

**Nahuel Moreno**  
**Biographical Outline**

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Carmen Carrasco & Hernán Félix Cuello

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# **Nahuel Moreno** **Biographical Outline**

Carmen Carrasco & Hernán Félix Cuello

# The legacy of Nahuel Moreno remains alive

Mercedes Petit

Some decades have passed since the death of Nahuel Moreno, on 25 January 1987. He was 62 years old and still had much to give to the international revolutionary movement.

His current continues to develop in different countries of the world. For these new litters of revolutionary militants and all the fighters, Cehus reissues the *Biographical Outline*. It was originally published for the first anniversary of his death by the magazine *Correspondencia Internacional* [International Correspondence] and written by Hernán Félix Cuello and Carmen Carrasco.<sup>1</sup> We faithfully respected the original except for some minor editorial or formal changes, and we enriched the pictorial illustration. The text intends to relate living facts of the life of Moreno that marked and are part of the history of our current, within the bosom of the working class and in different countries of the world; and to contribute to the daily debates that occur between the fighters under the heat of their struggles.

## “Morenism”

May this reissue serve as a political beacon to the dispersed Trotskyist movement. In a way, one could say that today the “Morenism” and the current that continues driving the positions of Ernest Mandel (the main ideologist of revisionism in the ranks of Trotskyism, deceased in

1995) remain the two main protagonists of the inheritance of the Fourth International founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky.

At this time, in the twenty-first century, numerous debates are taking place among the vanguard fighters who struggle against the increasing hardships caused by imperialist capitalism for the workers and the people. Many of them are a continuation of the main battles that Nahuel Moreno fought against Mandel for 40 years.<sup>2</sup> The capitulation to the communist parties (to their leaders, like Tito in the old Yugoslavia and Mao in China, or to the crushing of the political revolution in Hungary in 1956). Bourgeois nationalist movements, including their governments (such as Peronism in Argentina or MNR in Bolivia), Fidel Castro, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua or the Brazilian Lula. We mention only some of those controversies, which remain important antecedents in the debates with the different revolutionary sectors today.

Many fighters continue to fall for the illusions of class reconciliation, in the unity of workers and bosses, as well as placing expectations in the pseudo “revolutionary” leaders of varied ilk. The “Mandelists”, for example, have participated with an important ministry in the cabinet of the bourgeois government of class conciliation of Lula and the PT in Brazil in 2003. And they have been part of the capitulation to the government of the false “Socialism of the XXI Century” of “commander” Hugo

1 Hernán Félix Cuello, pseudonym of Anibal Tesoro, who joined Palabra Obrera [Workers' Word] in the 1960s and died at the age of 53, when he lived in Moscow for militant tasks. In August 1993 he was murdered in the street by a common criminal. Carmen Carrasco joined Morenism in Colombia in the 1970s.

2 See, among many of his works, the celebrated *The Party and the Revolution: Theory, program and policy — A polemic with Mandel*, available in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

Chavez in Venezuela. These are just two of the most paradigmatic experiences.

From our point of view, the resounding failures of these experiences have continued to show Moreno was right. The world class struggle continues to demand basic Morenism: the need to promote the repudiation and the mobilisation against all kinds of bourgeois governments and more than ever when they are beautified or led by leaders of the ilk of Lula or Chavez, and the consequent defence of the political independence of the working class.

At the same time, these situations are a powerful expression that the crisis remains open and without a resolution and of the absence of revolutionary leadership. This is why it is very useful to return again and again to remembering Moreno's long struggle for the consistent and principled defence of Trotsky's banners — building the revolutionary parties and the Fourth International.

### **The great global changes of 1989**

In 1989, barely two years after Moreno's death, there were huge events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and of the bureaucratic dictatorship of the former Soviet Union, followed by the extreme weakening of communist parties in the world.

Moreno had in recent years been researching and elaborating on the economic and social crisis that unfolded in the so-called "socialist" countries — what Trotskyism had called the "bureaucratic workers' states". Those countries where the bourgeoisie had been expropriated came to dominate a third of the planet.

In his last book, *Conversations*,<sup>1</sup> Moreno, in 1986, pointed out the great dangers engendered by both the criminal policy of opening up to capitalism of the bureaucratic dictatorships and the offensive that imperialism developed on that false "real socialism". Speaking about the possible fate of those experiences, Moreno insisted that everything depended on the emergence and development through mobilisation and workers' democracy of new revolutionary leaderships, still absent. Being aware of the differences, he insisted for a return to

1 This can be found in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org). At the end of this publication there a list of the documents available on that page.

the road to the true socialism that Lenin, Trotsky and the Third International had started to transit. He continued to point to the prospect that the possibility of new anti-bureaucratic political revolutions would be opened up in that direction, or its counterpart alternative, the reverse to capitalist restoration.

In Eastern Europe and the former USSR in 1989 the masses staged immense revolutionary triumphal mobilisations (also in China, where they were defeated by the Tiananmen Square massacre) against those one-party ("communist") dictatorships. But precisely because of the absence of revolutionary alternatives, these processes could not prevent the restoration of capitalism in those countries.

This new and complex reality, full of contradictions, brought a great confusion on the whole world left. Imperialism and the defeated bureaucrats themselves promoted the false discourse of defeat, of the "failure of socialism" and of "excessive statism", sowing scepticism. Confusion also hit the ranks of Trotskyism and the Morenist current itself.<sup>2</sup>

Without Moreno present, without his great experience and capacity, the leadership that was at the head of its parties and the international organisation began to commit great mistakes both theoretical as political and methodological. Many of these mistakes went directly against the positions and teachings of Moreno. A profound crisis broke out, resulting in divisions in the IWL-FI (as the Morenist current was known at the time)<sup>3</sup> and a great weakening. There were some sectors that directly moved away from Morenism and Trotskyism itself, concluding that it had even been a mistake by Trotsky to found the Fourth International.

### **The struggle for world socialism with worker's democracy**

But his legacy is still in force. His theoretical and political elaborations

2 Regarding this period, the party that in Argentina gave continuity to the Morenist Tendency in the MAS approved in May 1996 a self-critical document, the "Historical Balance Sheet (1987-1992)". Later on the IWU-FI approved a balance sheet of the same period and of the performance of the International Morenist Tendency (IMT).

3 A sector of Trotskyism has kept the name and calls itself "Morenist".

continue to be highly topical. Various organisations vindicate his legacy in the world. These include the International Workers Unity – Fourth International (IWU-FI).<sup>1</sup>

Today more than ever it is confirmed that the capitalist-imperialist system has failed, bringing greater misery, devastation and exploitation. The masses in the 21st century confirm their prominence. Major labour strikes took place in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Greece, France, and China. In 2011, revolutions took place in Tunisia, North Africa and the Middle East. Youth and women fight on the streets for their rights. It is still pending to take decisive steps to overcome the absence of new revolutionary leaderships.

It is in this context that many fighters do not believe in the possibility of the

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to [www.uit-ci.org](http://www.uit-ci.org). Izquierda Socialista [Socialist Left] is the Argentine section of the IWU-FI and gives continuation to Morenist Tendency in the MAS.

triumph of revolution and of socialism with workers' democracy. However, there is no other way out for humanity. Repeatedly the intermediate variants of the centre-left or "new left", such as Syriza's governments in Greece or Chavismo in Venezuela, show that there is no way out by agreeing with the bourgeoisie and the multinationals.

As Moreno, we are still betting on the emergence of new leaders who, in the heat of the struggles, keep advancing on a consistent and united way in defence of revolutionary tasks. Only the working class and the popular sectors in power can open a new era of sustained progress for humanity, producing a fundamental change, that is, socialist. And for this, the struggle of Nahuel Moreno for building a revolutionary socialist leadership in each country and in the world continues. The reprint of this Biographical Outline has this meaning. §

## Chapter I

# An heir of Trotsky

First of all, let us place in context the character and his circumstances. Who was Moreno?

The Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel defined him this way: “He was one of the last representatives of a handful of Trotskyist leading cadres who, after World War II, maintained the continuity of the struggle of Leon Trotsky, in difficult circumstances”.

We share this definition. Trotsky

founded the Fourth International in 1938 but was killed by Stalinism and most of the leaders who accompanied him fell in the war, fighting against the Nazis, or also murdered by Stalin’s bureaucracy.

At the end of the war, a handful of young and inexperienced cadres began the reconstruction of the Fourth International. Moreno joined them in 1948 and has since devoted all his best efforts to this task, still unfinished, which is the primordial task of the revolution.

Indeed, Mandel and Moreno, who within the framework of mutual respect and affection polemicized for decades, led the two international currents in which Trotskyism is divided today: Mandelism and Morenism.

### The long march

Trotskyism was born in the 1920s, after the death of Lenin. A few years after the triumph of the Russian Revolution, a time of retreat and defeat had begun, which would be terrible for the world’s masses. Heroic struggles would be bloodily crushed by the Nazi-fascist counter-revolution, personified by Hitler, Franco, Mussolini and Chiang Kai-shek.

To a large extent, these bloody defeats took place because of the betrayals committed by the old Social Democratic leaders of the masses and, above all, by the Stalinist bureaucracy that took over the Soviet state, the Communist parties and the Third International of Lenin.

In this dark time, Trotsky defended the Marxist-Leninist principles and the tradition of almost 100 years of workers struggles that had culminated in the Russian Revolution.

Before falling — he was also a victim of the bureaucracy — he managed to outline the program of the next world socialist revolution and to sow the seed of



the organisation which, in his view, would lead, sweeping off Stalinism and social democracy, when the working class took its revenge.

These were the Transitional Program and the Fourth International. The moment came, from 1943. In the battle of Stalingrad, the Soviet people defeated the armies of Hitler and the victory opened the floodgates of revolution. It began an era of triumphs in the world, which continues today. Almost all Nazi-fascist dictatorships fell, colonies became independent, many semi-colonies achieved political independence and a third of mankind expropriated the bourgeoisie, building workers' states at different latitudes.

Trotsky's program has been fulfilled, even beyond its forecasts.

Instead, the revolutionary upsurge did not sweep off Stalinism, social democracy or the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois or bureaucratic leaderships.

By an accumulation of circumstances, the masses have been able to achieve victories with these lousy leaders, who led some phases of revolutions, to betray them later, making the workers pay terrible costs. The fact is that these leaders and their organisations — the Communist parties, Maoism, Castroism, the Sandinistas or the bourgeois nationalist movements like Peronism in Argentina — have controlled the masses throughout this post-war period, while the Fourth International he remained very small.

For Trotskyism, the last 40 years of revolutions have been a "long march" which can be summarised as the search for the way to overcome this contradiction — that his program is fully confirmed, but his party remained a minority one.

### Who passed the test the best

When the battle of Stalingrad was fought, Moreno was a high school student, nicknamed "The Infant", who gave lectures on Kant to older intellectuals.

Won by Trotskyism, he founded the Grupo Obrero Marxista [Marxist Workers Group] and linked to the working class in Avellaneda, the most important industrial city of Argentina at that time.

At age 24 he joined the Fourth International and "discovered" the process of world socialist revolution. How did he pass since then the test of the

"long march"? What was his contribution?

We claim Moreno was who best passed the test that the "handful of Trotskyist leading cadres" were subjected to in these 40 years. And therefore, who best continued Trotsky's struggle.

Unfortunately, most of European and North American Trotskyism failed the test. They were not tied to the working class.

Some of their parties fell in the sectarianism of ignoring the very existence of the revolutions with the excuse that they had very bad leaderships. Thus they became small propaganda groups, who abandoned the struggle to build the Fourth International.

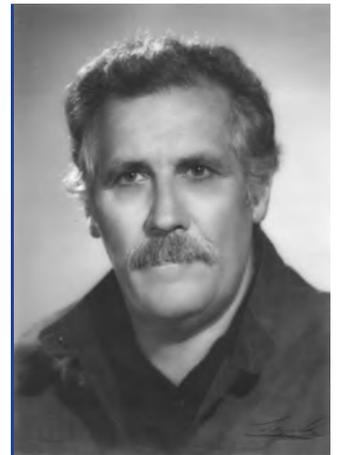
Others recognised the revolutions and attempted to take part in them. But they did so successively capitulating to all their leaderships. Thus, when Stalinism emerged from the war with the prestige that Hitler's defeat gave it, they said that the Communist parties would become revolutionaries.

Later, when Castroism emerged with the prestige of the Cuban Revolution, they joined it to send to political disaster and death an entire generation of heroic Latin American fighters, exterminated in the guerrillas made behind the backs of the masses.

Moreno, instead, joined firmly to the working class and fought to build a Fourth International and national sections of masses, recognising and systematically taking place in revolutions, struggles and processes of organisation, large or small, of the workers, but without capitulating to their leaderships. He endured almost alone the terrible pressures of Peronism, in his country, and Castroism, on his continent. And thanks to that there is today a powerful Trotskyism in Latin America.

Moreno's Trotskyism was, as he called it, a "barbaric Trotskyism".

Formed without the support and firm guidance of an international organisation or leadership, he was condemned, for that matter, to make many more mistakes and start over and over again and again. He advanced by defending the basic and simple principles of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky — internationalism and confidence that the working class is doing or will do the revolution. That is why he is who best passed the test.



*H. Moreno*

# To be a Trotskyist today



Trotsky in the Red  
Army, 1919

**In an interview held in August 1985, Moreno defined what it means to be a Trotskyist today.**

In general terms, it means to defend the positions of principle of socialism, of Marxism. That is, Trotskyists today are the only defenders, in my opinion, of the true Marxist positions.

Let's begin by understanding what it means to be truly Marxist. We cannot make a cult, as it has been done for Mao or Stalin. To be a Trotskyist today does not mean agreeing with everything that Trotsky wrote or said, but to know how to critique or exceed him, same as with Marx, Engels or Lenin, because Marxism intends to be scientific and science teaches that there are no absolute truths. This is the first thing, to be a Trotskyist is to be critical, even of Trotskyism itself. On the positive side, to be a Trotskyist is to respond to three clear analyses and programmatic positions.

The first is that while capitalism exists in the world or in a country, there is no real solution for absolutely any problem — starting with education, art, and getting to the most general problems of hunger, increased poverty, etc. Coupled with this, although not exactly the same, the approach that a merciless struggle is needed against capitalism until its defeat, to impose a new economic and social order in the world that cannot be other than socialism.

