters from FAU" which talk about the importance and decisiveness of the Political Organisation in the struggle, where it is stressed that it is not possible to aspire to a revolutionary outcome of the political accumulation of the popular struggles without such a specific organisation. Political organisation which is not a vanguard but a driving force which pushes and contributes to the popular struggles, but which has as its mission an important area of specific tasks to develop in a process of such characteristics.

These texts date from around 1968 to 1970 and in them we will see these concepts clearly expressed, through the sieve of the language of that time.

Secondly, two "tendency" materials are published, both at trade union and student level, setting out the need to deepen the struggle and also explaining what the unity of the trade union movement is for and what role a student tendency should play.

We hope that both materials will be useful to anarchist comrades all over the world. Health and Up with those that Struggle!

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## Preamble

History has no second parts, neither good nor bad, they are acts, some recurrent and others merely circumstantial. What is useful to us is the teaching it leaves us, the general elements that allow us to visualise some degrees of succession of current events. It gives us the possibility of being incidents, if we are moved by an ideological impulse of transformation, within a delimited framework, but no more. Even at this point, it shows itself to be implacable, with the implacability of the passage of time. It brings with it a series of elements that do not allow us to make an easy, pretentious and superb manipulation of it...

Within these considerations these materials appear as material for the study of the actions within the popular movement and its organisational forms. It keeps a distance from what has to do with formulas of solutions in society, which today is presented in a totally different way. It contains referential elements, ideas, experiences and historical facts that allow us to be incidentals. Each reader can take charge of his or her own conclusions, although in this case it is material to be objectified and converted into a positive element of social and economic transformation.

Mass actions and armed struggle, trade union mobilizations and direct action, had a constant and permanent presence during the period of the end of the 60s. Mass actions that meant a political deepening, ranging from economic, social and political demands to actions that meant direct confrontations with the repressive forces. Development, for example, of an armed struggle that implied a greater technical capacity and a further deepening of the people's struggle. But within a framework in which at no time should the

can be foreseen in the medium term, but rather a stagnation similar to that which the country has been enduring. We can therefore conclude that the defeat of the dictatorship (in its present form or those it may adopt in the future) depends basically on the resistance and struggle developed by the popular movement. The trade unions and the people have a long-term struggle ahead of them, not a short-term one.

The WORKING CLASS, the backbone of the popular resistance during the 15-day strike, must continue to play its cardinal role. The social sign of the political solution to this situation depends on the gravitation of the working class and its most combative sectors in the process of resistance that has started. It depends on the weight of the working class and its most militant sectors that we advance towards the people's power from this stage of resistance. Only the leading role of the people will prevent that this struggle ends with a way out behind the scenes and means a new frustration for the people and especially for the working class.

## PERSPECTIVES

From the above, it leads to maintain that with the dictatorship NEITHER TREGUE, NOR LEGITIMATION. But we must note that after the strike, within the framework of the decree of July 4, 1973, the employers have found an opportunity to beat the unions. One aspect of the process of recovery of the latter, is to understand that the general actions of the trade union movement will only be possible insofar as possible generalizations developed by subsidiary unions or by regional or zonal unions. We understand that these actions must be linked to the following immediate platform that will nucleate and guide them in the struggle:

- Freedom for all comrades in prison, immediate cessation of torture. Full validity of the right to information and assembly.

In short: the force of the GENERALSTRIKE against the dictatorship (a historically unprecedented experience) hit it to some degree. It did not succeed in overturning it, but it managed to bring together against the dictatorship a very broad front of unevenly structured forces. The struggle tested all orientations, all organisational and trade union work systems, all tactical criteria.

Correcting the shortcomings in the light of the experience, so that the next wave of the popular movement will drown the dictatorship, is a necessary task that demands broadness of criteria and seriousness of analysis.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION

In analysing the causes of the coup, we point out that the oligarchy is mounting an offensive to consolidate its power. This is not the culmination, but a further milestone in the process begun in 1968.

The geopolitical reasons (the interest of foreign monopoly capital and imperialism in the Plata basin) are factors that influence an increasingly serious economic, structural and political crisis. In the political field the regime is practically isolated, the armed forces are its main effective support. Aware of this reality, the dictatorship seeks to build its social support base. It has a monopoly on information to practice demagoguery.

The economic policy of the oligarchy only serves it, the foreigner, the imperialism. It will aggravate the structural causes of the crisis, the alienation of our wealth, the stagnation of production. It has an anti-patriotic, anti-national sign, exposing more and more our validity as an independent eastern nation. Despite this weakness (relative social and political isolation), the dictatorship has a monopoly on information in order to practice demagoguery, it has all the power, including the state armed forces, it is supported by imperialism and in the economic field no catastrophe or collapse

aspiration to a socialist society, to that of a more just and united society, be left. The materials offered, the first dating back to 69, Pacheco already had a long history of government with security measures that had involved closures of newspapers, closure of political organizations, prisoners in prisons and barracks and another series of outrages. The legal dictatorship he was promoting was in full swing, with a parliament functioning with all parties. Unemployment, attempts to control the unions. Prisoners, whether social, trade union or political, of all kinds, passed through the barracks, killed..., torture... A whole chain of monstrosities for which the state was responsible and driven by national and international capitalist interests. A bourgeoisie determined to put an end to the people's struggle and to project the advent and establishment of a dictatorship that would consolidate its claims. In the countryside, maintaining the medieval privileges of the latifundia, with workers who did not know their rights, subjected to starvation wages, without any possibility of organisation and trying to keep them at a low level of education. All those who tried to come up with ideas or solutions to overcome these problems were easy victims of persecution. The police stations and the barracks in the interior witnessed the passage of thousands of people treated as "stateless communists", trying to validate any kind of aggression. It is from this period that the death of a *canillita* at the hands of Pereira Reverbel, Senator of Artigas, dates, who saved the action of justice with complete impunity. Politicians, military, police and ranchers were an infamous threat to the country that was being created. Intimidation and persecution were commonplace and this is something that the rancher and the boss wanted to show as the rancher-dictator Bordaberry later did.

No less important was the situation of the industrial and service workers in the cities. Union leaders confined in all the barracks and police stations of the country, sentenced to prison for subversion, beaten and wounded in demonstrations, tortured and a whole lot

of atrocities for trying to defend the conquests and the rights of the workers.

“Strong government and an iron fist”, meaning repression, was the political vision of those who ruled. From the beginning, this was the way it was conceived, and over time it became more rigid until the military took a direct part in the matter, counting on the tolerance of all the politicians of the system, with a few exceptions, some of whom paid with their lives.

From Gestido to the military dictatorship it was a long process, but throughout this period the popular movement was developing and putting into practice a series of resistance mechanisms that have virtues that can be taken into account to this day. Perhaps the most important part is the response and mechanism for the forging of **a strong people**. Capable of confronting a dictatorship and breaking it down even at the expense of their own sacrifice.

The whole first part constituted by the FAU Charters points to that. Formulating, organising and responding by the popular organisations, trade unions and social organisations to the political situation that was being shaped by the bourgeoisie. Operational forms of action and dissemination for the defence of the people and perhaps most importantly: to involve the workers in the struggle that involved confronting capitalism. After the coup d'état and consequently the general strike as a response, the result of such preaching was seen. The labouring people confronting the dictatorship is a clear result of the way to be followed at all times with similar situations that arise. But it is also a constant of struggle to reduce and eliminate the exploitation whenever it occurs.

It is in the part that corresponds to proposals and scope of the trade unions that the importance of this process is most clearly understood. It is there that the notions and the political scope to which the workers can reach are clearly marked. To achieve the understanding that their political role and the knowledge of how to implement it is not merely that of conquering demands by following the path that the system has always tried to mark out for

- The generalisation of the whole trade union movement, of street demonstrations, practised under extremely difficult conditions.
- The recognition of the importance of the plans of fight (criteria and objectives, planning, organization and forecast), for the development of the fight. Their absence prevents the full potential of the struggle from being deployed.
- The confirmation of the importance of the Base Committees, of the development of the militancy by section, company and intermediate levels, as support and exercise of the management in any circumstance.
- The identification of the needs for a regional and zonal structure built from the workplaces, building from these a solid intermediate direction (regional and zonal of the whole trade union movement in Montevideo).
- It is in the practice of a conciliatory trade unionism, in the systematic softening of methods, in the constant condemnation, by sectors of the trade union movement, of every expression of radicalisation in the methods of struggle, all of which is linked to the lack of appropriate plans of struggle, to the lack of an adequate trade union structure, It is also due to the lack of sufficient intermediate cadres rooted in the base, in the practice of a vindictive trade unionism, disconnected from the programmatic aspects, that the explanation for the serious deficiencies that several unions showed must be sought, to such an extent that the strike could not be maintained and even, in some cases, effectively decreed.