The second problem, in those places where the bourgeoisie has been expropriated (I speak of the USSR and of all countries that call themselves socialist) there is no solution if workers' democracy does not prevail. The great evil, the syphilis of the world labour movement is bureaucracy, the totalitarian methods that exist in these countries and the workers' organisations, the unions, the parties who claim to be of the working class and have been corrupted by the bureaucracy. And this is a great success of Trotsky, who was the first to use this terminology, which is now universally accepted. Everyone talks about bureaucracy, sometimes even the rulers of those states we call workers' states. Without the widest democracy, you cannot begin to build socialism.

Socialism is not just an economic construction. The only one to make this analysis was Trotskyism, and it was also the only one who drew the conclusion

that it was necessary to make a revolution in all these states and in the unions to ensure workers' democracy.

And the third, decisive, question is that Trotskyism is the only one consistent with the current global economic and social crisis when a group of large transnational companies dominates almost the entire global economy.

To this socio-economic phenomenon, we must respond with an international organisation and politics.

In this era of nationalist movements who believe that everything can be solved in their own country, Trotskyism is the only one who says there is only a solution at the global economy level inaugurating a new order, which is socialism.

For that, it is necessary to return to the socialist tradition of the existence of a socialist international, which addresses the strategy and tactics to achieve the defeat of the large corporations that dominate the world, to inaugurate world socialism, which will be global or will not be.

If the economy is global there has to be a global policy and global organisation of the workers so that for every revolution, for every country that makes its revolution, it can extend it on a global scale on one hand and on the other hand, it can give increasingly more democratic rights to the working class, so they can take their destiny in their hands by way of democracy.

Socialism cannot be anything but global. All attempts to make Socialism national have failed, because the economy is global and there cannot be a socio-economic solution of the problems within the narrow borders of a country.

To enter the organisation of world socialism the multinationals have to be defeated globally.

Therefore, the synthesis of Trotskyism today is that the Trotskyists are the only ones in the world who have a global organisation (small, weak, whatever you want) but the only existing international, the Fourth International, which incorporates all the tradition of previous internationals and updates it against the new phenomena, but with the Marxist view — that an international struggle is needed.



Nahuel Moreno in his early years as a militant

## Chapter II

# The beginnings

Hugo Miguel Bressano Capacete — the name of whom later became known as Nahuel Moreno — was born on 24 April 1924 in Alberdi, a cattle-agricultural town in the rich Buenos Aires province.

In his family, of upper middle class, Italian and Andalusian blood mixed. His father was a public accountant and his uncles were local political leaders of the Radical Civic Union, traditional bourgeois party, currently ruling in Argentina.

Family influence made him combine the usual sports and social activities of the milieu with his first political readings. In a story recorded by Moreno in 1975, from which we have extracted several quotes, he says: “I read some socialist books and also by fascist authors. But I liked to read philosophy and got to know Kant quite well”.

The family sent him to the Capital to pursue secondary education in the Manuel Belgrano School, hoping he would take up law later. This was at the end of the 1930s, known as “infamous decade”, because the country became a British semi-colony, suffered an economic crisis and the governments were reactionary and repressive.

Soon World War II would begin and the heyday of fascism was felt everywhere. In schools in Buenos Aires, Nazi gangs militarily organised attacked Jews. It was a shock for Bressano, the dedicated student, who became an anti-racist fighter, in the tribunes and in street fights.

Linked to the Nicholas Vergara Cultural Association, formed by intellectuals and students, he gave his first lectures on philosophical themes, surprising for his precociousness.

Through the Association, he arrived at the Teatro del Pueblo [People’s Theatre], a stronghold of the leftist intelligentsia, that had recently reopened and at that time was at its peak. There he dealt with artists, critics and writers of renown.

A maritime worker surnamed Faraldo, who frequented the medium, won him to Trotskyism, despite his resistance: “I really hated politics. I liked mathematics and philosophy. Another passion of mine was theatre criticism”.

Argentine Trotskyism was limited to a few scattered groups, very little active. They had long meetings in bars and, in the evenings, informal get-togethers, usually at Café Tortoni, in Avenida de Mayo, a few blocks away from Teatro del Pueblo. “Between 1940 and 1943, Trotskyism was a party”, said Moreno.

However, they suffered the repression of Nazi gangs and, above all, of Stalinism which dominated the left. “You could be fascist, but being ‘Trotskyist’ was ostracism, in all fields”.

Bressano joined the group led by Liborio Justo, “*Quebracho*”, pioneer of Trotskyism in Argentina, and son of none other than the president of Argentina, Agustin P. Justo.

“*Quebracho*” was the first who, taking it from Trotsky, raised correctly that in Latin America and in Argentina the first revolutionary task is national liberation. He baptised Bressano with his pseudonym: Nahuel that in the Araucanian indigenous language means tiger and Moreno for the [dark brown] colour of his hair.

### The Marxist Workers’ Group

Moreno left “*Quebracho*” soon. With some teenage friends of the Vergara



The GOM's first newspaper issue, October 1946



Military service booklet



With his mother and brother

Association, he founded in 1944, the Marxist Workers' Group (GOM). The precursor document was called "The Party".

Amid philosophical quotes, that Moreno liked to use at the time, the document clearly pointed out the historic decision to abandon the "fiesta": "We will connect in the workers' movement, approaching and penetrating in organisations where it is found, to take part in all class conflicts".

The GOM was formed in the poor Jewish neighbourhood of Villa Crespo, in the Capital, using the bar Carlos Gardel and pizzeria Napoles, both on Corrientes Avenue, as meeting places.

Among the founders who accompanied Moreno, were: Boris, who was a textile worker; his sister Rita, 15, worker and printers union leader; Daniel Pereyra, who worked in the same trade; Mauricio, clothing unionist and Abrahamcito [Little Abraham], who was

the second theoretician, after Moreno, and worked as a civil servant in a ministry.

Rita and Moreno married soon after. They had two children — Eleonora (1949) and David (1954).

Rita was a strong militant in the GOM and years later she did it again in the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* [Socialist Workers Party], the name adopted in 1972.

In all this time, she earned the affection and respect of the comrades, many of whom she helped to form in the proletarian method, although she was away momentarily from the activity. For Moreno, she was "the greatest female personality I've ever met".

Rita died of an incurable disease in 1974.

Shortly before, Moreno, in the preface to his book "*The Chinese and Indochinese revolutions*" wrote: "I dedicate my work to Rita, my partner and love of my life, as recognition that without her constant support I would not have been able to make it".



Nahuel Moreno with his partner, Rita, and children Leonora and David at the beach on the 1950s



Elias Rodriguez in the first public rally of the GOM in homage to Trotsky, held in Avellaneda, Buenos Aires Province

## Chapter III

# Within the working class

By the end of 1944, the GOM realised that to apply their line they could not continue in Villa Crespo. The new workers' movement, just arrived from the countryside and focused on large industries, was located above all after the southern boundary of the Capital, especially in the huge meat-packing plants, whose production had entered a boom because of the war.

The occasion came in January 1945 when the strike broke out in the country's largest factory, the Anglo-Ciabasa meat-packing plant, with 15,000 workers in Avellaneda.

The young people of GOM sought a way to link and who gave them the "recipe" — which would later be used to our days — was Mateo Fossa.

Mateo was the Trotskyist leader of the timber union. An admirer of Trotsky, whom he met in Mexico, he fought tirelessly, led strikes that made history and was a formidable propagandist. Pursued by the bosses, by Stalinism and later by the Peronist bureaucracy, he gave no importance to building the party. Only in old age and shortly before his death, he entered the PST, which is one of the Moreno's proudest moments.

Mateo advised the young people of the GOM to organise a collection and take it to the Anglo-Ciabasa's strike committee. In addition, that they offer themselves for any service and to print the flyers: "However, without touching even a comma or pretending to give line".

They did. It took them work at first find the factory union leaders, who were anarchists and disorganised. But soon they were delighted with the seriousness of the group. Lucas Dominguez, the anarchist union leader, remained a great friend and the rest of the strike committee and several activists entered the GOM. In April, they

again resorted to strike: "It was almost entirely led by us", says Moreno. "We did a sort of commune in Avellaneda — we diverted traffic and one could not move around without a union card".

### Villa Pobladora

After this dress rehearsal, Moreno and several GOM comrades went to live in Villa Pobladora, an extensive working-class neighbourhood circumscribed by the river and the railway, in Avellaneda.

They managed to make a Trotskyist fortress in the middle of the Peronist tide that flooded the country since 1945. In addition to work with the meatworkers, they led the construction union, half the factory committee of SIAM — the largest metallurgical factory in the country, where Pereyra had begun to work — and many other establishments nearby. Moreno advised the labour leaders won by the GOM in the founding of several large unions, such as the Meatworkers Federation and the Textile Workers' Association.

One of the first activists won by the GOM, in 1945, was Elias Rodriguez: "The greatest labour leader I met", said Moreno.

Elias had a first class track record among metal, textile, meat, mineral grinding, municipal workers, etc. Organizer of factories, of unions and strikes leader he was always an exemplary party member. In 1946, he was a speaker at the rally of homage to the Russian Revolution that the GOM did in Pavon and Galicia streets in Avellaneda. Forty-one years later, he was on the stage of the rally in Plaza Once, where the MAS celebrated, once again, the Russian Revolution.

The insertion of the Trotskyists in the factories and in the densely populated working class neighbourhood was total. The GOM was based in the United Hearts



Picnic with the comrades and their families. Nahuel Moreno is in the front row, the third man from the left

Club of Villa Pobladora, whose executive committee was chaired by Moreno. In addition to being an “engine” of Trotskyism, the club organised dances and cultural, sports and neighbourhood activities.

Another centre of the GOM was the “*conventillo*” (tenement) of Oliden Street, where Moreno and other comrades lived.

In the club and in the tenement they gave courses and lectures — “although we worked with a union line, the essential was the courses, which were what most impacted the workers”. The topics ranged from teaching reading and writing to the history of the French and Russian revolutions. Also, a “basic” course of initiation to Marxism and the party, which essentially is the same the MAS keeps using.

On Saturdays, the chats used to continue with dances. In the bars of Avellaneda frequently a parishioner would often scream at dawn “Long live the Fourth International!”

Members of the GOM, which was renamed *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* [Revolutionary Workers Party – POR], reached the hundred, a figure so hard to overcome as, years later, would be the first thousand.

The successes of the POR attracted attention — Trotskyists who remained in

the “fiesta”, intellectuals and students came to see this “rarity” made by Moreno in Villa Pobladora.

By this means, Moreno recruited some youth from the city of Bahia Blanca, who were studying at the University of La Plata and belonged to the Socialist Party. Among them were Angel Bengochea and Horacio Lagar, who would be part of the leadership team we will refer to later. A little later also joined the party, along with other intellectuals, Ernesto Gonzalez. He was a history professor, recently graduated, and had a scholarship to continue his studies in France. He changed his destiny to live in Crucecita (Avellaneda) and work as a labourer in a meat-packing plant.

### The GOM and the labour movement

What was the balance left to Moreno by the fulfilment of the goals proposed in his preliminary document “The Party”?

For a long time, he gave his reports and recalled his career based on the mistakes committed, to show the members the weaknesses of his leadership. He considered that the Pobladora stage had sectarian and workerist errors and, above all, a narrow national vision of building the party.

He was self-critical of initially having had a sectarian position against Peronism since the GOM condemned equally such bourgeois nationalist movement and the bourgeois opposition front which was pro-US and supported by the Communist and Socialist parties.

The workerist deviation meant that the GOM did not have a policy for the students and the fractions that broke with the CP and SP, or on an important political phenomenon, which was the emergence of a labour party subsequently dissolved by Peron.

For Moreno, the largest deficit was “we did not live awaiting with anticipations the life and struggles of the Fourth International. We believed that there could be a solution to the problems of the Trotskyist movement within the country, with a national and not global vision. We did not understand that only with an internationalist position we could begin to really solve the problems of Argentine Trotskyism”.

We would, however, be unfair to think that the mistakes of the GOM and POR cast a shadow on their historic success. They did the first and foremost thing we must ask of a revolutionary group that begins to act: become part of the workers’ movement.

That was the great success of the GOM. Moreno says: “We were those

who said the preferred workplace of the Trotskyists should be the Peronist unions. We managed to understand that decisive phenomenon. And we did it without capitulating to it because we denounced the totalitarian and reactionary character of the union bureaucracy and the state control exercised over unions. This success, I think, is the main page that our group wrote and the ultimate reason that it subsists to date: to have been tied to the workers’ movement.”

For Moreno, the Pobladora experience was stamped. In future, he would give the same battle in the Fourth International, arguing with European Trotskyism, which has not passed its student and intellectual stage, which has not made its Pobladora.

Everywhere Moreno insisted on acquiring, maintaining and strengthening the ties to the workers’ movement.

He did it every time the Argentine party moved away from that path. And he repeated it in all the parties he contributed to found: he helped the Colombian students of the Socialist Bloc to wade into the workers’ concentrations of their country; he pushed the Spanish party to get in Getafe, the Avellaneda of Madrid; he taught the Brazilian students to enter the giant Pobladora of Latin America that is the ABC of São Paulo.

And thus always, everywhere...



Nahuel Moreno boarding an Aerolineas Argentinas aeroplane



Nahuel Moreno travels to the Second Congress of the Fourth International. Farewelling him on board the liner "Provence" are "Turk" Saul, Yolanda, Rita, Abrahamcito, and another female comrade



With American Trotskyist leader Farrell Dobbs and his wife

## Chapter IV

# The impact of the world revolution

Moreno first travelled to Paris in 1948, as a POR delegate to the Second Congress of the Fourth International. The postwar world was boiling.

The Chinese guerrillas of Mao Tse Tung were about to take power. Half of Europe had been occupied after the war by the Red Army, and the construction of new workers' states had begun.

An explosive process of national liberation shook South and Southeast Asia, the Arab world and the whole of Africa.

The leaders of the Fourth International, among whom were the Greek Michel Raptis (Pablo), the English Gerry Healy and Bill Hunter, the Belgian Ernest Mandel, the French Pierre Frank and Pierre Lambert, the Italian Livio Maitan, the Chinese Peng Shu-Tse, the Americans James Cannon, Joseph Hansen, Farrel Dobbs and George Novack, indefatigably were trying to launch the organisation, without the guiding hand of Trotsky.

Moreno joined the task.

One wing of the comrades was inclined not to recognise the character of workers' states for Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and other Eastern European countries, given that their transformations were made in "cold", bureaucratically, without workers' revolutions or Bolsheviks leaderships, as there had been in Russia.

Pablo, his disciple Mandel, and Moreno were, in contrast, among those who decidedly led the recognition of those workers' states as a win of the masses, even though they were born in an unusual way and deformed by the bureaucracy.