NO UNION WAS DEFEATED, A STYLE, A METHOD, A CONCEPTION OF UNION WORK WAS DEFEATED.



From 4 to 8 July, the strike in the transport sector collapsed and was broken in the municipal, dockworkers, SUANP, and railway companies, as well as in COFE where the strike was never organically decreed. There are also uprisings in the sectors that had decreed it themselves. We do not know who was responsible for these uprisings, or in agreement with whom. The funerals of the fallen students and the great popular concentration on Monday, July 9 showed a high level of presence and militancy. Finally, on Wednesday 11, the Representative lifted the strike without any conditions. As a result, there are still: the dismissed, the demanded, the summarized, the persecuted. The level of struggle of the occupied places at that time eloquently pointed out the firmness and the vanguard role of the working class in the battle fought. The battle was fought in the heat of the people, with the support of the neighbourhood.

## LESSONS FROM THE STRIKE

This general strike is the most important political action carried out in Uruguay by the whole of the proletariat, the salaried sectors, the student body and vast social sectors. They are major political contributions of this strike:

- The participation of big masses acting together as a form of political protest against the dictatorship, made in the form of strike and occupation of workplaces.
- The leading role of the working class, which made a qualitative leap in the political leadership of the popular movement.
- The awareness of its strength by the people's movement and the necessity to create the political, organisational and technical conditions for the struggle for people's power, without which no programme of the people will become a reality.

them. They can elaborate, execute and achieve political objectives, breaking the steel fences that they try to impose on them.

A good lesson this one!

How do we see it today?

It is good to put on the table some indications that appear at the moment as clear premises for the work of the popular movement.

They say that "power exists in acts", the same can be said about the revolution. As Michel Foucault reminds us, "given the nature of politics, radicalism is of the order of existence and not of discourse". It is not an entelechy or something that comes before a certain spell. It is not an isolated act. It demands modifying practices, of rupture, of discontinuity, in fields such as the economic, ideological, political-legal, and general cultural, to be hitting and breaking that vast network of domination. All of this takes shape in a process with active popular participation. A people that we would compose as a wide spectrum of the oppressed and exploited that we designate in this historical stage as the group of Oppressed Classes. A people that suffers, within the structural changes that have occurred, a fragmentation of importance that must be overcome.

Where structures of domination have developed and emerged in other places than the traditional ones. We must build solidarity ties that link, that make the unity of their struggles a first-rate foundation for them to form a social force capable of effective struggles and quality steps. We are not talking about gradualism, or linearity, or taking over enemy stands one by one. We are talking about systematically, strategically, opposing a universe that understands the new historical reality, the changes that emerged in complex processes.

So far, what we can expect from this material, only action, experience, struggle, can open a path of socialism and freedom.

**Up with those that struggle!**

**Publications Committee**

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themselves as the armed wing of the interests of the oligarchy and imperialism.

## **THE STRIKE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT.**

On the very morning of the coup, in compliance with the resolution of the Congresses, without stopping to wait for a central order, nor in the face of hesitation that might occur at some level, important workplaces (especially factories) were occupied.

By midday the occupation was almost total, reaching places with little history of trade union mobilisation.

From 27 June to 4 July the strike was almost total. We highlight that period:

- The generation of electricity was kept under workers' control and the supply of fuel depended entirely on union resolutions.
- On 30 June, 1, 2 and 3 July an offensive of eviction operations took place. In the majority of cases, they were re-occupied (in some cases up to 7 times), except for Lanasur, which was unilaterally occupied by the Armed Forces and could not be occupied by the workers. In Alpargatas, Bao, etc., the repression reached an extreme violence without achieving the softening of the workers and militants who reoccupied their factories.
- On Thursday 28 and Friday 29 June, the army withdraws fuel from ANCAP. On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>, the army occupies it, taking over the stored fuel.
- Serious difficulties have been reported to the Coordinator of the Press Unions.
- On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> difficulties in transport start to be observed.

Parliament. On the other hand, the armed forces, which were gradually incorporated into the support of this policy and left the barracks in 1972 (fight against “sedition”), began to follow a path with certain autonomous characteristics, within the framework of the state apparatus of which they are part. February 1973 was a sign of the process that the Armed Forces were going through. Communiqués 4 and 7 could be, to a greater or lesser extent, an expression of the real aspirations that existed within the Armed Forces at the time, or mere instruments of demagogic propaganda. What is indisputable, in light of the events, is that the expectant passivity with which the popular movement faced its actions from February onwards was a mistake. It was therefore a mistake to mobilise without a decision to achieve immediate objectives of their own that were of such importance to the workers and – in some cases – coincided with points in communiqués 4 and 7, whatever interpretation was given to them. Wage improvements were postponed until July despite the unleashed inflationary process, the huge demonstrations of 19 March and 1 June, indicative of the combative mood of the masses, the solidarity action for the respect of trade union rights, and the defence of the sources of work, did not develop in a coordinated manner with the required amplitude (Juan Lacaze conflict, intervened banks, Frigonal, integration of the boards of the Autonomous Entities). The campaign for the nationalization of the banking, foreign trade and refrigeration industries was not developed, despite the elements provided by the speculation with wool, the pressure of the managers of the Banco Mercantil, the presence of Gari in Lanasur. No maximum solidarity was deployed to respond to the attacks against the registered HISSA unions; etc.

As a culmination of this expectant city, the celebration of May-day is even planned as a party, in a completely inadequate attitude in relation to the harshness of the class struggle. Finally, with the coup of 27 June, the armed forces have unequivocally positioned

## **SOME CRITERIA FOR WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL (1)**

Montevideo, 19 May 1969.

The process of the struggles in our country is making clear a wide and complex set of experiences. It is essential to analyse them in order to extract clear and precise guidelines for action. We begin this analysis by addressing some problems that can be deduced from the trade union activity, an aspect of the greatest importance within the set of tasks that we have before us today. Despite the experience already accumulated, despite what daily practice shows, there are those who insist on presenting as exclusive and incompatible, methods that only define different levels of the same struggle and that can and must be confluent and harmonious. There are those who continue to artificially oppose mass action and armed struggle, union mobilisation and direct action. This strategic conception is full of “alternatives” that contain as many subjectivisms animated by an interestingly mechanical and abstract thought. “Either we mobilize and organize the masses or we take up the machine gun. Either we go to the lessons or we all start “shooting”.

It is these “arguments” that are still heard. In general followed by the corollary that they are destined to suggest: “the conditions are not given yet, let’s continue with legal propaganda, peaceful acts, election fronts, parliamentary battles, strikes and stoppages without violence”. It is also said with the same meaning and with the same practical consequences: “let’s organize the Party first”. In our country the different levels of struggle, the different methods, are happening simultaneously. To emphasize the convergence of

their effects, to perfect their work, is the central task of the present. It is a largely original and new task, given the specific characteristics of our country (high urbanization, extensive mass movement, gradual and different rhythms of contradictions, existence of forms of armed struggle, increasing repression, etc.) and the fluidity and complexity that characterize this transition period. What experience has shown is that the legal, traditional methods, which appeared before as useful to achieve gains in wages, are not enough now to break the policy of freezing. What we can see, on an international scale, is the innocuousness of the electoral route as a way of gaining access to power, the negative side of deceptive parliamentarianism, the vulnerability of the vast public organisations and apparatuses, and the relative ineffectiveness of the traditional means of propaganda available.

Does recognising all this mean renouncing action with the masses? Does it mean the need to isolate oneself from them? To abandon the task of organising them, of stimulating them in their mobilisation, of helping to enlighten them? Of course not. And at this point, a few points about the modalities of trade union work in relation to these problems are particularly relevant.

Trade union activity can and should also be developed at various levels. In fact, it has been doing so for some time now. There are high levels of struggle that have already been achieved in trade union actions. Within these, in a necessarily summary schematization, one can recognize these variants, which are in fact mere stages in the process of a trade union conflict:

- Agitation (events, flyers, graffiti, demonstrations) to set the scene and spread the word about the motives for a subsequent mobilisation.
- Strike or stoppage aimed at achieving it.
- More or less combative street demonstrations to stir up opinion and galvanise and unite the ranks themselves.

- The extension, with an unprecedented amplitude in the life of the country, of unionization. Trade unionism is no longer an exclusively workers' phenomenon, but a phenomenon of all employees.
- The raising of the political level of trade union mobilisations, expressed in the programmatic proposals.
- The progressive hardening and radicalisation of the methods of struggle.
- The creation of the CNT as a massive expression of trade union unity and the programmatic advancement of the working people.
- We workers lost part of our wages.

In 1964/66, trade union unity was established: a declaration of principles, a programme and statutes accepted by all the unions when the CNT was set up. The oligarchy responded to the new level reached by the workers' resistance with the "Orange Reform" and the constitutional dictatorship of Pacheco. Pacheco constitutes the process by which the oligarchy assaults the Executive Power and concentrates in its hands all the instruments that define the economic policy of the country. Thus, with the parliamentary endorsement finally expressed through the "chico" pact, the oligarchy from the Executive unifies the Armed Forces to serve its repressive policy. The unions and the people have been fighting against this process from 1966 to the present. In an unstable balance between the possibilities of the oligarchy and the potential for struggle of the trade union and popular movement, facts and confrontations are hidden, and the oligarchy is settling its contradictions.

The political "crises" are representative of the expression of such contradictions, of the imposition of the real power of the oligarchy over the formal power of the parties expressed in

the junctures in which the process of accumulation of forces and the contradictions in the field of the oligarchy made it possible to break Pacheco's economic policy were not taken advantage of, a practice of dispersed struggle — without planning — was followed in response to the blows of the oligarchy, the popular movement was weakened and the strengthening of the oligarchy was enabled by the failure of the working class to achieve political objectives — by and possible — in various junctures of the pachecato: August 1968 and June 1969.

The need for the CNT leadership to study and plan, throughout the trade union movement, the appropriate measures to ensure effective implementation

## THE JUNE 27TH COUP

All the technicians agree that from 1955/57 an economic-structural crisis took shape which became progressively worse. The two great traditional parties that shared power, with multi-class electoral support bases and a wide spectrum of tendencies within them — ranging from populist formulations to extreme right-wing expressions — without prejudice to the interests of the oligarchy. The advance of the economic-structural crisis and the decrease in the wealth to be distributed generated growing social tensions. Since 1960, attempts have been made to apply the recipes of the IMF (wage freeze), as a way of maintaining the quota of the latifundia, the large industrialists, bankers and exporters at the expense of wage earners and small producers in the city and countryside.

The workers lost part of their wages. Within the framework of the struggles understood as the answers of the trade unions to the crisis, five events of fundamental importance in the process of the class struggle took place:

- Direct action as a means of public impact, to punish treason and repressors, to radicalise one's own mobilisation.

One of the characteristics of the reformist methodology is its exclusive attachment to the first two forms of action. This, together with the cult of obedience to the "apparatus", often disguised as "union discipline", and to the procedures and formalities (to "isolate the enemy") to be channelled towards parliament (where the Party representatives "show off"), constitutes the reformist recipe for union activity. If the objectives pursued are not achieved, "another great victory" is proclaimed, and it is a matter of deducting "political balances" ("hundreds of new members", "thousands and thousands of new voters..." in close or more or less remote elections).

All this is well known. And it has become traditional. But in the current conditions this strategic scheme proves to be insufficient. To act as a union, with a revolutionary perspective, with a revolutionary direction, melting in the masses, without giving up the claiming role of the union action poses difficulties, suggests problems. To locate those, to elucidate these, let's start from the beginning.

A correct orientation means facing the platforms of demands with a revolutionary direction and with appropriate methods.

The essential function of trade unions, which legitimizes their existence as a mass organization is their function of struggle. We must avoid the mistake of trying to turn them into a kind of political party with total definitions of the most diverse problems. This was a misconception to which anarcho-syndicalist militants slipped, but they fulfilled the difficult task of founding the first "societies of resistance" in the Rio de la Plata, based on criteria of class intransigence.

In the present conditions, the essential thing is to decide on union actions, combative and hard, which determine the conquest

of the most felt and deeply rooted demands. There is room for some clarification in this respect.

- The role of militancy is to encourage, promote and stimulate the struggle and not to wait for it to emerge spontaneously. It is to create the concrete means (organisational, financial, informational, etc.) so that the struggle finds adequate channels, opportunity and forms.
- It is necessary to have clear criteria as to which are the objectives around which to focus the struggles. Demands are not lacking, by the way, in all the unions. The problem is to choose which of them it is preferable to agitate first and then launch them as a reason for mobilisation.  
The success of this choice is decisive for success. There is no need to “plug in” slogans. Don’t be vague or confused or do too many things at once. Several slogans can be shaken, but there must be well-defined, clear and achievable objectives (goals to be achieved).
- You can’t mobilise a union in depth for issues that are only of interest to a minority of militants. Subjectivist “occurrences” are not valid here. Only deeply felt demands can really move a trade union. But it is often the action of the most active sector that makes these demands clear and defines them for the union as a whole, clarifying their content.
- Trade unions are, by definition, mass bodies. It would not make sense, from a correct perspective, to try to turn them into mechanisms for plastering and vertically handling the masses. The trade union apparatus must be a channel and not a quagmire. The organisational forms to be adopted must ensure the broadest, quickest and most direct contact between the rank and file and the representative organs of leadership.

## THE THREE “F” DOCUMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The Uruguayan trade union movement analysed, discussed and determined, criteria for fighting a coup d’état from a long time ago. In June 1968, the CNT’s Representative unanimously resolved “the occupation of all workplaces and the general strike in the event of a coup d’état or equivalent situation”. The first Congress, then the second Congress and the assemblies of all the unions and the meeting of all the Base Committees — in May 1972 — reaffirmed this resolution. The resolution was clearly unanimous. Throughout this period, different unions and leaders at all levels pointed out: the foolishness of a plan of struggle that would intensify and unify the different union positions of confrontation with the oligarchic offensive expressed in pachequism. Only the uncompromising struggle of the trade unions was able to raise the levels of consciousness and organisation of the unions as a way to enable the fulfilment of the CNT’s resolutions.

The need to adapt the structure, forms of operation and leadership practices of the unions to the new situations imposed by the pachecato (develop solid base committees by section or workplace), to establish and develop intermediate levels of leadership, to strengthen the links between the leadership and the bases, to promote militants at all levels, to deepen union unity while respecting the expression, at all levels, of the different orientations and trends.

The need to confront the regime vigorously in order to break Pacheco’s economic and social policy, to prevent its consolidation, its absolutist and repressive control of the state apparatus. In fact,

level of combativeness and consciousness achieved by vast sectors of the proletariat will be expressed

**-BAO WORKERS' UNION**

**-FEDERATION OF ROAD ASSOCIATIONS IN URUGUAY**

**-UNIQUE UNION OF ENRIQUE GHIRINGHELLI**

**-URUGUAYAN HEALTH FEDERATION**

**-AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNION OF TEM**

**-UNION OF WORKERS, EMPLOYEES AND SUPERVISORS OF FUNSA**

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- Within the framework of a reactionary and repressive government policy, any trade union conflict is currently facing serious difficulties. These must be analysed with objectivity and realism and presented to the union clearly and without defeatism. If, despite the difficulties, the masses want to fight, they must continue with them and not stop them. We have stated this repeatedly. The worst defeat is the defeat without struggle.
- If a trade union, faced with the obstacles it encounters in the struggle, wants to retreat and it is impossible to instil more combativeness in it, either because of its own weakness or because there are really insurmountable difficulties, it should not insist on moving forward until it is isolated. It is necessary to be able to withdraw in order, with opportunity, without becoming disoriented and always speaking clearly. One must not invent victories when they do not exist.
- The launch of a mobilisation, the relevance of a withdrawal, is established through a concrete analysis of conditions and possibilities.  
What elements to take into account in this analysis?  
Firstly, the situation of the union: level of organisation and awareness, experience of struggle, availability of cadres, etc. Secondly, the situation of the whole popular movement: possibilities of solidarity and influence on other sectors, predominant orientations in directions and apparatus, etc. Thirdly, the peculiarities of the moment: the rise or fall of the struggles, the situation and means of the enemy in the situation. With an analysis of this type, in close contact with the masses, the most difficult circumstances can be faced effectively.
- In a period like the present one, the isolated struggle of a union is doomed to failure. We must be concerned to give

every struggle the greatest possible scope. In extension, outside the union. In depth, in mass support, within it. This presupposes adequate coordination and organisational forms. A basic structure that translates punctually and faithfully the opinions and reactions of all the members of the union. The broadest freedom of discussion and criticism within the trade union cadres, as a guarantee that those opinions are expressed without hindrance.