After a debate, in which Moreno had outstanding participation, the Fourth International officially leaned for recognition. This helped the progress of Trotskyism, which could give a correct answer to a crucial fact of the postwar period — new workers states were great triumphs of the revolution, they had to be defended from any imperialist aggression.

Soon, however, the Fourth International would be in crisis. This was the time of the "Cold War" between the USSR and the United States.

The Communist parties had, then, an enormous prestige, due to Hitler's defeat, the transformation of Eastern Europe and the struggle of Mao in China.

Pabloism — name given to the leadership whose axes were Pablo, Mandel and other comrades — analysed that the outbreak of World War III was inevitable.

It guessed that the communist parties, forced to defend the USSR, would become revolutionary. And it decided that Trotskyists should practice entryism in them, which indeed many European groups did, for 20 years.

This orientation meant a capitulation to the Stalinist bureaucracy, which would be extended soon to other bourgeois and petty bourgeois leaderships.

This caused that for many years Trotskyism virtually disappeared from Europe. Moreno had been, as he said, "A Pabloite of the first hour" because he was next to Pablo and Mandel in the debate on the workers' states, also accompanying them in their proposition that the Fourth

International should be a centralised world party.

But immediately he faced them when they capitulated to Stalinism. He opposed their theory of “imminent war” and, above all, their revisionist analysis that the communist parties would become revolutionary.

With regard to entryism, Moreno stated it could be a tactic of Trotskyists to link to the masses, going to the parties where the masses were, but to break them, fighting from the inside against their leaderships, because they would never cease to be counter-revolutionary.

For Moreno, the Pabloite capitulation became particularly pathetic in Bolivia.

The working class of the Altiplano [Highlands] had managed to make revolutionary unions, which fought great battles and created armed militias.

In 1952, there was an insurrection and the workers’ militias defeated the bourgeois Armed Forces. Soldiers defected and went to the people with weapons.

The unions formed the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB – Central Workers Union).

The only armed forces in the country were the workers’ and peasants’ militias. In the process, Trotskyism, nucleated in the Bolivian *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* (POR – Revolutionary Workers Party), had reached mass influence.

Moreno proposed that the Bolivian POR had to fight for the COB and the militias to seize power. His slogan was “All power to the COB”.

But Pablo, Mandel and the Secretariat of the Fourth International, along with the leaders of the Bolivian POR, instead supported the bourgeois government of Paz Estensoro, who was, at the end, the gravedigger of the workers’ revolution.

Since then Bolivian Trotskyism degenerated in small sects.

Moreno considered that the capitulation of Pabloism to a bourgeois nationalist leadership in Bolivia did miss the greatest opportunity of Trotskyism to lead a workers’ revolution and become an international mass current.

Pabloism caused the crisis of the Fourth International not just for their revisionist capitulatory policy, but also for their bureaucratic methods.

Under their leadership, the centralised world party degenerated into a vertical organisation where the Secretariat bureaucratically imposed their decisions on national sections.

Moreno’s party had been a victim of such methods. The Pabloites recognised as official Argentinian section the small group of Posadas, a Pablo stalwart.

Moreno’s POR was given the category of sympathiser section, despite having proven its penetration in the workers’ movement with the signature of 50 frontline union leaders.

Arriving at the height of bureaucratic methods in 1953, Pablo expelled from the Fourth International the majority of the French section, who opposed his policy of entryism to the CP and attacked their premises.

In solidarity with the French comrades, Moreno broke relations with the Pabloite International Secretariat.

The crisis led to the division of the Fourth International, producing an alignment of forces. On one side was Pabloism. On the other, the International Committee was formed.

A few parties stood outside both, isolated from the world movement.

Moreno joined the International Committee.

Its leadership was exercised by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of the United States. With its old working class leadership of Farrell Dobbs, James Cannon and Joseph Hansen, who had participated in the great American union struggles and to whom Trotsky, from his exile in Mexico, had helped directly. The SWP was the party of the most proletarian tradition of Trotskyism. Moreno considered himself a disciple of those leaders, particularly Hansen.

Despite the claim by Moreno, the International Committee was not organised as a democratically centralised world party.

The SWP imposed for it to be a federation of parties, with a loose organisation.

As a result, the International Committee failed to defeat Pabloism politically, which continued to act as an international revisionist faction. Thus, the crisis of the Fourth International was unsolved.

As part of the International Committee, Moreno and other comrades organised a Latin American Committee, which soon after became the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO), editing the magazine *Estrategia* [Strategy], directed by Moreno.

The SLATO acted regionally — Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru — and centralised leadership to act in the region.

Thanks to this, he played a very important role in Peruvian events, which we will see later.

From the crisis of the Fourth international, caused by Pabloism, Moreno drew definitive conclusions: “In the International happens something akin to what had happened in the Argentine Trotskyist movement.

“It was in the hands of a non-proletarian leadership, with its social base in the European intelligentsia and with all the vices of petty bourgeois currents.”

## Chapter V

# *Palabra Obrera*

Let's rewind to Villa Pobladora, from where Moreno had left for the Congress of the Fourth International in 1948. What was the influence of embracing the internationalist cause?

It was a revolution. Moreno used to say that previously he had a photographic, static view of reality and by understanding the global framework he could see the dynamism of the film.

In 1949 and 1950, Moreno made important studies on the economics and history of Argentina and Latin American, which crystallised in documents and books. But what was most important was the fine tuning of the characterisation of the Peronist phenomenon, which allowed the party to overcome its workerist and sectarian vision.

Moreno analysed that a continental scale there was a Yankee colonisation plan. Forty years ago it was a discovery since all the left were still denouncing British imperialism as the main enemy.

Moreno considered that, despite its bourgeois and totalitarian character, the Peronist government played a relatively progressive role in opposing, even if in a tepid and cowardly manner, American imperialism.

With his new characterisations, the party took a leap. It spread to several other parts of the country and, shortly after, was the only one which denounced and called to fight the pro-US military coup that was being prepared.

The *gorilla* [reactionary] coup took place, finally, in 1955. Soon it attacked the worker's movement, taking control of the trade union Central, dissolving the factory internal commissions and imprisoning and even sending to firing squads labour activists and political leaders of the banned Peronism.

The response was a great workers struggle, known as *The Resistance*. It was fought amid a total crisis of leadership — Peron had fled into exile and the union

bureaucracy was “erased”, as Argentines say of those who cowardly desert. The SP and CP, for their part, supported the dictatorship.

Despite clandestinity and the smallness of the party, Moreno set himself with all boldness to lead the fight. Just a month after the coup, together with Bengochea and other comrades he personally signed a leaflet calling for a general strike in the Peronist day (17 October). The strike was spontaneous because it was the feeling of the workers.

In the factories began a grouping of the fighters to recover the unions. There were strikes and factory occupations. The first, in the metallurgical plant Carma, defying military tanks, was led by the party.

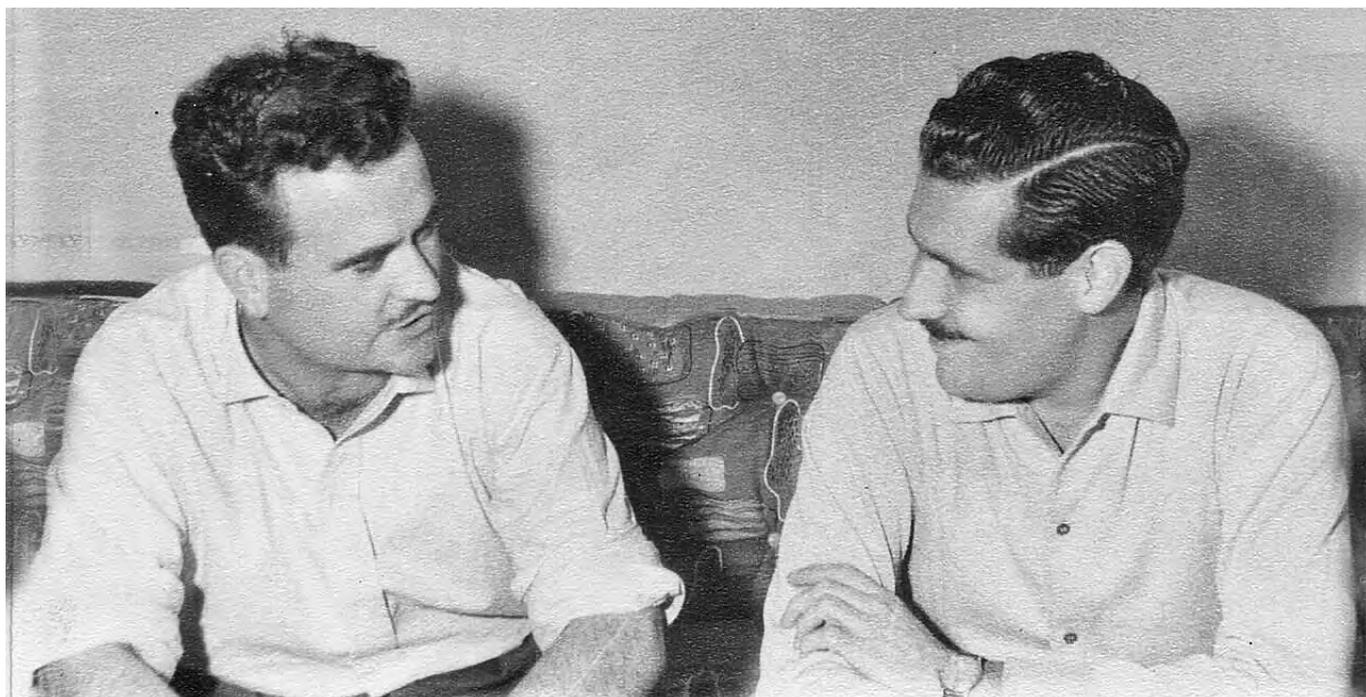
Moreno drew the line of uniting those struggles, forming the Movement of Worker's Groups, whose newspaper, *Palabra Obrera* [Workers' Word], would make history. The party became known with this name. Sequestered countless times by the police, *Palabra Obrera* became one of the most read. Its average print run, close to 10,000 copies weekly, came sometimes to 50,000. It was sold at the gates of the large factories and passed from hand to hand.

Its director, “*The Basque*” Bengochea, arrested on several occasions, was interviewed in 1957 by American television as one of the most important politicians in Argentina.

The party line was to finish organising the most important guilds, especially the metallurgical, where *Palabra Obrera* led many major factories, to form an inter-union and launch a general strike against the dictatorship.

Noticing this danger, Augusto Timoteo Vandor, the main Peronist union bureaucrat and leader of the metalworkers, aborted the process by prematurely launching the isolated strike of this guild.

Many factories stopped, believing that the line came from the Trotskyists.



Angel "The Basque" Bengochea and Nahuel Moreno

*Palabra Obrera* had no alternative but to take the lead on the strike. Moreno directed it personally. The strike committee, formed by the most representative comrades, met day and night in party homes with Moreno. For 20 days the strike kept the government on tenterhooks until it weakened and was defeated. It cost the dismissal of activism, mainly Trotskyist.

For that reason, the inter-union, which was formed shortly after, had a net Peronist majority. It could have been had by Trotskyism if the metal strike had succeeded.

The inter-union took the name of 62 Peronist Organizations. Today they are an apparatus without ranks of the worst trade union bureaucracy. But originally they had a democratic functioning, holding weekly open plenaries and with supporters, which were attended by thousands of working class fighters. The bureaucracy had no choice but to accept them because of the rise of struggles.

*Palabra Obrera* requested admission to the 62 Organisations. This entryism to the union branch of Peronism was to continue disputing the leadership to the bureaucracy, now under more difficult conditions.

In the plenary sessions, Bengochea and Moreno were acclaimed many times and managed to win several ballots. Finally, when the strikes dwindled, the bureaucracy could end workers' democracy.

Beginning in 1959, in Argentina began 10 years of the retreat of the fights, during which the union bureaucracy was strengthened again. *Palabra Obrera*, which had scratched the leadership of the worker's movement, fell back to become, again, a small group.

Several of the main labour leaders of the party were dismissed from their jobs. And others organised a faction that capitulated to the bureaucracy and broke *Palabra Obrera*. They were headed by Fucito, a prestigious member of the party leadership, who had been a metalworkers leader and was then leader of naval workers.

Moreno polemised with those comrades, who held the union bureaucrats were ideologically confused fighters. He demonstrated that they were, in fact, paid agents of the bourgeoisie to betray the workers' struggles. And he predicted that they would end up becoming bureaucrats and servants of the Peronist bourgeoisie. Fucito died shortly after the break, in a traffic accident. And those who left with him, ended as Moreno had predicted.

Moreno, as always, was the first to point out his own mistakes; he considered that this brilliant stage of the party in which it achieved huge union and political influence, it had unionist and movimientist deviations. Party cadres acted as extraordinary leaders of workers' struggles, but without building in parallel



In *Palabra Obrera's* headquarters, Chela Gil (Ernesto Gonzalez's wife), Chilean Trotskyist leader Valenzuela, and Bengoechea



With a group of Peruvian comrades in the 1960's. Rita (second from the left), Ernesto Gonzales (behind Rita), and Nahuel Moreno on the right side

the party. That is, without recruiting or forming cadres or organised teams.

### **The leadership of *Palabra Obrera***

What strikes the most going through this period of the history of Moreno and the Argentine party is the huge trade union and political influence they achieved, despite the Peronist consciousness of the workers and that they were still a very small party.

The fact serves to illustrate that on that occasion, as in many others, which were

and will be presented worldwide, there was, there is and there will be, increasingly, possibilities for the development of Trotskyism.

At the time, beyond their unionist and movimientist errors, *Palabra Obrera* could seize its chances, because it was ready for them.

Its cadres — albeit reduced in number — and its leadership had been forged for that.

Ten years earlier, Moreno had given the line of going to the labour movement. There he was formed, leading strikes such as of the meatworkers of 1945, and learning from the anarchists and their pickets. Next to him, as leader of the chemical workers union, Bengochea had made his experience, becoming another pillar that leadership. And with them, Daniel Pereyra, Fucito, Lagar and Ernesto.

At the same time, they relied on solid cadres, of whom Elias Rodriguez was an example.

They were all made in the persistent work within the labour movement and rowing against the current of Peronism. So they were able to form a great leadership team that at the beginning of its short history, gave the qualitative leap to become internationalists.

It was a team where several of its members were experts in *Capital*, in Marx or Hegel, and they discussed Bolivia, China, the workers' states, and the march of the world revolution and the building of the Fourth International, while betting among them who would "open" a difficult factory or recruit more workers in a course.

They practised brutal openness and loyalty in their discussions, and a division of tasks in which offices, from the general secretariat to the newspaper's management, and to finance or organisation, were performed alternatively, according to the needs.

The entire team sought to respond to the large reality, with its small forces.

And thus they achieved great feats.



Cover of *Palabra Obrera*, 1967

Then, with the retreat, the team cracked. Fucito capitulated to the terrible pressure of the Peronist union bureaucracy. Bengochea, Pereyra and Lagar would do it, as we shall see, to another pressure, as much or more terrible, which was that of Castroism. Moreno, who resisted, always lamented this crisis. We will return to the subject later. But let's remember that Moreno took the leadership team of *Palabra Obrera* as a model. And everywhere hereinafter he tried to help form leaders and cadres to follow this example, and for them to be prepared, theoretically and practically, to boldly challenge for the leadership of the masses.

## Chapter VI

# Under the sign of the Cuban revolution

In 1959, when the reversal of the struggles in Argentina began, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the situation reversed completely, and a big uprising started. The Cuban Revolution triumphed, breaking all schemas built up to then.

A guerrilla movement, originally born out of a traditional party of the oligarchy, supported by the Church and having a student and petty-bourgeois leadership, connected, after years of fighting in isolation in the mountains, with a great mass upsurge. Fidel and Che then led a triumphant popular insurrection, and shortly after expropriated the bourgeoisie, establishing the first workers' state in the Americas.

Imperialism was totally surprised. It erred its calculations so much that some bourgeois Yankee sectors had supported the 26 of July Movement and Fidel, who appeared interviewed as a hero in *Life* magazine.

Stalinism suffered a heavy blow and was left completely misplaced — for the first time a triumphant revolution was totally out of its control.

Trotskyism was not prepared either for an event like the Cuban Revolution.

Moreno foresaw mass uprisings everywhere, but with insurrections like the Bolivian of 1952 or like the one that was at the doorstep in the Argentine Resistance, that is, carried out by the working class.

The Cuban Revolution unleashed a storm. Fidel and Che went on to head a Latin American movement which won most of the best fighters.

But soon, after the fair slogans they raised, such as: “Making of the Andes a

new Sierra Maestra”, “Make two, three, many Vietnams”, and the proposal of the armed struggle for socialism, they applied in all countries the same guerrilla recipe, disdaining the real class struggle.

They believed they had found a shortcut, a shorter and safer route for the revolution. But it was a dead end. For almost 20 years, an entire generation of Latin American revolutionaries who followed Castroism ended in disaster, capitulating in many cases to the bourgeoisie but not being saved from extermination for doing so. Most of the survivors of the massacre suffered by Che himself in Bolivia in 1967, and later by the Tupamaros, Montoneros, ERP and dozens of groups ended in the darkest political and moral bankruptcy.

After 20 years of this political tragedy that left mountains of corpses of heroic fighters, Castro, in the island, embraced Stalinism and called not to extend socialism and not to fight for it.

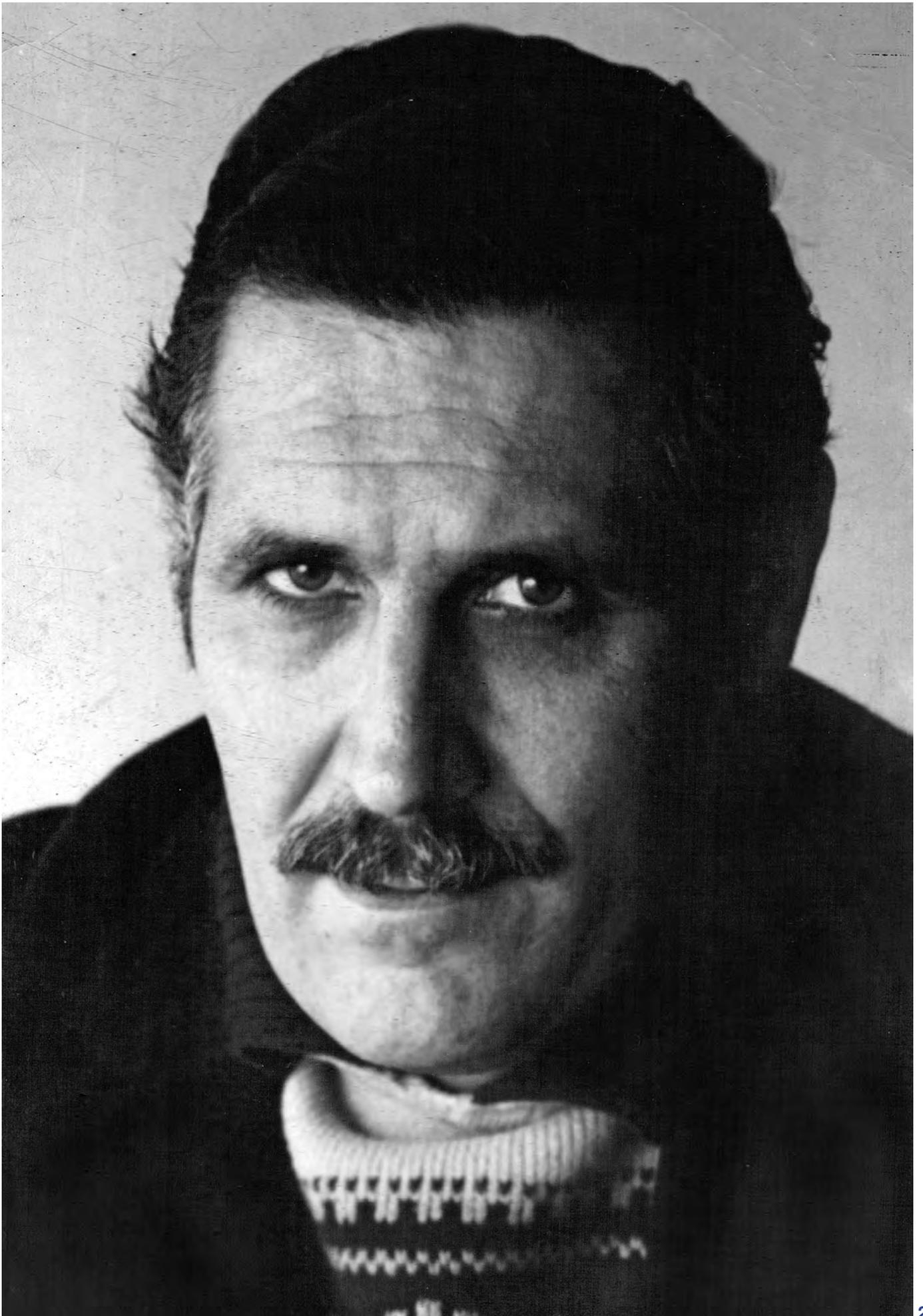
A sector of Moreno's own party broke up with him and became Castroist. They paid with their life, like the rest.

Most of world Trotskyism, from a distance, also came to support and to worship the methods and politics of Castroism, being responsible, therefore, for its consequences.

Moreno was almost alone resisting the storm and arguing with all of them, clinging to the mast of the Trotskyist principles and the working class.

### Early discussions

After some hesitation, Moreno assimilated the novelty of the Cuban Revolution. Long before Stalinism, he recognised and welcomed the existence



of the new workers' state which he then considered as the greatest achievement achieved by the Latin American masses.

He congratulated Fidel and Che for their call to be a continental movement. With admiration and respect for both — he interviewed Che in Uruguay in 1960 — Moreno judged that in Latin America there was a single revolutionary process led by them, of which he had to be a part, albeit with deep political and methodological differences.

He also drew important theoretical conclusions. The Transitional Program almost dismissed the possibility that a petty bourgeois guerrilla movement, as Castroism, could lead a socialist revolution. He deduced, then, that the world situation had become more revolutionary, more Trotskyist than what Trotsky foresaw. He concluded that guerrilla warfare should be incorporated as one more tactic in the arsenal of the armed struggle of the masses, to be applied in certain circumstances.

At the same time, he began the discussion with the vanguard who believed that in every time and place, they had to go and risk their lives by opening a guerrilla focus.

Moreno insisted on working on the labour movement and the masses and called to continue the task of building a revolutionary world party; he was opposed to the petty-bourgeois conception of building nationalist guerrilla armies, which obey without question the orders of their heads.

### **Cusco, Lares and La Convencion**

An echo of the rise of the struggles unleashed by the Cuban Revolution ensued, in the late 1950s in Peru. In Cusco, in the valleys of La Convencion and Lares, peasants rose up and seized land. The owners organised to defend them violently.

The explosive peasant struggle had nothing to do with a guerrilla focus as postulated by Castroism. It was a mass struggle.

Cuba refused to support it, but Trotskyism ran to do it.

Hugo Blanco was a Peruvian student studying at the University of La Plata in Argentina. There he was won by the party and Moreno convinced him to return to Cusco to be active with the peasants. So

he did, and he became a legendary leader of masses, the greater that Trotskyism has produced in Latin America.

All the Argentine party and SLATO took to help Peru. Moreno drew the line — to drive the mass unionisation, which was already underway, of the peasantry and for their unions to enter the Peruvian workers' central. To propose the creation of peasant militias to defend the occupied lands. And in parallel, to build the party not only in the region but in Lima, winning the working class.

So it started to be done. Daniel Pereyra went to reside in Lima. The Argentine party gathered donations and many militants pawned their personal property to support the struggle. Moreno travelled periodically organising material aid and directing work. Soon, Hugo Blanco was the peasant's delegate to the Cuzco workers federation.

But the problems started. The Castroist theses took their toll on Pereyra and other leaders. Instead of hitting on the Lima workers' and student movement to support the peasants and instead of building the party, they organised a guerrilla group. They wanted to give a "masterstroke" robbing a bank and, at together with getting funds, to create a political event.

Moreno began a harsh polemic against the putschist deviation. He went to Peru to prevent the assault. It would be useless. Che Pereyra, as then he was called by the Latin American press, had been won by the Guevarist conception. In 1962 he raided the Credit Bank of Miraflores, Lima.

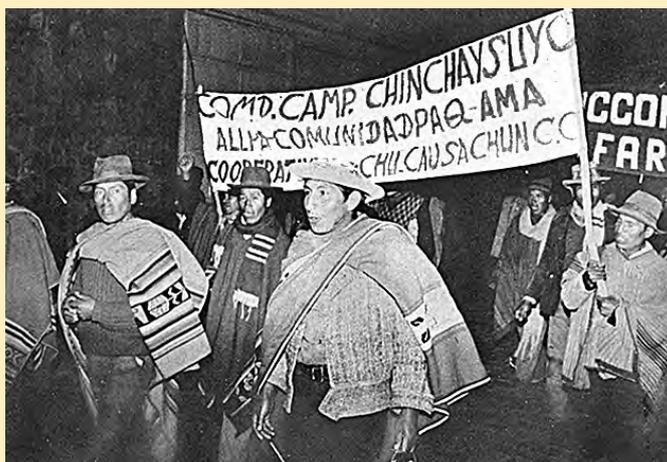
It proved disastrous. Instead of awakening popular support, it gave a pretext for the government and the bourgeoisie to unleash repression. They were able to isolate the peasant struggle, until making it back down and defeating it.

Hugo Blanco was the victim of a long witch hunt, which ended with his imprisonment and death sentence. A global campaign of Trotskyism could ultimately save his life and managed, years later, his amnesty.

Immediately after the raid took place, Moreno helped the escape and concealment of Pereyra and the other comrades, managing to get them out of Lima. But later they were arrested, imprisoned and savagely tortured.

## The lesson of Peru

Given the vigorous development of the revolutionary mobilisation of the peasants of La Convention and Lares, led by Hugo Blanco, the landlords and the repressive forces unleashed a violent persecution. The peasant movement organised its self-defense and armed clashes occurred.



At the same time (1962), in the Peruvian Trotskyist party (the FIR, of which Hugo Blanco was one of the leaders) a guerrilla deviation developed. Its failure was another example of the failure of putschist adventures and correctness of the line of joining to the masses and promoting their mobilisation.<sup>1</sup>

Moreno fought a political battle against this deviation. In a letter to the leadership of the FIR he made a forecast that was soon confirmed by the facts:

"Hugo Blanco, in three or four months becomes an unquestioned leader of masses, known throughout Peru and across the continent, separated from his putschists friends, since he will be forced to use the methods that we have been advocating unsuccessfully for months — to develop the agrarian revolution, to respond to armed actions with other armed actions (...).

"This policy will be explosive, and within months it will capitalise on the prestige of Hugo Blanco, who will become our first leader of Latin American masses (...)" (La Paz, 15 June 1962).

In a later letter (23 February 1963), Moreno replied to a group of leaders and militants who spoke of "opening a second front". There he said:

"This term means that what Hugo (Blanco) does is the first front. I do not

know what reasons you have to name the first front to what Hugo is doing. For us, what Hugo does is a fabulous revolutionary movement of the peasant masses, without any characteristic of the first, second or third front (...).

"If when you call to build a second front you mean do what Hugo Blanco is doing, we completely agree (...).

"We should unionise, occupy land, recruit peasant leaders to the FIR, publish a newspaper or get a radio to broadcast throughout Peru. We should organise peasant militias of the FIR, should be aiming to organise a united party of the Peruvian revolution.

"If so, it is a question of opening as many fronts as there are valleys and rural areas in Peru. Is this the second front?

"We know it is not, that for you the second front is a military front, a small group of magnificent petty bourgeois or revolutionary lumpen who studied theoretically and practically Mao and Che, who never unionised a peasant, and never have been next to a peasant taking his land or fighting his *gamonal* [landowner], who have been always studying opening fronts.

"With these elements, it is about starting a military battle, of guerrilla-type, against reactionary forces, relying on the peasantry (...).

*"We say to them: enough of playing the revolution, enough of being in deeds political criminals; there is no more urgent, immediate, essential task than to help Hugo Blanco in all areas."*

<sup>1</sup> Editorial Cehus has republished in 2015 "Peru: Two Strategies" with the letters of this polemic. This book had been out of print since 1964. English translation is available in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

Moreno, accused by the bourgeoisie of being the organiser of the raid, was able to hide in Bolivia. There he was arrested and later released, taking advantage to organise aid for Hugo Blanco. He returned clandestinely to Buenos Aires, where he was rearrested. After one year in prison, the Argentine Justice rejected the extradition requested by the Peruvian government.

It is worth noting here that, years later, in 1969, Moreno re-entered Peru, circumventing controls. The police did not believe their eyes when Moreno voluntarily submitted to the court of Lima. Three months later, in a sensational trial, he was acquitted of the charge for which he had been persecuted for seven years.

In prison, Moreno organised chess and soccer teams. There he was visited by young Trotskyists, some of whom now run the Peruvian party.