- When a combative orientation predominates in the direction of a union, the reformers, crouching, wait for the most difficult moments of the struggle to bet their cards on retreat, on capitulation. When repression grows, when victory is slow in coming, the well-known proposals against “adventurism” emerge from those who, on many occasions, have proposed real adventures at the beginning, in the ascending phase of mobilisation.

In this perspective, avoiding isolation (of the most combative militants, within the union; of the union within the whole of the popular movement) becomes one of the fundamental aspects.

But this requires a stable and functional, broad and non-sectarian coordination of all those who are truly willing to fight. The formulation of the theme leads us, necessarily, to the consideration of other aspects that we cannot avoid.

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and we urge all the comrade leaders of the CNT to do so, the real reality of struggle in Latin America that our people have never been alien to by repeatedly demonstrating their willingness to struggle.

This time it has been demonstrated in difficult instances. We must take into account the capacity of struggle shown by the working class and the Uruguayan people, in order to immediately elaborate a plan of struggle, which does not stop it, but drives it and channels it. While the radio stations and all the newspapers applied self-censorship and the apparatus of confusion and intimidation of the oligarchy worked intensely at all levels; despite all that and the repression, the threats to confusion, the whole working class responded magnificently to the agreed upon measures, and the clamour for more radical measures, within a plan of struggle that includes all the unions, is felt in all the working class neighbourhoods. Despite the harassment, threats and persecutions, the militarised unions have defied the repression and firmly carried out the general strikes decided by the CNT, and also led to the implementation of union measures in the workplaces, strikes and street actions. This has happened, for example, in the official banks, where the personnel have expressed their willingness to resist and their demand for union and deeper and more general measures in many ways. In ANCAP’s refineries, in UTE’s headquarters, in the occupied textiles and study centres: in the strikes, street exits and confrontations with the repression developed by the health workers, students and workers of Maroñas, Villa Española, La Teja, Belvedere and Nuevo París, the fighting capacity of the Uruguayan people has been expressed, which is also shown in other areas and unions in Montevideo and in the interior. It is therefore a question of preventing this struggle from being split up and weakened. On the contrary, it must be unified in actions of ever greater magnitude. Let the unified and real struggle wear down those who launch repression against the people and strengthen them. This can be achieved through a joint plan of struggle. Through which the high



left the way free for the “gorillas”. The unions and the CNT now have a huge responsibility more than ever. And the only way that can be taken is the one that in the factories, in the labourers’ quarters and on the streets, they are demanding enough contingents of organised workers; the way of struggle in depth, without conciliations, developed with firmness and responsibility. We are fully aware that the situation is not simple, and that the struggle can be hard and has to be long. That is why we must fight it from now on. For the sake of elementary solidarity and at the same time for the convenience of all, we cannot allow ourselves to be delayed so that the unions are left alone in the fight; they are being fought on their own strength to face a repressive apparatus that is acting in such a way as to crush one by one the pockets of resistance. The struggle must be general and united. Any hesitation in front of the current situation, comrade president of the CNT, can be fatal for the workers and for the country.

And therefore, beneficial for the Uruguayan gorillas who from the government are already giving a “legal” blow against our salary and our freedom. Let’s face them, now, before it’s too late!

**THE URUGUAYAN PEOPLE PROVED THAT THEY DO NOT GIVE UP.**

**ALL WORKERS, UNITE IN THE STRUGGLE!**

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The permanent work in contact or formal or informal arrangements can sometimes prevent the whole picture from being covered. It does not seem essential for the permanent bodies of the CNT, and in particular the one that has decided to command the Convention in these circumstances, to properly assess the real correlation of forces. In other words, without underestimating the enemy, the true magnitude of the possibilities of our working class and our people should not be underestimated either. We know that the oligarchy, which is the one that really governs, has important repressive, financial and propagandistic means at its disposal, orchestrated its action within a continental plan. But we also value,

## **SOME CRITERIA FOR THE WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL. (2)**

Montevideo, 26 May 1969.

Within the framework of the present complex situation and for an evaluation of the tasks of the revolutionary militants, within the trade union and popular movement, it is interesting to consider the experiences gathered during the actions carried out by the First Ordinary Congress of the National Convention of Workers. In this sense, it is necessary to formulate some points aimed at clarifying the meaning of the former, as far as it has to do with certain aspects that are abundantly distorted or devalued by self-serving confusionist propaganda.

### **1.**

The Congress imported, first of all, a reaffirmation of the enormous possibilities of the labour and popular movement.

Over and above the attacks of the reaction, despite the deviations, hesitations and betrayals, the trade union movement has an important potential force that, insofar as it is channelled through an adequate strategy, will be able to conquer, for the people, important advances.

It is important to take this into account when it is said that “there are no conditions” to deepen the struggle, that the policy of

“preservation of forces” is necessary, of constant backward movement in the face of the attacks of the reaction.

When the need of subordinating the tactic to the obtaining of “allies” outside the working class is raised openly or in a hidden way. When disproportionate importance is given to the so-called “national bourgeoisie” and it is used to try to reduce the role of the working class to that of a kind of left wing of the great “national front” led by it. When the possibility of the trade union movement taking the lead and leading the mobilisation and struggle of the people in our country is so much questioned, it is important to evaluate objectively and realistically the forces available. Only by proceeding in this way, it will be possible to clearly establish the role of the popular, mass movement in the process. What it can do as such, in the present situation. And also what it cannot do. What is the task of a specifically political organisation, adapted in its organisation and methods to the current conditions.

## 2.

Secondly, this Congress reflected the process of clarification of positions that has been taking place within the trade union and popular movement. In the face of all the major issues under discussion, two orientations were clearly outlined. The first, which is the majority in the CNT apparatus, once again showed its self-satisfied subjectivism, its refusal to deepen its self-criticism, its defence at all costs of an essentially reformist orientation, whose harmful effects no longer escape anyone who is not blinded by sectarian prejudices. Another, which showed at the Congress a volume that many did not suspect (some 150 delegates out of a total of 509) reflected the growing awareness that a radical change in the CNT’s orientation and working methods is essential.

Members from a wide range of different sectors agreed, with a suggestive reiteration, on the need for a more combative, more

## **CNT TO FIGHT!! WE CANNOT “DIALOGUE”.**

If there was a lack of evidence, comrade President of the CNT, now they are breaking their eyes: In this social situation there is no room for “dialogue”, in other words for conciliation and softness. In these circumstances, no one can trust the possibilities of the trade union movement to “saviours”, “commissions of notables”, “démarches”, or “amnesties”. It is not possible to seriously postulate “tactical withdrawals” or to argue that it is necessary to stop fighting measures in order to produce a “de-escalation of repression”. In Uruguay, the national and foreign bourgeoisie is taking advantage of all the mechanisms of the “orange reform”, and the clearly fascist inspired articles of the Constitution and the Penal Code, to establish a legal dictatorship. In our country, as the facts show, we are living in an increasingly advanced military or police state at the service of the so-called “living forces” that in order to expand and maintain their business and their “order”, again and as their equals did in the time of Artigas, do not hesitate to “integrate” themselves under the protection of the Buenos Aires oligarchy. The classic coup d’état has not been carried out; but the “legal” coup d’état is taking place, through an escalation against the unions, against the liberties, the standard of living and the independence of the country. When we formed the CNT, and on various occasions, the trade union movement defined a course of action in the face of situations such as the one we are experiencing. This decision was taken to resist in all forms, including an indefinite general strike and the occupation of workplaces, under any attempt at a coup against the people.