The dramatic and tragic episodes gave subject to the novel “Warn the comrades soon”, which was made into a film.

### **The crisis of *Palabra Obrera***

Meanwhile, the Argentine party had been weakened by the above events and began to leave the factories and universities. Many comrades thought, they too, about making “exemplary actions”, leaving aside the hard, dull activity in the working class, selling the paper, the teams and contributions.

This deviation, which endangered the very existence of the party, was corrected when Moreno could resume the leadership. Then they began to recover the method and traditions.

At this time there was the break up with Bengochea, who had also been won by the guerrilla conception. He had been sent to Cuba with a group of militants, by the party leadership. His delicate mission was to try to get Fidel Castro to decide, finally, to support Peru, organising the rescue of Hugo Blanco from the repressive wall that surrounded him.

But Bengochea was neither returning nor reporting on the progress of their work. It later emerged that he had stayed on the island, receiving military training, which earned him the highest ratings. Although he had been with Moreno in their fight against the putschist deviation of Pereyra, in Cuba he was also won by Castroism.

He returned to Buenos Aires in 1963 to leave the party and organise guerrillas in northern Argentina. He did so, but a few months after the split, he and his group died tragically in an explosion in their residence, in Posadas Street in Barrio Norte of the city of Buenos Aires, where they had installed an arsenal.

Bengochea’s breakup was the first major toll Moreno and his party paid to the terrible pressure by Castroist methods and policy, which sent so many revolutionaries to extermination.

There was no factional struggle; the division was made frankly and fraternally. The differences remained perfectly clear. Moreno deliberately avoided a *tête-à-tête* discussion with Bengochea, arguing instead with the writings of Che Guevara.

The work, entitled “Two methods for the Latin American revolution” is one of the greatest contributions of Trotskyism, defining the limits with the foquism.

Moreno made efforts to prevent Bengochea going permanently to Castroism and he sought to leave the door open for Bengochea to return to Trotskyism. In a personal letter, he wrote: “Because if you decide to break, we decided to give you all the possibilities and means for you to fully implement your experience. I am not prepared under any circumstances to argue or quarrel personally or polemically with you. And because we considered you a great revolutionary, we should give you the possibility to implement your revolutionary concepts. The Secretariat fully agreed with me: you mean too much for all of us to embark on a factional struggle or controversy with the comrade we love the most...”

Bengochea’s breakup was the turning point of the destruction of *Palabra Obrera*’s leadership team. Moreno never stopped seeing the objective causes of this destruction. But at the end of his life he made a self-critical assessment, noting that “his biggest problem” had been the leadership team: “... how to care for it; to make all sacrifices necessary so the leaders may have good relations between them. For a long time, I didn’t understand the problem. When I finally understood it, thanks to the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party and especially Joseph Hansen, it was too late. Some of the old



Cover of *La Verdad* in the 1970s. Headline reads: "Let's organise the resistance from the rank and file"

guard comrades argue that the split of the old leadership team, with Bengochea, Lagar, Fucitto and others, the best the party has had in its history, was inevitable due to the political influence of the Castro regime. This factor existed, but I think there were additional subjective elements, contributed by me. I preferred to discuss and practice the truth in the abstract, rather than putting all possible care to keep that team. It may not be so, but I'll die with that doubt and that sorrow" (*Conversations with Nabuel Moreno*, 1986).

### In the Fourth International

The Cuban Revolution was, as one would expect, a catalyst for the currents of the Fourth International.

As it had happened 10 years earlier with the workers' states of Eastern Europe, Cuba prompted a majority of Trotskyists to recognise the Cuban Revolution and a sectarian minority, to ignore it.

The majority were reunified in 1963, breaking the previous faction, and forming the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec).

Pablo and Posadas had retired and at the head of that current were Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitan, Pierre Frank and others. They SWP joined them.

Moreno joined a year later. While he considered that reunification was progressive, since it regrouped most of Trotskyism to support the Cuban Revolution, he feared that the SWP leadership would give in to the revisionists, and warned of the danger that now a capitulation to Castroism would take place, as before it had happened with Stalinism. Unfortunately, so it was. The majority

of the USec soon gave for Latin America the disastrous orientation that Trotskyists centre their activity on the peasantry and rural guerrillas. Later on, they changed it for the orientation of making urban guerrilla. In brief, they completely yielded to Castroism.

Thus began a very strong discussion, led by Moreno. The same occurred mainly around Argentina itself and Bolivia, countries where the orientation given by the majority of the USec caused greater havoc.

The Argentine party had strengthened again by patiently developing their work in the labour and student movements.

Since the late 1950s onwards successive tiers of comrades entered the party, who started to become cadres and leaders. Some of them, who worked closely with Moreno at different times, were Eduardo Exposito, Satchmann, Anibal Tesoro, Arturo Gomez, Lombardi, Alejandro Dabat, Cesar Robles, Alberto Pujals, Nora Ciapponi, Aldo Romero, Mercedes Petit, Roberto Ramirez, Alba, Eugenio Greco, Silvia Diaz, Miguel Sorans, Mario Doglio, Marina, Orlando, Luis Pujals, Bonet, Ritita, Lidia, Pestaña, Armando, Cabezon and others. In 1965, the party merged with a student group called FRIP, active in the north of the country and led by Roberto Santucho. Thus it formed the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (PRT – Revolutionary Workers' Party), whose newspaper was called *La Verdad* [The Truth]. But two years later, due to the pressure of Castroism and the majority of the USec, the party broke again. This time the division was deeper because it dragged many cadres and militants. Santucho left, amidst a

hard factional struggle, forming the PRT (*Combatiente*) to make guerrillas. Its armed wing would be the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Revolutionary Army – ERP). Joining Santucho were Lagar and Daniel Pereyra, fresh out of a Peruvian prison; and promising cadres and leaders, as Dabat, Lombardi, Bonet, Luis Pujals and others.

The majority of the United Secretariat, who had driven them in their struggle within the PRT, recognised them as an official section. They stamped their seal of approval to send them to political disaster and death.

Moreno once again clung to the principles and resisted the blow. He was left at the head of a party again weakened — the PRT (*La Verdad*). He remained within the USec, where he made a bloc with the

SWP, to fight the guerrilla and ultra-left capitulation. Once again, the ERP official section and Moreno a sympathiser!

As a balance of this fight, Moreno wrote his book "*A Scandalous Document*",<sup>1</sup> published in 1974. The book, which polemises with Mandel, is a summary of the differences with guerrillaism and ultra-leftism and a guide for party building. Known as "The Morenazo", the text has been studied by Trotskyist cadres throughout the world and gave the theoretical, political and methodological basis for building the strong world Trotskyist current, which Moreno would spearhead.

<sup>1</sup> Later on published under the title "*The Party and the Revolution: Theory, program and policy — A polemic with Mandel*", and available in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

## The acknowledgement of Hugo Blanco

Hugo Blanco, the leader of the Peruvian peasantry, is surely the best known Latin American Trotskyist personality. In the 1960s, he led a large agrarian mobilisation in southern Peru. He thus applied, through Moreno's direct inspiration, the method of promoting the mobilisation of the masses that had learned in the *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* [Workers Revolutionary Party] of Argentina.

In his book "*Land or Death*", Blanco told that "it was in the Argentine Trotskyist party, among whose leaders Nahuel Moreno was prominent, where I received my Marxist education".

In the same book, referring to the guerrilla deviation that nearly destroyed his party (the Front of the Revolutionary Left), Hugo Blanco said: "The merit of having reacted first and starting a serious fight against this deviation corresponds to Comrade Nahuel Moreno, the main theoretician of Latin American Trotskyism".

Away from our current for many years due to serious political differences, upon the death of Moreno, Hugo Blanco sent the following message: "With great surprise and sorrow I have learned today of the death of Comrade Nahuel.



Hugo Blanco being taken to Court

"I recognise in him my greatest teacher of Marxism and I have always acknowledged him so, despite the vicissitudes of the revolutionary struggle that for years have separated our ways.

"Latin America has lost a tireless and intelligent fighter of the revolution. When we come to the triumph, one of the names remembered in the future will undoubtedly be Nahuel Moreno.

"I hope the MAS succeed in its struggle for the revolution, which will be the best way to honour the memory of Nahuel.

"Until the final victory.

"Hugo Blanco."



Nahuel Moreno speaking in the rally after the massacre of Pacheco

## Chapter VII

# The PST

The Argentine party was, as we have seen, hit by the split of the guerrilla wing. In addition, in 1966 Onganía's military coup had forced it to retreat into clandestinity.

Under these conditions, Moreno again did as usual. He had heard in the Peruvian prison that police used the term "comb" to designate the search, house by house, of activists. Similarly, Moreno pushed the party to "comb" the factories, in search of activists, during those years of retreat. In addition, many cadres continued going to jobs as labourers and made their experience as factory leaders.

Moreno put its best efforts to help the cadres and build with them a leadership team. He had infinite patience, supporting them in all circumstances and discussing with each, their experiences and problems of any kind.

Thus, the party mended itself and, in the late 1960s, was in a good position to seize the opportunities that would be presented.

As always, Moreno was the first to "sniff" where the process would come from. In 1968 in France took place events known as the French May, which enabled a great leap to the Trotskyists, and to form the powerful Revolutionary Communist League. From these facts, Moreno came, among others, to the conclusion that there was a need to pay priority attention to the student movement because from there would be an uprising and the party would advance.

The party concentrated militants in universities and was quite ready for the growth of struggles, first student and then workers, that took place.

In 1969 broke out a series of semi-insurrections, the largest of which was the Cordobazo, which marked the beginning of the end of the dictatorship.

The new Argentine uprising would be, as Moreno said, "the test of two lines". Before the Cordobazo, Castroism and Mandelism sent the cadres and activism

out of the factories and universities, to take them to the countryside to prepare the rural guerrillas. Moreno, however, called to concentrate on the workers and student movement, where it would come — and it came — the mass struggle.

After the Cordobazo, Castroism and Mandelism called to hide in clandestinity, because the dictatorship was to repress and to prepare the guerrillas, now urban. Moreno, instead, called to use all vestiges of democratic freedoms that the mass struggle was imposing.

To achieve this, he had to push the inertia of his own party — accustomed to clandestinity — and with a group of university, militants opened the first semi-legal premises, under the guise of a student cooperative.

With the same courage and drive, next Moreno's party unified with a left faction detached from the Socialist Party and headed by Juan Carlos Coral. Thus the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (PST – Socialist Workers Party) was founded in 1972.

After getting 40,000 affiliations and the corresponding legality, in the second round of the 1973 elections, the PST reached 180,000 votes, at a time when the CP and the guerrillas called to support Peronism.

The PST began the electoral process as a virtually unknown party. And it came out spread throughout the country, with 50 premises and several thousand militants respected by the working class.

### Key years

The years 1974 to 1976 were decisive for Moreno and the party.

Personally, Moreno suffered the painful blow of the death of Rita, his wife. She became ill in late 1973. Confirmed the diagnosis of cancer, she was operated. Moreno remained at her side and for that reason he did not attend the X Congress of the Fourth International. An exciting



Nahuel Moreno, Juan Carlos Coral, and Arturo Gomez



Rally of the PST in the stadium of the Argentine Box Federation, 1974



Rally of the PST in the stadium of the Argentine Box Federation, 1974



Attack against the PST premises in La Plata, 11 October 1974

struggle for life, which both of them fought accompanied by their children and comrades, then began. But death was stronger.

Rita died in August 1974. Her funeral was held in the party's central headquarters — on 24 November Street in Buenos Aires — and she was farewelled by the militancy.

The party would suffer other equally painful blows. The PST had been showing its fibre taking part at the head of the struggles.

In that tragic year of 1974, the Peronist government organised the Triple A and vigilante groups proliferated. Its first three killed were militants of the PST, who, weapons in hand, defended the premises in General Pacheco — working class area in the north of the Great Buenos Aires — from fascist attacks. Many more comrades would fall.

In November 1974, the Triple A black peppered with bullets “Black” Cesar Robles, after he was chased down the street and picked up in a police car.

The following year, in the Massacre of La Plata eight militants, who were participating in the strike of Petroquímica, were killed. And in May 1976 it occurred, at age 38, the unexpected death of Arturo Gomez, from a heart attack. He was the secretary-general of the party and fell by overwork and stress.

It was one blow after another.

The party, closing ranks around its principles and traditions, honoured and mourned its dear dead ones, in large public events, with clenched teeth and fists.

The losses of “Black” Cesar and Arturo were an irrecoverable blow in another sense. They were two of the most prominent leaders of the new generation, and Arturo at that time was the hub of the party leadership. With his death, the slow and laborious task to which Moreno was committed, of building a new leadership team, was extremely hampered.

Moreno drew strength from weakness. Overcoming his grief and his personal crisis, he faced two colossal tasks that were opening. One, conducted by the foreign affairs commission of the PST, was to travel and establish ties with other parties and Trotskyist groups in the world, extending to them the discussions that Moreno had done in the USec. Alberto Pujals, Eduardo Exposito, Aldo Romero, “Black” Andres, Eugenio Greco, Mario Doglio among others, and Moreno himself travelled to Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and more countries, laying the groundwork to form a principled tendency in Fourth International.

Among the first comrades who were won in Europe was the Italian Dario “della minoranza”.

Mainly at the service of this international task, *Revista de America* was published in Buenos Aires, under the direction of Moreno.

Another task, within the country, was preparing the party to go underground. Moreno was on the list of the first sentenced to death by the Triple A.

The entire party leadership and many cadres were also marked. When the threats of different coups were added to this, the



Column of the Advanced Socialist Youth (JSA) of the PST, 1974

decision to move, first partially and then totally, underground, was adopted.

Thus, when the genocidal dictatorship of Videla was installed in power, in 1976, the PST was on guard: the militants had safe houses and there were three printing presses prepared to perform even under the military.

In this, the two lines were also tested.

The bloodbath unleashed by the dictatorship ended with the tragic and courageous guerrilla experiences. Their organisations were half destroyed and their militants kidnapped, killed and imprisoned.

The PST also suffered. It lost more than 100 militants including “Cabezon”, of

the national leadership, and hundreds were arrested and tortured.

Dozens spent years in prison; among them, Jose Francisco Paez, workers’ leader of the Cordobazo and member of the MAS leadership.

But unlike the ERP and Montoneros, the PST resisted and when the dictatorship fell, transformed into the MAS, becoming the largest left party of Argentina.

At the same time, their leading cadres made a decisive contribution to creating a global revolutionary current. The class struggle gave its verdict. The two lines were tested.

Moreno was right.