And it is more than an attempt of coup d’état that we are enduring. We are under the beginning of a plan of repression and surrender similar to what other brother countries, especially Argentina, have endured. We must take example and not repeat “mistakes”, like those made by certain trade union leaderships there, which

prisonment of hundreds of citizens; violation of houses; beating, gassing and shooting of students and workers; banning of meetings and union assemblies; systematic campaign of confusion using censorship, venality and fear of newspapers and radios; persecution of union activists, action of “yellow” elements and groups and projects to regulate the unions. In this month and peak of security measures, this escalating curtailment of individual, trade and public freedoms characterizes the purposes and methods of the government. This government has direct representatives from all the fundamental nuclei of the Uruguayan oligarchy connected to foreign companies and governments. Of a government that does not have popular support, not even stable political support, but does have it from the Rural Federation, the employers’ association of the banks, the Stock Exchange, the Chamber of Industries and other sectors of the bourgeoisie and the latifundia.

Everything becomes even clearer when, in the framework of this revolt against trade unions and fundamental freedoms, wages and salaries are frozen and reduced; adjustments are not paid to retirees and pensioners but more and more advantages are granted to landowners. In the midst of this reality, the financial and political links of the government and the “national bourgeoisie” with the Argentinean oligarchy and the gorilla dictatorship of Onganía, under whose “protection” they are trying to “integrate” our country, are getting stronger. Undoubtedly, with the approval of the United States and within its plans.

The government is therefore attacking the freedom, the workers’ rights and the independence of the nation. Meanwhile the rich are getting richer and more and more Uruguayan families lack the essentials in terms of food, housing, health and education. The violence of the regime is being dumped on those at the bottom. In the first half of the year the cost of living rose by 64%, which means that in these six months the purchasing power of wages, salaries, pensions and retirement benefits is 64% lower than it was at the beginning of the year.

persistent, better coordinated and offensive action, in view of the programme’s objectives and, in the first place, against the wage and salary freeze imposed by the government.

The emergence of this trend is not new. Nor is it the result of a mere sum of wills at the level of the delegations attending the Congress. It still insufficiently translates, at the level of leaderships and apparatuses, an increasingly broad consensus coming from below.

Already in July last year, in full force of the security measures, six unions, echoing a state of mind involving broad sectors, even beyond its “borders” trade unions, formulated criticisms, very concrete, which accompanied and founded the proposal of a plan of measures of struggle, to address the escalation reactionary. The leading bodies of the CNT not only did not take up this proposal, but every effort was made to hide it or to distort it in its meaning and even in the content of its proposals. There was talk of “adventurism” and “childishness”. Shortly afterwards, the popular struggle was reduced to its minimum expression, participation in CO-PRIN was accepted, and it was fallaciously argued that the lifting of the security measures was “a great victory”...

Relying on the still insufficient coordination of those who supported a combative orientation, on the hesitations and perplexities of others who claimed to support it, the reformist apparatus managed to make its criteria prevail. Now it is evident to what extent its hegemony within the trade union movement has been questioned.

The fact is that the need for a plan of struggle on the offensive, the need to adopt methods of direct action, is being suggested by daily experience. These methods are becoming part of the normal range of procedures in all trade union conflicts of some importance. In view of the harshness of the repression and the difficulties of the situation, the hardening of the methods of struggle is even occurring spontaneously. Actions that were once easily categorised as “adventurism” are the bread and butter of today’s mobilisations.

Apart from the dogmatic conceptions supported by the reformist apparatus, the line of militancy and struggle is winning over wider and wider sectors, it is growing. And this growth has manifested itself despite the procedures put in practice during the preparatory activity and the development of the Congress by the reformist leaderships.

### 3.

The Congress lacked adequate preparation. After a long process of struggle, which was experienced during the last year, in view of the important changes in the situation since then, a broad discussion was necessary at the grassroots, a frank self-critical opening was necessary to enable a real balance of what had been done, with a view to draw useful conclusions for the planning of future tasks.

But this did not happen. It was decided to go back to the old, well-worn way of dealing with the administrative tasks. The corresponding reports either arrived late or did not arrive at all. Their discussion was so “rushed” that it was hardly done at all. The dissenters were harshly attacked.

According to the old, time-honoured method, their arguments were dispensed with and covered up with gratuitous insults.

The sound of “unity” was crushed as usual. Attempts were made to present those who are simply not obsequious as “divisionists”. The whole range of old recipes were mobilised, to which a leadership attached to sclerosed bureaucratic routines, suitable to “take over” bodies and positions, useless to promote and lead struggles. It is not surprising that in these conditions the congress has been a very imperfect reflection of the true feelings of the working class.

Pointing out all this is useful, but it should not be the centre of our concern. In the end, what matters, the only decisive thing, is to elucidate who organizes and practically leads the struggles and not who has the majority at the time of the congresses.

## LETTER TO THE CNT

Montevideo, 17 July 1968.

Comrade President of National Workers’ Convention, Mr. José D’Elia

Present:

The undersigned trade unions address the highest permanent bodies of the CNT, through them, to express their opinion on the serious situation that exists. And to leave formally a plan of minimum struggle, of resistance to the security and freezing measures, to be applied by the whole of the working class, the students and the people. This approach, which reflects the spirit of struggle of vast sectors of the proletariat, reaffirms previous ones that we have formulated before the CNT’s Representative Committee and its regional committees.

**“AGAINST THE WORKERS AND AGAINST THE COUNTRY, THE MILLIONAIRES IMPOSE THEIR LEGAL DICTATORSHIP.**

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The despotic and anti-worker nature of the regime is already evident to everyone; the bourgeoisie and the government have taken off their mask. A more or less “legal” dictatorship is already in place in the country. The fact that the parliament meets and that the political parties hold authorised meetings is one of the characteristics of this “legal dictatorship”, where for the time being those in charge are willing to tolerate a certain decorum. In the meantime, persecution is being launched against the unions and all those who are fighting. Militarization is increasing; suspensions and dismissals in official banks, ANCAP, UTE and other distribution centers; im-

movement, becomes in a position to dispute power to the bourgeoisie in a favourable conjuncture.

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The characteristics of our national situation demand from us the difficult commitment to face and realise simultaneously all these tasks that constitute different levels of a single revolutionary practice.

Without organised groupings in the unions, but firmly coordinated in a solid trend, we will not have a truly national political perspective in the mass movement. We will continue to be prisoners of union localism, locked in to particular wage expectations, which are correct, but cannot be the only thing, on pain of being frozen at the level of the economic struggle.

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## BEWARE OF DETOURS, THE FOCUS IS ON THE STRUGGLE.

Montevideo, 2 June 1969.

Parliament wants to become fashionable again. With extensive publicity, it intends to focus public expectation on its actions, the discussions and votes that take place within it. Mobile transmitters, which report “up to the minute”, with a sporting tone, on the progress of the sessions. Generously titled comments in the newspapers, abundant radio broadcasts, they want to convince the people that the General Assembly, which for nine months did not make a quorum to consider the Security Measures, is now the scene of decisive events for the country. The well-paid “fathers of the fatherland”, who turned a deaf ear to the gunshots with which the repression killed people on the streets, who ignored the presence of dismissed and sanctioned people, who continue to make themselves accomplices of the government’s policy, want to return to the limelight, they want attention once again to be paid to their pantomime. Those who “erased” themselves when COPRIN was approved, those who submitted meekly when they were threatened with dissolution, “guave” now and say they are ready to submit “heroically” to the “verdict of the ballot boxes”.

It is too early to know for sure if this complicated and tangled game of political manoeuvres will really lead to new elections. It is even uncertain whether, once these have been resolved, they will be carried out or whether their results will be respected. In any case, what is already clear are the aims that this parliamentary “affair” is pursuing, the role that the eventual elections that would result

tionally, only by framing it within an adequate strategic conception, will it be possible to obtain the definitive victory.

Reformism, on the other hand, in the face of the spontaneous reactions of the people (which simultaneously translate the shortcomings of that orientation and the beginning of its disintegration) opts for a policy of restraint.

To slow down now is to attempt, utopianly, to freeze a process of growing radicalisation, which is generated by the evolution of the objective, economic-social situation. To advance means to stimulate and support that spontaneous process of radicalisation, while at the same time trying to achieve, as far as possible, its overcoming, translating it into higher strategic-tactical and organisational conceptions, appropriate to the level, also higher, at which the struggle is posed.

This includes several things, which we have sometimes raised:

- Organize, union by union, the most combative elements in permanent groups, with defined positions and their own tasks.
- To coordinate these groupings within a common trend, which in the joint action will process their political cohesion and decide on their working methods, their working experience, their experience of struggle and their organic structuring.
- To develop the means to enable the consistent application of direct action methods, to support and enforce union measures, to promote mobilisations on the streets and occupations, to punish traitors and divisionists, to contain the continuity of action and to raise the morale of the struggle at the moments when the mass movement enters periods of ebb.
- To develop an armed apparatus that, growing through a prolonged succession of actions, converging with the mass

treat together with the liberal politicians independently of the advance and radicalisation of the masses. When these politicians influence the government (as it happened in the first months of the Gestido period), they make a pact with them, try to avoid difficulties, they ask for an “understanding” attitude from the masses. They shore us up, abandoning, without any scruples, the popular aspirations. When the liberal bourgeois policy (which differs from the reactionary one much more in its methods than in its real content and aims) fails, this means the failure of reformism, which is left without any way out. The dilemma of the reformist orientation lies in the fact that it subordinates the action of the popular movement to the attitudes of the liberal bourgeoisie, in a situation where the latter has nothing concrete to give to the people.

The right way must be, and in fact is, the opposite. It is the trade union and popular movement bringing together all the sectors harmed by the government’s reactionary policy, which must (and in fact does) play a leading role in confronting it on a mass level.

In this sense, as we have pointed out on other occasions, the central problem is the delay of the subjective conditions (level of clarity and consciousness, degree of organisation, availability of means of struggle in all fields), with respect to the objective ones (magnitude of the economic-social deterioration, entity of the problems affecting the people).

The expression (and cause) of this is the continuation of the reformist influence in the popular movement, especially in its apparatus. Another characteristic, conditioned by the previous one, is the frequently spontaneous modality that the struggle adopts.

When we propose the need for a plan of offensive struggle, we start from a positive evaluation of this spontaneous tendency, but, at the same time, we approach with realism the limitations of this modality of action. It is necessary to organise for a prolonged struggle, our insistence on the concrete ways to achieve this, starts from the conviction that only by channelling this spontaneity organiza-

from this “conflict” between sectors that have so agreed to support the government’s reactionary policy would play. Whether there are elections or not, it is symptomatic of the approach to the issue and the importance attached to it through a well-orchestrated media campaign, so obedient to “the voice of the master”.

In a way, all this tends to complement the repressive policy developed consistently in recent times. After the beatings, the elections, seem to be the formula. A reality of frozen wages and salaries is complemented by an illusion of fluidity, of political dynamics. A reality of the closure of expectations of improvement for the poor living conditions of the people is complemented by the fantasy of an electoral “opening”. The social tension created by the effects of the government’s economic policy is falsely intended to be channelled into the dead end of a new farce. The reality of the hardening of the situation, the stark truth of reactionary politics, is combined with the expectation of a change... of Parliament.

Voting instead of fighting is what, once again, the oligarchy proposes to the people through its political representatives.

Whites against Reds, Etchegoyen against Pacheco, Jorge Battle against Etchegoyen, “oppositionists” against “officialdom”, current constitution against constitutional amendment. Many options. The more the better. So what does it matter? In the end, with Pacheco or Etchegoyen, with Jorge Battle or Gallinal, the dominant classes will always retain power. And in the process, everyone is offered the opportunity to believe again, to deceive themselves again, to hope that “now we do...”. If the game does not go well, they always have the resource of kicking the table. There is always the possibility of resorting to violence, of abandoning the farce and appealing to force.

The only “change” that a new election can bring is a redistribution of the influence that the different oligarchic sectors have in the government. What share of profits will each of these sectors deduct from the reactionary policy that is being developed and which they all agree to continue. How will they share out what they take from

the people, what part will go to the large landowners or bankers, to the big businessmen or speculative traders. That is the only thing that a parliamentary “renewal” can alter.

The real change, the one the people need, is not achieved through elections. It will only be the product of a long and difficult struggle, going through paths that do not cross the utopian electoral illusionism that reaction encourages. This is well known, although there are always those who try to pretend not to know it. In any case, it is still useful to make a few points regarding certain complementary objectives that are being pursued through the latest political moves.

Firstly, to revive the belief in the possibility of a major change within the current system by peaceful means, without violence. They clearly feel the popular malaise. They see with fear how the struggle is hardened, how the means of direct action are popularized, how the influence and prestige of the revolutionary forces is growing. They see the retreat of the reformist orientations within the workers’ and peoples’ movement. They see that the resistance to their politics, far from disappearing, is taking more and more dangerous forms for the preservation of their system. Then they try to make believe that it can still be “improved”. That there are open peaceful ways to achieve it. That it is by voting and not by fighting that change will be brought about. They insist on this, the clearer their awareness of the real sterility of the path they are proposing. The need to deflect popular discontent towards it becomes all the more pressing the greater the real powerlessness of the system to continue granting reforms of any importance. Tightly bound up with the impossibility of satisfying popular demands, the oligarchy offers to intersperse, in the reality of the repressions, the deception of the elections. The possibility of voting is intended to replace, in the immediate future, the impossibility of reform.

The election campaign is the way through which the representatives of the oligarchy get in touch with the masses, try to regain their influence on them, disguise themselves as their “representa-

times”. They are confident that the political-institutional norms of bourgeois democracy, that the existing legal system, is the most effective way to make the system work. They fear the overflow of power and have learned from the experience of many Latin American dictatorships that this can be dangerous for the politicians. That an excessive concentration of authority can even compromise the “equitable” distribution of profits among the various segments of the bourgeois class. Some are linked to the sector of the industrial bourgeoisie (the so-called “national bourgeoisies”) and encourage developmentalist utopias.

Others are simply old professional political foxes, who know that it is not with sticks that votes are obtained and that often the sticks bring the end of the elections themselves... and their end.

All of them prefer to “dialogue” with the trade union movement. They agree to make room for it, to institutionalise it within the system, as is done in the USA and other developed countries. They consider it more useful, for the normal functioning of the system, to have “sympathetic” unions, ready to discuss “peacefully” wage issues, ready to admit “reasonable sacrifices” to “save the country”. They know that the origin of the deterioration lies in the armoured structures, in dependence on imperialism. But they are enablers. For them, for their bourgeois thinking, the world is made like this and is unchangeable. They believe that it is not possible to change the structures or to break with the empire. Resigned to the framework this creates for them, they go through the whole range of ineffective files, of remains without future, of utopian illusions, of claudications and betrayals, typical of those who dream, in the era of imperialism, of a “national capitalism”

It is the inevitable fate of those who want to make the policy of the national bourgeoisie, with a “national bourgeoisie” almost non-existent. Reformism in the trade union movement acts as a kind of left wing of that bourgeois liberalism. Its function is to act as a pulley to transmit the positions of the liberal bourgeoisie to the popular movement. The reformist leaderships advance and re-



lems, but ensure, for the future, the destruction of the system. The case of Argentina, where the popular struggle is being revived after years of fierce dictatorship, illustrates this truth, which is evident from history. The new application of security measures is once again shattering the illusions of liberals and reformists who dream of a return to the Uruguay of the 50s. The arbitrary closing down of EXTRA, after many resignations and declarations, has become a mere matter of legislative privilege, which can be negotiated in terms of legal abstractions and subtleties, ignoring the real issue: the agony of freedom of expression. The fact is that in the framework of economic and social deterioration, there is only room for freedom for those who support the system, only free play between bourgeois factions is allowed. If anything, reformism, in its different variants, is tolerated, since it also plays a role of “social conservation”, of integration into the system of the possibly opposing forces, we are seeing.

When the situation becomes really tense, the famous parliamentary quorum never appears to consider the measures and everything indicates that in this situation, the same picture will be repeated as on the previous occasion.