## The historic role of the Fourth International

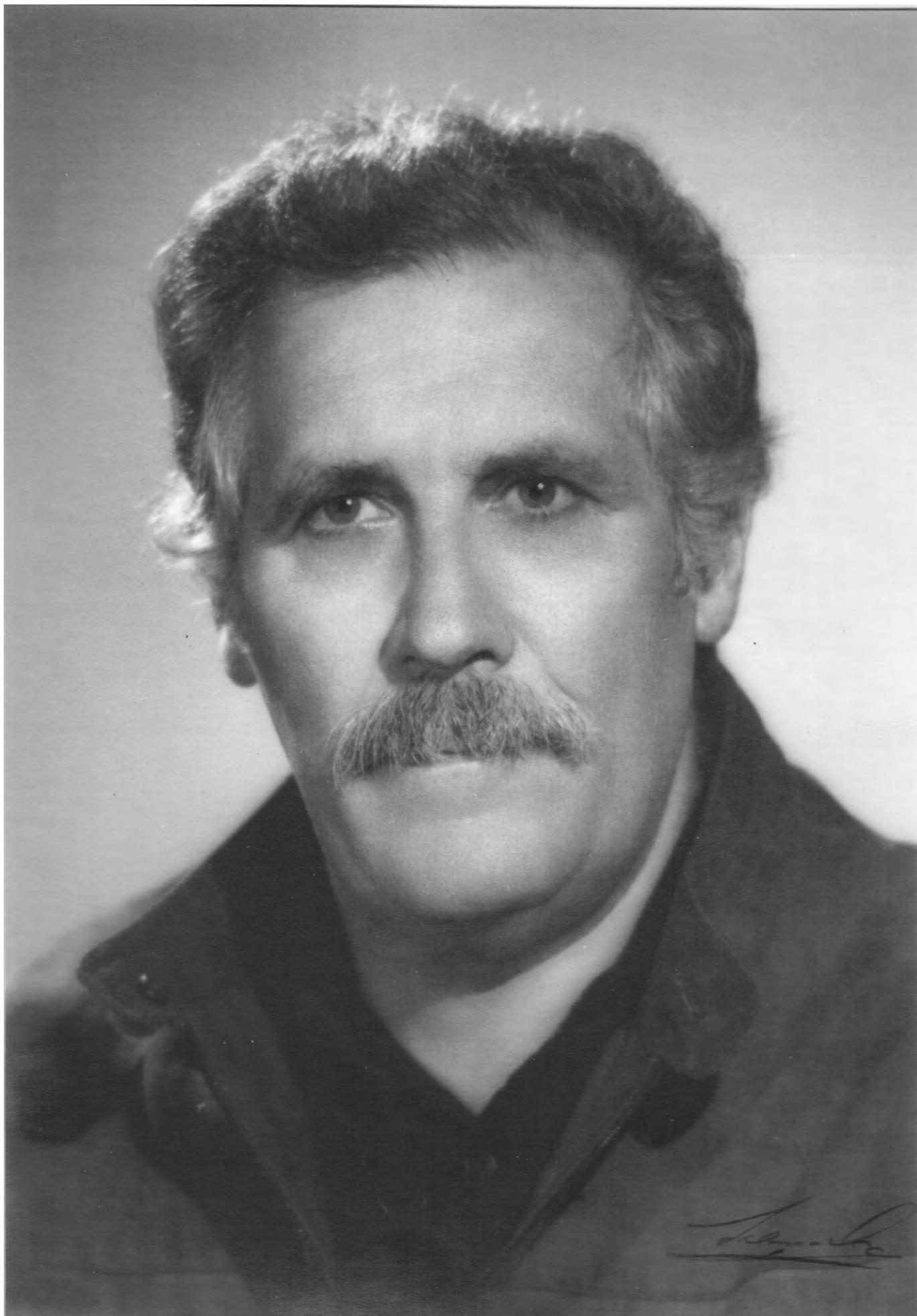
In the context of the polemic with the majority of the leadership of the Fourth International on the eve of the Tenth Congress (1974), Moreno produced a long paper entitled “A scandalous document”. The last page offers us a brief summary, the Moreno position on the historic role of the Trotskyist International.

“We’re done. We just have to make a clarification. Building a world revolutionary workers party is, as we have said, the greatest task that has ever been posed to human beings. For its vastness and for the very powerful enemies it faces, it is a very long and very arduous task. We are a handful of militants, who face, with the only moral weapon of our unconditional and blind faith in the mass movement and the working class, imperialism and the bureaucracy: a class and a caste who have concentrated in their hands the largest power ever known to humanity.

“The new comrades who just now learn, amid a tough and violent argument between two factions of all the previous fights, even more harsh and violent, the new comrades who see that we are facing a new crisis, the new comrades who see the tremendous amount of mistakes made by the Fourth International in the last twenty years, these new comrades have every right to ask, and many do, why to stay in this International. We want to answer the following: what we have experienced so far is the prehistory of the World Revolutionary Workers Party. Despite all its mistakes, this International has had a huge merit: in the midst of the fiercest persecution of the bourgeoisie and the Stalinist bureaucracy, it has preserved for the workers and mass

movement all the experience gained in over a century of struggles. An experience whose loss would have delayed the development of the socialist revolution by several decades. An experience that is synthesised in a theory, that of the permanent revolution, in a program, the transitional program and in an organisation, the Leninist–Trotskyist party. By the mere fact of having preserved these tools of the struggle of the workers and mass movement, even this is a prehistoric stage in the history of mankind.

“But now we are leaving prehistory and entering into the history of the Fourth International. The mass movement has entered the most colossal rise ever known; the world capitalist system, imperialism, is still struggling in one dramatic deepening crisis, which expresses its decline and eventual putrefaction; decades of experience of the masses with Stalinism and reformism gets them increasingly closer to breaking with them. No longer is there a historical obstacle between the Fourth International and the masses: since 1968 we are able to start building Trotskyist parties with mass influence anywhere in the world. No longer is the World Revolutionary Workers Party only a historical necessity of this transitional stage: the objective bases already exist to build it. And all those errors, divisions and bitter arguments of the past and present, are but the birth pains of this world party with mass influence. The Fourth International we know is, at once, the embryo and the midwife of that party. So we are in it and so we will continue in it.



## Chapter VIII

# Time of exile

The military coup forced Moreno to make decisions about his own location and that of the party leaders.

In Argentina, a gruelling period began when the slogan was to resist. Meanwhile, in other countries, as we have seen, there were open conditions to advance in the construction of the world party and its national sections.

The international task, requiring travel, telephones and correspondence could not be done in clandestinity. Where to settle, then, to devote himself to international work and at the same time closely help the PST?

It could not be in Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile or Uruguay, countries known and loved by Moreno but which were infested with dictatorships.

He opted, finally, for Colombia, because there he had established political contact with a centrist group — the Socialist Bloc — formed by university professors and students, of leading conduct in the university struggles of the late 1960s.

Trying to adapt to tropical customs, learning to eat with rice, potatoes and bananas, and, most importantly, studying a country whose class struggle, different from the Southern Cone, mixed old peasants and popular movements with workers' struggles, Moreno settled in Bogota.

More Argentine leaders and cadres arrived with Moreno or shortly after — Mercedes, Greco, Ritita, Lidia, Roberto, Silvia, the Uruguayan “*Black*” Andres. Meanwhile, Mario Doglio, Aldo Romero and Alberto Pujals went to Europe, Eduardo Exposito to Peru, and Jorge Guidobono to Colombia. At the same time, more than a hundred cadres of the Argentine party travelled to different countries to build the international current, as part of the same policy.

To Bogota also came Amelia, Moreno's partner, with their daughter Clarita, a few months old. Arturo, their fourth child, was born in Colombia in 1978.

The family was completed with the arrival of his children David and, later, Eleonora and husband Hannibal, with grandchildren Hernan and Sebastian.

Almost all of them ended up living in a tower block of downtown Bogota. In the local political jargon, these towers were called Beijing, because they had been inhabited by Maoists. With the presence of the Argentines, they became Alma Ata (where Trotsky was confined in 1927).

Moreno moved to Bogota Editorial Pluma, founded in Buenos Aires before the coup. There it became the largest Trotskyist editor in the Spanish language.

While dealing with getting some basic things for an Argentine exile — the griddle grill to cook steaks, yerba mate, caramel jam — Moreno and the comrades launched into the battle to win the Socialist Bloc for the Fourth International, in a country where there was very little Trotskyist tradition.

Moreno achieved it quickly. With an honesty that honours him, the Colombian Mandelist leader Libardo Gonzalez paid tribute to Moreno, after his death, acknowledging him as: “One of the pillars of Trotskyism not only in Argentina but in Latin America and the world. In Colombia, we who had been pushing Trotskyism for over 15 years never were able to achieve what Comrade Moreno did when he managed to lead a centrist organisation, the Socialist Bloc to the Trotskyist positions”.

If for Moreno the Argentine PST was his natural party, the Socialist Bloc became his adopted party. In its construction, he put the same passion and effort, teaching their members to be internationalists and go to the shanty towns of Bogota, Cali, Medellin and Barranquilla.

With successes, failures and lessons learned, the Socialist Bloc — aided by some Argentine comrades who took to be active permanently with the Colombians — was consolidated and could have a major intervention in the event that divided in two the history of that country: the national civic strike of 1977, the first general strike



An outing with comrades of the Colombian PST, near Bogota, 1978



Nahuel Moreno playing with his children, Clara and Arturo, near Bogota

in Colombia, with which a revolutionary situation began.

Thanks to this great success, a few days after the strike, the comrades of the Bloc formed the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (Socialist Workers Party). The public act of its founding congress brought together 3,500 attendees and the Party exceeded 500 militants.

Soon the Colombian PST joined the Argentine PST to build the international current. Its leaders participated in the development of policy and some, like Eduardo, Kemel George, Camilo Gonzalez, Jaime Galarza, Ricardo Sanchez and others would travel abroad, including Argentina, to assist in party building.

### The Bolshevik Faction

For 20 years Moreno had tried, unsuccessfully, to build with the SWP an alternate leadership for the Fourth International. The American party was opposed to a centralised International and ended up yielding to Mandelism.

Subsequently, the political differences kept increasing. In the American Trotskyists, of whom Moreno had considered himself a disciple, there was a degenerative process in underway, with the loss of proletarian traditions.

The paths of Moreno and the SWP finished separating with the differences caused by the Portuguese Revolution of 1974, with which the revolutionary wave strongly shook Europe.

Unfortunately, the SWP degenerated to become a news agency in the service of Fidel Castro. After Hansen's death, its leaders reneged of Trotskyism, although they continued in the USec, with Mandel.

For the first time in his life, Moreno was left alone as the only historic leader of the Fourth International who continued to defend the principled program. But in inverse proportion to that loneliness in the heights, its current strengthened from below.

In 1976, Moreno founded in Bogota the Bolshevik Tendency, which becomes two years later in Bolshevik Faction (BF), to contest the leadership of the Fourth International.

Moreno's Bolshevik Faction grouped 80 percent of the forces that, within the USec, had opposed the ultra-left and

guerrilla deviation. The SWP could only keep the left over minority.

The BF gathered around 20 parties and groups, almost all of them in Latin America — where the crucial fight against the guerrilla and ultraleftism had taken place — but with open bridgeheads in Spain, Italy, Sweden, Portugal, Germany and Greece.

Within the BF, the Argentine PST, although it was the worst moment of the genocidal persecution, remained a solid foundation.

The Colombian PST was booming and began to contribute to the international work.

The same happened with the Brazilian party. Its origin dated back to 1970 when Moreno won for Trotskyism Zeze and a group of exiles in Chile. Already in Brazil, they gathered 500 members, with immense prospects. And one of its leaders, Antenor, had joined the international work.

In Peru, the party had helped to form a workers and peasants front, the celebrated *Frente Obrero Campesino del Perú* (Workers Peasants Front of Peru – FOCEP), which managed 400,000 votes —12 percent of the electorate — despite the fraud and won three parliamentarians. On that front were: Hugo Blanco, who had adhered to the SWP line; Ricardo Napuri, who later became one of the founders of the IWL (FI); and Enrique Fernandez, of the FB, one of the youth Moreno had won when he was in the prisons of Lima.

The success achieved by Peruvian Trotskyism with the FOCEP was another sign of the immense possibilities open to become a mass party. The votes obtained on that occasion by Hugo Blanco were the recognition of his fight at the head of the peasants.

Moreno and the BF immediately sent leaders and cadres to help.

With the BF, Moreno began to form a genuine international leadership, made up of comrades from different countries. This fledgling leadership was able to successfully promote centralised international activities.

One of them was in 1978, when Moreno was jailed in Sao Paulo, Brazil, together with the leadership of the Brazilian party and Portuguese Comrade Antonio. All the Fourth International then claimed for his life and freedom, as the Brazilian

military could send him to Argentina, where he would have been at the mercy of Videla's dictatorship.

The campaign won numerous pronouncements of parties, personalities and trade unions organisations in the Americas and Europe. Months later, Moreno was released, although the government banned him from re-entering Brazil.

### The Simon Bolivar Brigade

The Nicaraguan Revolution produced in 1979 a new tremor. Once again, a guerrilla movement, after struggling in isolation for a long time, went on to lead a triumphant insurrection of the masses.

This time, Moreno was not unprepared; he had learned from Cuba. In addition, he had the BF, which showed the capacity to take action.

Moreno and the BF had been calling since 1977 to support the struggle of the Sandinistas. In Nicaragua, there was virtually no Trotskyism. With great audacity, Moreno then proposed forming an international brigade of fighters, rescuing the example of the volunteers who had fought in the Spanish Civil War. It was now about joining the armed struggle against Somoza, under the military command of Sandinism. Thus the Simon Bolivar Brigade was born. It was an example of how Trotskyism, correctly oriented, can and should intervene in this kind of revolutions.

The Simon Bolivar Brigade assembled a united front of volunteers under the leadership of the Trotskyists. With a broad appeal, they achieved the sympathy of various sectors opposing the dictator Somoza. In Bogota, where it was organised, one of the most important journalists of the bourgeois press, Daniel Samper, wrote his much-discussed article "*People are needed*", reprinting the call of the PST and the BF. The PST offices were filled with volunteers, many of whom came from other countries. Fifteen hundred enrolled. A commission took their details; another made the medical examination, and another directed the military training in the hills surrounding the Colombian capital.

Meanwhile, artists donated works and unions collected money, food and medicine. And the BF started a recruitment

of volunteers in various Latin American countries.