Everyone plays their own game. Echegoyen and his faction are waiting for the government’s political drift, supporting it in the application of the repressive measures and attempting to contain some of its outbursts, in order to preserve the institutional forms in terms that will allow it to capitalise on its red discredit at the elections. Helping to repress and benefiting from the unpopularity that this same repression entails would be its double game. To reach a white government, with domesticated unions, would be their goal. The internal contradictions in the distribution of the profits that reactionary policies bring to the oligarchy weigh heavily as basic conditions. But always on the basis of the common defence of class interests and the acceptance of the need for repression.

The game of the liberals (red and white) is somewhat different. They continue to cling to the bourgeois scheme of the “prosperous

tives”. The unpopularity and discredit that have fallen on the parliamentarians and politicians in general is evident. In a situation like the present one, when it is becoming increasingly difficult to continue using traditional methods (distribution of jobs, distribution of favours, etc.) to create “clienteles”, the party apparatuses are losing their functionality. The ascendancy of the warlords, the prestige of the clubs, is declining as they “give” less and less, in the context of a situation where people’s needs are increasing. In view of this, it is essential for them to attempt a “reactivation of political life” aimed at restoring the parties’ importance and gravitation in national life. This would be achieved through an electoral campaign that generates expectations, hopes of renewal, that through massive propaganda mobilizes old sentimental values that still retain their effectiveness in many sectors. In the process, another, no less important, goal for reactionary interests is achieved.

Dividing the people around empty banners, in an electoral bid that is practically inconclusive, preventing them from fighting for real demands and solutions to the acute problems that affect them. In the action, the people are grouped together for concrete reasons. In the election, they are divided by abstract pretexts and utopian illusions.

Those who are never really divided, those who stand together above the bands and parties, in defence of their positions against the people, are the privileged ones, the members of the ruling classes. Their disagreements, their circumstantial conflicts, never make them lose sight of the common defence of their class interests. They never deceive themselves in this respect and that is why, as long as they know that they have the majority assured, they will continue to proclaim that elections are the only “correct” way for the people to express their opinions.

Therefore, in front of the reaction’s confusionist manoeuvres, in front of the attempts to divert the people towards the dead end of the elections, the answer is only one: to broaden and deepen the struggle. To unite everyone in the struggle to break, now, the policy

of freezing wages and salaries. To surround the unions in conflict with the broadest solidarity. To promote, with all the energy, the popular mobilization. Without admitting pretexts that differ from it or slow it down in order to ensure an eventual “peaceful” electoral process. To combat any tendency to subordinate the action of the trade union and popular movement to electoralist interests and perspectives. Today, tomorrow and always the only true thing, what can decide, is the organised mobilisation and struggle.

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## **THE LONG MARCH TOWARDS THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE.**

Montevideo, 30 June 1969.

Once again, we are experiencing an upsurge in repression. Disproving the prognosis of those who spoke of détente and the easy optimism of those who trust in the government’s isolation, there are, once again, security measures. Their reintroduction, barely three months after the previous ones were lifted, shows how essential they have become to the regime. The extent to which the regime has become incapable of providing solutions to popular grievances. The fact is that preserving the oligarchy’s fabulous profits has become incompatible with accepting the most obvious claims.

Every time the budgetary authority or an accountability is raised, the response to the wave of protests and mobilisations is the implementation of security measures. The only consequence of this is the accentuation of social tensions, the hardening of confrontations, the growing hatred of the people towards the beneficiaries of an intolerable situation. Even tougher regimes do not succeed in eliminating these tensions. The problems that motivate protest do not disappear, but become more acute with repression.

The regime’s own contradictions are not diluted but rather accentuated by the use of force. These can eventually lead to apparent successes in the short term. They may succeed in deferring prob-

- Having a certain political definition does not mean ignoring the problems involved in making demands. It is always necessary to have concrete objectives for the work of the group. And these objectives must, as far as possible, include the demands that need to be promoted within the union.
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## **SOME CRITERIA FOR WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL (3)**

Montevideo, 9 June 1969.

The events of the last days clearly show the great reserves of combativeness, the will of resistance of the people. At the same time they give the measure of the failure of the regressive policy that imperialism applies through the governments of Latin America. The failure of repression as a form of social “pacification”. See, for example, the nearby example of Argentina. After years of fierce dictatorship, the proletariat and students of that country have given the most convincing demonstration that it is impossible to dominate a people by applying the repressive “models” of importation used by Onganía and so admired by Jorge Batlle and Pacheco.

Here, in our country, worker and student mobilisations are growing, which constitute the worst omen for the “success” of the Rockefeller mission and the worst condemnation for the regressive policy of the government.

On the other hand, what was intended to be a demonstration of austere and sacrificial civility ends up, in Parliament, in a real sainete — Jorge Batlle, aware of his unpopularity and cornered against the possibility of an election that would benefit Echegoyen and Pacheco “supports the government” by ordering, from Europe, the censure of Peirano. Peirano’s distancing from the government, which has deliberately become a kind of lightning rod for popular repudiation, would be a further attempt at “détente”. Has anything changed or will it change with Peirano’s departure from the

cabinet? The logic and statements of the government itself clearly indicate that it will not. Will the government's reactionary economic orientation change? No. The causes that determine it are very powerful and, as everyone knows, the underlying reasons must be sought outside the country.

On the other hand, the same people who promoted this deliberately spectacular political crisis are the ones who shied away from lifting the so-called "economic security measures". They are the same ones who declare their general agreement with the policy in progress. The fact is that, as in any difficult situation, the various sectors of the oligarchy are in keeping with their main objectives, even though they maintain secondary contradictions with each other. That is why it is very negative to help focus public attention on Parliament and to encourage, directly or indirectly, hopes that the profound change which the people need can come from there. That change can only be achieved through struggle. This has various levels that must be integrated harmoniously, complementing each other.

The trade union struggle, the mass activity, is one of them. We want to come back to this topic today, in circumstances that demand, imperatively, a coordinated, planned, offensive and deep action against the reactionary orientation of the government.

There are still questions and problems that need to be fully clarified concerning the strategy to be formulated for the labour and people's movement.

Let's see some of them.

The experience of the last years has shown, to the point of exhaustion, that an isolated union, even if it is strong, faces great difficulties to succeed, within the framework of the current situation. The need to coordinate the struggles becomes evident.

However, this coordination is not carried out or is carried out very imperfectly.

Why does this happen?

There are real obstacles and artificial ones. Those who create the

to take those demands (which are the immediate objectives of the grouping) as objectives of the general trade action.

To the extent that such a grouping translates a higher level of definition than the trade organization (which is for everyone), it must have its own approach, even for the demands. Its function is to lead the struggle within the union and therefore, in its own approach as a group, it must go beyond the more circumscribed approach of the union organization.

Any concrete demand is a partial, localised manifestation of more general problems. In the area of wage demands, for example, it is a fact that they all clash with a general government policy. To point out this fact, using the struggle for demands to clarify, at the level of the masses, the reasons and characteristics of this policy, is a task that sometimes cannot be done through trade unionism. In those cases, the grouping as such must do it.

However, as a result of the development of the general level of political understanding and consciousness that we are witnessing, this type of relationship and significance is often already the heritage of trade unions. In such cases, there is a tendency to make more definite approaches at the mass level, at a higher political level.

In short, it is a matter of not losing sight of these three things:

- What defines the grouping as a trend are political positions and approaches that clearly differentiate it within the union as a whole and give it its own profile. That is why it differs (in its content, purpose and structure) from the trade union organisation, where everyone participates and whose positions may vary according to circumstantial majorities in assemblies, elections, etc.
- That level of definition, in the groupings, must be, at present, sufficiently broad so as not to identify totally with specifically political, "partisan" groups, let us say.

zational criterion promote the creation of groups without foreseeing this decisive aspect. Without clear objectives, the organization lacks functionality, the object of its own existence is blurred, contact with the mass is lost, and the mass only supports those who promote concrete actions for concrete objectives.

Sometimes meetings are held, a group is created, it is instrumented organizationally, work is done around some specific goal (participate in an election, act in a mobilization) but once that is over, it is not known what to do. The meetings languish and lead to endless general discussions. The group is left without objectives, without "having things to do". If such a situation persists, it inevitably leads to impotence and failure. No matter how numerous and well organized a group has become, it is not a matter of being a group. No matter what positions they hold within their union. If you do not have goals, if you do not actively fight for them you will fail hopelessly.