Argentinian Miguel Sorans and Nora Ciapponi, and Colombian Kemel George and Camilo Gonzalez assumed command of the Brigade. A group of the brigade came to fight in Nicaragua, on the Southern Front under the command of the Sandinista commander Eden Pastora, the same that years later defected and became head of the "contra". There, the Brigade had three fatalities.

Another group of the brigade departed from Costa Rica and took the Nicaraguan port of Bluefields, seizing it from the Somoza followers. On 19 July 1979, the Brigade entered triumphantly into Managua, received by the people and by the Sandinistas.

The weekly newspaper *El Socialista*, of the Colombian PST, had gone on to sell nearly 20,000 copies weekly, with direct news from the war front. In Bogota, a direct telex service to Managua had been installed, by which Moreno discussed all the steps with Kemel, Camilo, Nora and Eduardo.

The Sandinistas did not want to further deepen the revolution. They did not repeat what Castro and Che had done when 20 years earlier expropriated the bourgeoisie and sought to extend the revolution, but they took Castro's advice of today: compromise with the bourgeoisie and imperialism.

For the Sandinistas, the Brigade committed the Trotskyist sin of calling to advance to socialism, of having organised more than 80 trade unions in a few days and having promoted the workers and popular armament. The brigade members were arrested, put on a plane and handed over to the Panamanian police.

### Crossroads

The majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, which did not support the Sandinistas when fighting Somoza, did afterwards what it always has done — when the Sandinistas triumphed, they ran to lie at their feet. They joined the bourgeois chorus which applauded the expulsion of the brigade and decreed a ban on BF militants acting in Central America.

It was a crossroads for Moreno. In 1969 and 1974, in the IX and the X Congress of

the International, he had to endure, that with factional and bureaucratic criteria, the USec decreed that the Argentine PST was a sympathiser section, while officially recognised the guerrillas. But now it was infinitely more serious: the USec supported the persecution of Trotskyists, lacking proletarian morality, and forbidding the very existence of Trotskyism.

Moreno and the BF made the decision to break with the USec.

After the Brigade and the breakup with the USec, the BF continued to spread. It displaced the USec throughout Latin America, excluding Mexico, was introduced in Nicaragua and throughout Central America and thanks to some brigadiers who had come from Los Angeles, the American section was founded.

### In Paris

At the same time, Moreno was able to establish an agreement with Frenchman Pierre Lambert. The latter led a traditionally sectarian current, which had been left out of the life of the International, since many years before. His party was the *Organisation Communiste Internationaliste* (OCI — Internationalist Communist Organisation) of France and had some leaders and small parties in other countries. Lambert had a correct analysis and a fair policy on Nicaragua, similar to those of the BF, and condemned the USec for its disregard of Trotskyist principles. He agreed with the programmatic theses, written by Moreno, and accepted his proposal to create a democratic and centralist world organisation.

Moreno was filled with great joy. Finally, a principled agreement with another historic leader of Trotskyism! Finally a truly global party! Because the prospects considered by Moreno were immense.

The BF, with its weight in Latin America, and the OIC, with its weight in France, could be the springboard to spread throughout the Old Continent. Especially in the workers' states— in the restive Poland Solidarity had been born — of which Moreno expected in the near future major parties to emerge moving towards Trotskyism. The unification was made at a Congress in Paris, where the new organisation was founded, it was called Fourth International – International

Committee (FI-IC). Considering the dream of quickly implementing principled Trotskyism in Europe, the cradle of Marxism and one of the strongest working classes of the world, Moreno settled in Paris in 1980.

He was accompanied by his family and some leaders of the BF (Camilo, Aldo, Roberto). The others remained in Colombia and in their countries. While they settled (children, grandchildren, second-hand furniture, rent), Moreno got himself checked by cardiologists and continued medical treatment. In Bogota, he had suffered his first severe chest pain. But the dream quickly vanished. In the elections of 1981 Social Democrat François Mitterrand won, inaugurating a popular front government at the service of the French imperialist bourgeoisie. Lambert and the OCI had a capitulatory policy to that government. They still have it.

Moreno and the Bolshevik Fraction called to open the discussion. It was not possible. Lambert prevented it bureaucratically and came to expel from his party the militants who agreed to discuss, and forbidding any exchange with the BF comrades. One of the main leaders of his current, Peruvian Ricardo Napuri, was accused by him of refusing to contribute the salary he earned as a senator. For Moreno, who had already returned to Bogota, the attack on the morals of a Trotskyist was a matter of principle. His whole life had reacted the same way, even with more strength when the attacked did not belong to his party.

When Healy slandered Hansen — fact occurred after the breakdown of political relations with the SWP — Moreno came to the defence of Comrade Hansen asking for a moral court. He did the same this time with Napuri. Moreno called for a tribunal, formed by anti-imperialist personalities, unsuspected of any partiality towards Lambert, the BF or Napuri, to establish whether or not he contributed his parliamentary allowance to the party.

The tribunal was established, investigated and established that Napuri contributed. He had been slandered to prevent democratic discussion among Trotskyists, on the capitulation of the OCI to Mitterrand.

Despite the failure, the brief alliance with Lambertism meant, for Moreno, one more step towards the formation of the

International Workers League – Fourth International (IWL-FI).

# EL TIEMPO

62 PAGINAS — 4 SECCIONES — VALOR \$ 8.00 17 de Junio de 1979

Reloj

## Necesítase gente

Bogotá (Colombia)

Por DANIEL SAMPER PIZANO



En la calle 17 No. 4-49, oficina 201, de Bogotá, están necesitando gente. No dan trabajo ni prometen enriquecer aspirantes de la noche a la mañana a través de la venta de enciclopedias. Lo único que ofrecen es la posibilidad de perder la vida, someterse a riesgos e incomodidades y llevar durante un tiempo incierto, una vida llena de peligros. A cambio, solo brindan la oportunidad de luchar por la liberación de un pueblo. En ese lugar funciona la oficina de reclutamiento de combatientes colombianos que quieren voluntariamente alistarse en la lucha armada contra la dictadura de Anastasio Somoza en Nicaragua.

Organizada por el Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, uno de los varios grupos izquierdistas de Colombia, la oficina promueve, selecciona y coordina la integración de la Brigada Simón Bolívar. Como en épocas de la guerra civil española, se trata de reunir esfuerzos internacionales para combatir la máquina genocida que ha montado Somoza contra su pueblo. Varios países americanos han empezado a mandar sus refuerzos. Desde el Perú, las juventudes del APRA han enviado contingentes de voluntarios al frente sandinista. Desde Costa Rica se han sumado cientos de jóvenes ricos. Desde Panamá, encabezados por un exviceministro de Salud, han salido varios batallones de improvisados guerrilleros. Todos van a reforzar la lucha de los nicaragüenses contra la dictadura. Muy pronto, en las unidades del Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, habrá también antioqueños, bogotanos, tolimenses, caucanos que han resuelto prestar su brazo a una causa que hace rato dejó de ser nicaragüense y se ha vuelto americana.

El martes de esta semana se abrieron en Colombia las inscripciones de la brigada. El miércoles ya había 40 aspirantes, todos ellos provenientes de los cuadros del PST. El jueves se anunció por la prensa el nacimiento del batallón. El viernes pasaban de 80 los inscritos. La semana que hoy empieza saldrán los primeros colombianos hacia un país de Centroamérica donde se colocarán bajo la dirección militar del Frente Sandinista.

Entre ellos estará "Eduardo", un combatiente de 28 años que estudió publicidad y ahora trabaja en una fábrica. También "Patricia", empleada de un medio de prensa de Bogotá, de 23 años y, hasta hace dos, estudiante universitaria. Y "Francisco", de 33 años, profesor en una universidad de Bogotá.

Dentro de algunos días también viajará el coordinador del programa, Luis Carlos Valencia, un abogado popayanajo de 27 años que ha sido nombrado algo así como coronel de la brigada Casado, sin hijos, graduado en la Universidad del Cauca en 1973. Valencia es por ahora el único voluntario que la brigada identifica con su verdadero nombre. Nunca ha manejado un arma, es tipo pacífico y tranquilo, pero está convencido de que se necesita la solidaridad internacional para tumbar a Somoza. "Somoza caerá —dice—, pero es difícil saber cuánto más va a durar. Esto depende de la actitud de Estados Unidos, el avance sandinista y la solidaridad internacional con el pueblo nicaragüense. Pero yo no voy a luchar simplemente porque sepa que Somoza caerá tarde o temprano, sino porque allí se define la suerte de la revolución en América y en los países bolivarianos".

Valencia nunca ha estado en Costa Rica, Panamá ni Nicaragua. Tendrá que pasar primero por un período de entrenamiento para el combate en los campamentos sandinistas, porque en Colombia la brigada se limita a reclutar voluntarios, someterlos a una selección y enviarlos a Centroamérica.

"Aquí no tenemos armas ni uniformes —aclara—, solamente una oficina y pasajes. El que se aliste, tendrá que viajar con el vestido que lleve puesto". Los organizadores de la brigada, con Valencia a la cabeza, están tratando de canalizar toda la ayuda posible para Nicaragua. Reciben combatientes. Y reciben donaciones para enviar a los combatientes. Después de que sean despachados los primeros contingentes, Valencia irá tras ellos. Y luchará al lado de los sandinistas como guerrillero.

El y su partido, sin embargo, no creen en una solución de guerrilla para Colombia. "Rechazamos el guerrillismo y el terrorismo individual, y reafirmamos que solamente la lucha de masas acelera la revolución", sostiene. "En Nicaragua sí hay una verdadera lucha de masas, es el pueblo entero el que combate a Somoza desde las trincheras, por eso somos consecuentes al sumarnos a él en ese terreno".

Entre los primeros voluntarios inscritos hay de todo. Desde una maestra hasta un antiguo militante de Anapo. Los coordinadores de la brigada, empero, son muy celosos en la selección. No solo se necesita tener físico adecuado para el combate, sino también suficiente motivación política, aunque no necesariamente se exige ser marxista.

"Estamos seguros —dice Valencia— de que contaremos con libertos conscientes". Lo que se trata es de filtrar aventureros, maníacos y personajes de dudosa condición, como un par de "aspirantes" del primer día que evidentemente cumplían funciones de espionaje.

En la calle 17 No. 4-49, oficina 201, están necesitando gente. Gente que esté dispuesta a tomar un fusil contra la dictadura de Somoza, o gente que quiera ayudar de cualquier otra manera a la lucha del pueblo nicaragüense. Es la oficina de reclutamiento de la Brigada Simón Bolívar.

ALFONSO WILLAGAS RE STELLER, Fundador  
30 de noviembre 1917 - 19 de marzo de 1984  
EDUARDO SANTORO, Gerente jefe de 1973  
Gerente  
Jairo Rodríguez, Gerente 1973 - Septiembre 1976  
Abelardo Escobar, Gerente 1976 - Junio de 1980  
Jorge Carlos Cortés, Gerente 1980 - Agosto 1980  
ROBERTO GARCÍA PENA, Director  
REYNALDO GARCÍA CASTAÑO, Subdirector  
Gerente: Luisa María Nájera  
Subgerente: Luis Fernando Sotoca

Daniel Samper — from *El Tiempo*, the main newspaper in Bogotá — whose columns were some of the most read in the country, supported the formation of the Simon Bolivar Brigade. The following day the premises of the PST were filled with volunteers wanting to fight in Nicaragua



Two scenes from the arrival of the Simon Bolivar Brigade in Bluefields. In the right photo and next to the Jeep, the Argentinian Miguel Sorans and the Costa Rican Marvin Wright

## Chapter IX

# The party and the International

The IWL-FI was founded in Bogota, in January 1982, to tie the historical thread cut by Pablo in 1951, by Mandel and the USec in 1979 and by Lambert in 1981.

In the foundation participated, in addition to the forces of the former Bolshevik Faction, the two leading public figures of Lambertism, the Comrades Napuri and Franceschi, and a small but important group of US Trotskyists.

Venezuelan Alberto Franceschi had been a senior leader of the Revolutionary Left Movement, an important force in his country. And Peruvian Ricardo Napuri was the founder of Revolutionary Vanguard, a powerful pro-Castro party that reached mass influence. Almost as a 50-year-old Napuri joined Trotskyism. Along with Franceschi, they abandoned Lambertism for their capitulation to Mitterrand. Both joined the IWL-FI, accompanied by most of the Lambertist militants in Venezuela and Peru.

For Moreno, it was imperative to establish a centralised global organisation to take advantage of the "epoch of Trotskyism".

The IWL-FI was a higher challenge for Moreno. No longer was it a matter, as with the previous Bolshevik Faction, of making an opposition grouping within the United Secretariat, but making alone, as a historic leader, an independent party, with its own statutes, program, policy, finance, and magazine and leadership team.

On the other hand, a thing that filled Moreno with joy, the IWL-FI was really something new, as it synthesised his long working class and internationalist career with other rich and diverse experiences, such as those provided by Napuri and Franceschi.

Like any birth, the birth of IWL-FI was costly. There was a big discussion because

some comrades considered it premature to make a centralised party and proposed to build a lax federation grouping the various national parties.

Finally, delegates from 18 parties present approved founding the IWL-FI. However, some time later, the Colombian leader Camilo Gonzalez and Italian comrades of the Revolutionary Socialist League left. Moreno had the joy, in 1986, on his last trip to Europe, to reunite with the Italians, who are again approaching the ranks of the IWL-FI.

Moreno was in all the debates. But the very day that the foundation was voted, he had to stay in bed, because of his heart. Three years later, in Buenos Aires, a similar fact would be repeated when Moreno was forced to retire from the Congress of the MAS.

Moreno saw the IWL-FI as "a place of defence and growth of Trotskyism". For him, the "long march" of the Fourth International, from 1948 onwards, had allowed a vast advance of Trotskyism worldwide. Despite its mistakes and its revisionist deviation, it was the world's only political current that gave correct Marxist answers to the new phenomena of the class struggle.

The "long march" finally solidified, within Trotskyism, two international currents: the USec and the IWL-FI.

Although the IWL-FI was, since many years before, the most dynamic current, Moreno never thought he was at the end of the road. He always felt it was still far from great workers' party of the world revolution. IWL-FI only had strength in Latin America and lacked a significant presence in Europe.

Therefore, Moreno tirelessly encouraged unity with the revolutionary currents that break with the bureaucratic apparatuses, stressing that this is the only



way to go towards a Fourth International with mass influence.

Moreno considered the IWL-FI as a part, the principled part, of Trotskyism. He believed that overcoming the crisis of the Fourth International will be achieved thanks to the IWL-FI, but never thought that the IWL-FI alone could be proclaimed Fourth International. Until the last day of his life he fought for the unity of principled Trotskyists, in a centralised global organisation. Thus, with his tired heart, he travelled to Europe in November 1986 to meet with the leaders of the Workers Revolutionary Party of Great Britain, some of them acquaintances of 30 or 40 years, as Bill Hunter.