The opposite is also true. Any group, no matter how small, if it chooses its goals properly, if it actively and enthusiastically promotes the struggle for them, will grow. Those who want to fight (and in the present situation there are more and more who do) will go there, they will recognise in the comrades who make up the group their real and true leaders, even if they suddenly do not occupy any leading position in the union. And that is the leadership function that matters.

But when we talk about objectives, what do we mean? At this stage and at the level where the struggle is currently taking place, the objectives of a tendency grouping will usually be union-type demands.

We have already stated that the demands to be taken up are defined by the degree of urgency with which they are demanded by the mass of the union. In this matter there is no room for "occurrences". Only the demands that are really felt by the people will be taken up. However, the function of a trend grouping is not limited to trying to get the trade organisation, within which one acts,

latter often hide behind the former to legitimise their attitudes. Let's analyze one and the other.

- The different levels of income, the different treatment, let's say, that the system gave to the different unions, stimulated the raising of also different demands. This, in itself, is not a particularly novel feature. It is the way all union movements proceed in their early days, when the value of immediate and local objectives predominates. When what is kept in mind, primarily, are the particular demands of each union.
- It would be wrong, however, to consider this way of dealing with trade union struggles as natural, permanent and unchangeable. It is only viable in cycles of economic expansion, when it is not too difficult to obtain concessions from a prosperous bourgeoisie. When the situation changes, it is necessary to proceed in a different way. A more complex strategy is needed and therefore greater maturity, inventiveness and flexibility in trade union militancy is required. Also, more harshness and combativeness, conditions that are not incompatible, as some suggest, with the previous ones.
- In our country, the regime of Wage Councils sanctioned and favoured union particularism. Each sector fought for the Council of its group to meet, then put pressure on the employers and the government to accede to their sectoral demands. Negotiations were held or fought at different rates for different demands.
- Perhaps these struggles could have been unified if they had been wanted. But there is no doubt that the situation favoured their dispersion. Regular and spontaneous practice made this dispersion and

de facto isolationism the most common, the traditional.

It has happened many times that strikes, mobilizations and even strikes are taking place simultaneously, without any real coordination between them. This situation has even occurred between branches of the same headquarters. There has been institutional coordination, but there has been a lack of operational and practical coordination.

By practical coordination we do not mean, of course, the exchange of notes, declarations, delegations or even the holding of events or a partial solidarity strike. Of course, this has often been done and is done. Doing so is right and must be continued. But, in the current situation, that is not enough.

What we understand by coordination is the adoption, by all the unions, of concrete support measures that force the decision of the conflicts that arise in any of them.

- The approach of the isolated struggles is linked to the more or less spontaneous form that they have been taking. Of course, in the approach to a struggle for demands, one must take into account exclusively what are the aspirations felt by a union. It is not valid to forcefully postulate objectives that are not shared by the masses of the union. It is true that one cannot artificially provoke important mobilisations. In this sense one could speak of a “spontaneous” origin of the demands.
- The spontaneous rise of the masses’ combativity is an important element in every revolutionary process and it is not by drowning or hindering this push that the struggle is radicalised. It is not against this that we aim our criticism on “spontaneity”. We do it in the conviction that in such a situation it becomes decisive to channel the spontaneous impulse properly so that it develops and gets organised to achieve the

## SOME CRITERIA FOR WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL (5)

Montevideo, 23 June 1969.

In the last letter, we referred to the risk that the erroneous criteria that lead to the introduction of levels of definition in groupings, which make them a kind of small union “party”, entails for a policy of creating groupings. this way, the organisation is rapidly becoming sectarianised and closed off, the aim of which is precisely to ensure broad mass contact, at a more definite level than simple union organisation, open to all. To avoid the indefiniteness that paralyses. The opposite error to the one noted above, consists in underestimating the need to set out, with sufficient clarity, the objectives of the group, whose principles, whose limits we can say, remain so vague that they can be understood by anyone. In this way, the group ceases to be a trend, a precise level of definition, and becomes totally identified with the union in which it operates. This criterion leads to the formation of groups that are too heterogeneous and therefore not very operational, where doing anything or adopting any position requires endless internal discussions, question of sustained action, the latent divergences become apparent, they become more acute and the conditions for division, disintegration and failure begin to be created. Organisation is a means, an instrument to develop the struggle for certain objectives. It grows to the extent that it fulfils those ends, to the extent that it is functional for that purpose. It is therefore wrong to make organizational growth an end in itself. This must be taken into account. It is often the case that colleagues who are concerned about applying an organi-

own action, in coordination with similar groups of the same tendency.

- In the groups, we must proceed broadly, without sectarianism, but on the basis of clear and precise positions. Two dangers always threaten groups of tendencies: militant sectarianism and imprecision in positions, also limiting in the end.
- Avoiding the sectarianism that isolates. The sectarian attitude originates, usually in the erroneous approach which attempts to attribute to groups with tendencies within the unions, tasks proper to specifically political organisations. By virtue of this error, the aim is to provide these groups with comprehensive and exhaustive definitions of the most diverse problems. Sometimes we even try to define them at the level of political ideologies. In fact, they become a kind of local micro-party. The propensity to make these mistakes is preferably observed among independent individuals who, lacking the possibilities to adequately channel their political concerns within specific organizations, try to do so by partisanizing the trade action groups.

But this leads us to other points that we will make.

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most effective results. To do this, in order to be able to strike at the most opportune moment, concentrating the greatest amount of force, it is necessary to foresee. And that means organising oneself, going beyond the spontaneous stage. It means a plan of struggle that establishes objectives, work criteria and joint measures in stages, based on a general assessment of the situation. It implies a direction that leads and directs effectively. That is capable of determining the facts instead of running after them once they have occurred.

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## SOME CRITERIA FOR WORK AT THE MASS LEVEL. (4)

Montevideo, 16 June 1969.

Various facts unequivocally mark the growing development of a tendency that seeks, within the workers' and popular movement, to impose a more combative orientation, of more determined confrontation with the reactionary policy of the government.

First was the election in the Uruguayan Banking Association, where the 19<sup>th</sup> list made important advances. Then the CNT Congress, where a valuable nucleus of forces around the militant line was operated. And recently, in unions as diverse as the FUNSA workers' union and the Montevideo secondary school teachers' union, this same orientation has shown its growing relevance.

We will provide further information on the internal elections in FUNSA's union. This is, without a doubt, the conclusive ratification of the ratification that the Union of Workers, Employees and Supervisors of FUNSA has been holding for years and which has contributed to placing this organisation in a leading position within the national workers' movement.

In a union with very different characteristics, in the Gremial de Profesores de Montevideo, a relatively recently formed grouping, which expressed itself electorally through the 68 list, in its first appearance, attracted wide support, obtaining 6 of the 15 positions in the Executive Committee.

These facts reflect the growing discredit of the reformist line held by the CNT's executive management bodies. They testify to the strengthening, in the most diverse trade union circles, of the

orientation that brings together the sectors of the Workers' and Students' Resistance. The repeated demonstrations of the union bases, if anything, show the wrongness of the tessitura of those who associate militant positions with lack of mass support, with "adventurism". Those who think this way, spreading paralyzing theories of regression, underestimate the importance of the level of consciousness and acquired. Who can validly doubt that through the struggles of the last times a broad development of this level of consciousness of mass combativity was processed?

To be able to deduce from the facts that this conclusion, which represents the failure of repression in its attempts to break the popular resistance, is particularly important now, when it is precisely one year since the implementation of the security measures.

The main task that needs to be carried out is to deal organisationally with the vast number of forces that are being mobilised. To this end, it remains essential to bring them together to form a solid trend that can influence the whole of the workers' and people's movement.

In this respect, it is necessary to be very clear about a few things.

- It is not enough to have a favourable opinion in a union. It is necessary to implement it organizationally. It is essential to create, in every union where there are possibilities, groups that unite all those who are willing to sustain a clear line of struggle and combat.

When we speak of groupings, we do not mean merely the holding of occasional meetings between colleagues in similar positions. Nor do we mean the simple presentation of lists in union elections or the constitution of groups with that more or less exclusive purpose. By groupings we mean stable, intermittently structured bodies with their own means of action, which develop permanent action. Trying to influence the orientations of the union. But also, by deploying its