The foundation of the IWL-FI once again confirmed what Moreno had seen many times before — Trotskyism cannot achieve any major national triumph unless it is part of an international organisation regardless of how weak it may be.

Thanks to the Fourth International, the GOM managed to take a leap in 1948. Thanks to the reunification of 1963 French Trotskyism could make a great party like the *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (Revolutionary Communist League – LCR), after the French May. Now, thanks to the IWL-FI, the Argentine party could take another big leap: the MAS.

### Back home

The Argentine General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri never thought his decision to send the army to recover the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands, on 2 April 1982, would trigger a war with Anglo-Yankee imperialism, provoke the uprising of the Argentine people and workers and unleash a continental anti-imperialist mobilisation. Two months later he had to surrender to Margaret Thatcher and in Buenos Aires, to the enraged masses.

When the cables transmitted the start of hostilities in the Malvinas, there was a stir in the offices of the IWL-FI.

At the same time, Moreno in Bogota and the PST in Buenos Aires drew the line: they had to be in the same trench of the dictator Galtieri against imperialism, without abandoning the struggle to overthrow the military.

The PST put itself at the forefront of the revolutionary mobilisations of these

days. In parallel, the IWL-FI promoted the anti-imperialist movement in the entire continent. Its highest point was achieved in Peru, with a demonstration of 150,000 people. Meanwhile, Franceschi and Napuri travelled to Buenos Aires representing the IWL-FI.

The war ended, dragging behind the dictatorship.

In the entire Southern Cone, the same was happening. We were facing a great process of democratic revolution that opened the way to the socialist revolution. And in Argentina, there was the possibility to build, in the medium term, a party with mass influence. There, the PST concentrated a history of 40 years of struggles.

In July 1982 the Executive Committee of the IWL-FI met and Moreno proposed for him to travel to Argentina and for the entire Argentine international leadership and militants in exile to do the same later.

Moreno left immediately. Earlier, at a meeting with Argentine leaders, he proposed that the PST — banned by the dictatorship — adopt the name MAS.

Thus began the final five years of Moreno, in which his heart was giving in proportion to the progress of the MAS and the IWL-FI.

In Argentina, the political situation was still uncertain and it was not known what attitude the military government would adopt. Moreno entered through the land border with Uruguay. His presence in Buenos Aires was kept secret. He settled in a small apartment that only the Executive Committee of PST had access to.

It was Moreno who insisted that the party lease premises in Peru Street, in the San Telmo neighbourhood, in the city of Buenos Aires, of immense dimensions, size according to his project.

On the third floor of the premises, whose access was closed down, Moreno set up his office. He went in and out at night, by a passage. Several days a week he slept there. In his youth, Moreno had practised intensely soccer, swimming, rowing, boxing and other sports. Over the years, he concentrated in tennis. Now he had to relinquish his tennis passion by medical prescription. As an exercise, he had to walk. He did it at night on the terrace, accompanied by a comrade. Although his heart was declining, he maintained a good



Moreno in the MAS Congress, held in the stadium of the Box Federation, 1985



Moreno with her partner, Amelia (on his left), in the rally for May Day 1986 in the Stadium of Ferrocarril Oeste



Moreno in a march of the MAS in Corrientes Avenue, Buenos Aires. On his right, British Trotskyist leader Bill Hunter

physical condition and all his affability, revolutionary passion and ability to work.

From these secret offices, Moreno together with the Central Committee led the election campaign.

He was the one who proposed to take Luis Zamora as a candidate, because of his youth and because he was a symbol of the struggle of the party with the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. Only in October 1983, Moreno left his semi-clandestine activity. Upon arrival in Buenos Aires, Moreno had found the PST at a bad time. After six years of dictatorship and genocide, scars were deep. There were de-politicisation and bureaucratic features as a result of the vertical operation during clandestinity. Moreover, the party had concentrated in the centre of Buenos Aires and away from the worker's bastions. Moreno put his effort to change this situation. He did it, as always, preparing theoretically, politically and organisationally; helping to go again to the working class and spending his days and nights to build a leadership team.

Moreno defined the situation saying that a democratic revolution had overthrown the dictatorship, opening the floodgates for the socialist revolution. We had to call the workers to liquidate the capitalist-imperialist system. In his view, three tasks would be the axis of the Argentine Revolution: trial and punishment of those

responsible for genocide, constituent assembly and a third, which he was the first to raise and which at the time seemed to be delirious —non-payment of the foreign debt. The Latin American mass movement would take it a little later.

What most pleased to Moreno was the process of the crisis of Peronism and the union bureaucracy. "When it breaks out", he said, "we will fully enter the construction phase of a party with mass influence". With that idea, Moreno revolutionised the PST, pushed it out of clandestinity and directed it to use the legal margins and reach large layers of workers.

The MAS was founded just three months after the arrival of Moreno, and faced the election campaign with the characteristic party style: opening hundreds of premises in popular neighbourhoods across the country. The election result was meagre, there was not a break of masses with Peronism mass and the little there was, was channelled by Alfonsín. But even so, the MAS began to be settled everywhere.

Moreno continued the battle pushing the party to get into the factories, where it was emerging a new union and political leadership in the fight against the Peronist union bureaucracy.

Also, to create a strong pole that would appeal to the workers in crisis with Peronism, Moreno proposed to make a left

front in the elections of 1985. Thus was born the agreement with the CP, which took the name of People's Front.

Inside the party, Moreno fought the bureaucratic and administrative methods left by clandestinity; trying to restore a healthy regime he pushed the militants to be true politicians, and not only managers of dues, figures and newspapers. His obsession at this time was to achieve political activists passionate about the revolutionary events in the country and the world, and able, therefore, to win over workers of the union, the job or neighbourhood.

For the construction of the leadership team, to which Moreno devoted his greater energies, he made the greatest efforts seeking to test different combinations with Marina, Pestaña, Eduardo, Alberto, Sorans, Exposito, Aldo, Silvia, Mercedes, Ernesto, Roberto, Nora, Armando and slowly with them, trying to overcome the old leadership

crisis, triggered by the breakdown of *Palabra Obrera's* team and then compounded by the death of Arturo and Cesar, crisis which had not been resolved to his death.

Moreno managed to see that his battle was achieving immense results, turning the MAS in the largest Trotskyist party in the world and the main left force of Argentina.

On May 1986, the MAS and the PC made a joint rally at the football stadium of Club Ferrocarril Oeste. Moreno and his partner Amelia sat together on the podium. As in all great rallies, he was hit by nervousness. Suddenly the stadium shook up and down. The overwhelming majority of attendees gave a standing ovation to Zamora, the speaker of the MAS. Moreno could not hold the emotion and had to retire. His life was not long enough to see his MAS in 1987, filling by itself the same stadium of Ferrocarril Oeste, leaving unscathed from the test of the Easter



His mortal remains are held in Chacarita Cemetery, Buenos Aires



Thousands in attendance at Moreno's farewell rally in Castro Barros Street

military uprising, multiplying five times its election result of 1983 and surpassing, also in votes, Stalinism.

### At the head of the International

In these five years, Moreno split his time between the direct attention of the MAS and the International.

International work involved continuing theoretical discussions, collaborating with the political orientations of all national sections, publishing the *International Courier* magazine and building, here as well, a leadership team.

Continuing his old habit, after his day's work, already at home, Moreno slept a little and got up, beset by insomnia, to read without pause the discussions of contemporary Marxism. He did not write much in his later years. However, it was one of his periods of greatest elaboration, as he began to systematise his thoughts on the theoretical problems in the postwar period and unresolved by Trotsky. As was usual with him, the contributions he made on the world economy, the worker's states and the political revolution, democratic revolutions, guerrilla warfare, the role of the working class and the party, were poured into party

## “We begin to walk towards a party of masses”

In the pamphlet “1982: The revolution begins”<sup>1</sup>, Moreno analysed the possibilities open for the construction of a revolutionary socialist party of masses.

“We begin to walk towards the construction of a revolutionary socialist party of masses. But we have not yet reached it because the crisis of Peronism has not yet exploded. It doesn't take much imagination to imagine what will happen when it takes place, in those neighbourhoods, factories and workshops, where workers are no longer Peronists and decide to get rid of the union bureaucracy. Only then, when the crisis of Peronism and the bureaucracy bursts open and is

not hidden, we will enter fully into the construction phase of a party with mass influence. A substantial part of the workers' movement can be won by our party. Perhaps the majority, or perhaps only a minority but very important. Perhaps we will win them directly with our policies, or perhaps we will win them in combination or mediated by our anti-bureaucratic and anti-bosses union currents, expanding and continuing the heroic experience of Sitrac-Sitram.

“The question is whether we will win the majority or a large minority, whether a new directly political or trade union-political leadership will emerge. But it is inevitable that we will win and extend our party's influence over a large sector of masses.”

<sup>1</sup> Found in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).



Column of the MAS marching on 9 de Julio Avenue, 1983

cadres' schools and leadership meetings. His method of collective elaboration made him raise issues to comrades in the form of theoretical and political questions, to withdraw, all together, a conclusion.

A small sample of his final works is the booklet "*Revolutions of the XX Century*".

Moreno's participation in the International was decisive to orient in the main problems that were presented to the sections. To this end, he wrote letters, received comrades from different countries and travelled himself. By way of example, we mention that Moreno and the leadership of the International were the first to condemn, since 1981, attempts to defeat by negotiation the Central American revolution, with the Contadora Pact. This has now been completed with the Pact of Esquipulas.

To develop the international leadership team, Moreno used the patience and passion that we knew in him. He promoted new comrades from different sections and joined them to those who were a little more experienced. In these years, Moreno worked directly with Edu, Zeze, Kemel, Jesus, Leon Perez, Alberto, Ricardo, Eduardo, Mercedes, Carmen. With them and other comrades, Moreno led the IWL-FI and the publishing of *International Courier*.

In that leadership there was a huge contradiction between the experience and theoretical, political and cultural level of Moreno, and the rest of the leaders. But he always tried to make a synthesis, testing and promoting the comrades, exchanging experiences and tasks and sending them to various countries to help and to learn. His encouragement to study, write and prepare reports and to assume tasks of responsibility was ongoing.

A week before his death he sent a letter to Colombian PST, where a debate was developing. The text shows Moreno understanding of how to form teams. He begins by saying that his contribution to the debate is "one more" and he did not intend to "impose any definition to the

party, because we pride ourselves as an international leadership, for not being top-down or totalitarian, for not imposing policies or tactics to our parties, for not making the slightest personal attack on any leader and for not making the slightest persecution for political reasons". He adds then that he rejoices "that there is discussion, that there is no unanimity on the International or the party" and that the international leadership cannot impose the line to the national sections because "it is being forged and it has not been tested yet by decisive events of the class struggle, or represents strong parties with mass influence".

Then, the letter continues with Moreno's position regarding the controversy. But these lines reveal the respectful manner with which he encouraged discussions. Similarly, Moreno participated in all discussions. Since returning to Argentina in 1982, and despite his health, he travelled twice to his beloved Colombia and twice to Europe, especially stopping in Spain, where there was a very strong internal discussion. On that occasion, Moreno asked several leaders of the International to attend the Congress of the Spanish party and he stayed for over a month, helping the comrades to become structured in the working class. In August 1985, the Sarney government lifted Moreno's ban on entering Brazil; and Moreno went several times, to help the young comrades to lead the big unions they had won and to build the party in that vast country.

His last day in the central headquarters of the MAS, on Peru Street, he was at a meeting of the party leadership. He left tired but went through the international offices. He chatted, became informed on the progress of relations with the WRP of Great Britain and reread the letter he had written to the Colombian party. He made his jokes, with the usual laughter. He filled his briefcase, full of materials to read on the weekend. And he left. So we always remember him.

## Democratic Centralism

**At a party cadres' school in the summer of 1984, Moreno discussed, among others, the issue on democratic centralism, in the following terms:**

"A party, if it isn't centralist, it's not for the fight. A party that has to confront the regime and the police and act in the class struggle has to be centralised and very disciplined. Otherwise, we cannot all raise the same slogan, we cannot take part in the struggles with the same line, and we cannot face repression.

"If there is no centralism, hard, iron discipline, there can be no revolutionary party. Lenin taught that.

"There has been no revolution that has prevailed without disciplined parties. Even too centralised, as the guerrilla, which imposes a military discipline to the political. The commander gives an order — support popular frontism, for example — and no one can argue. It is a military centralism to political issues. But it's centralism.

"But Lenin was also a maniac of the other pole: democracy — within the party an extraordinary, very large democracy. This is what is called democratic centralism.

"Democratic centralism is not the same for everyone. The more rank and file you are, the more independence and freedom you have. The hub of the meetings of grassroots organisations cannot be disciplinary or organisational. It has to be political.

"The worker or student who comes to us must feel that, finally, he found the first place where he speaks and he is listened to, where he wants to do something and it is done, where he can take initiatives, where he is not controlled as in bourgeois society, where he is only an object.

"He has to take notice that his opinions, what he thinks, what he feels, what he wants to do, is what counts.

"Democratic centralism is the opposite of an army. The guerrillistas, the petty bourgeois currents, let alone the bureaucrats believe it is the same thing — that there is a discussion in the Central Committee but, as it goes down, there is less and less discussion; that what goes down are orders like an army. And this order reaches the last link, which is the least important: the militant.

"Democratic centralism and discipline are tremendous as you go up. But as you go down democracy is increasingly larger. And when it reaches the rank and file is total — it almost gives the impression it is an anarchist party, where everyone does what he wants.

"Why is it good that this is so? Because it helps an enormity to adjust the political line.

"There is no leadership, neither Lenin, nor Trotsky, nor Marx, who are always right with the line. Even when they are right, it needs to be changed."

# The farewell

In Moreno's farewell participated thousands of members and supporters of the Movement to Socialism, as well as delegations of IWL-FI parties, who travelled especially, while thousands of condolences were received.

This imposing event was the tribute of Trotskyism to one of its most important leaders, of the IWL-FI to its founder, of the MAS to his teacher, of the international and Argentine working class to whom built unions, led strikes and won thousands of workers, in short, the homage of his comrades, family and friends.

After his wake held on Sunday 25 January at headquarters in Peru Street, where he worked in his last years, on Monday he was he taken to the Argentine Boxing Federation (FAB), the place that had witnessed much of the history of the party and Moreno, until it became too small for the MAS and larger stages had to be sought.

That day, by strange coincidence, Buenos Aires awoke paralysed by a general strike.

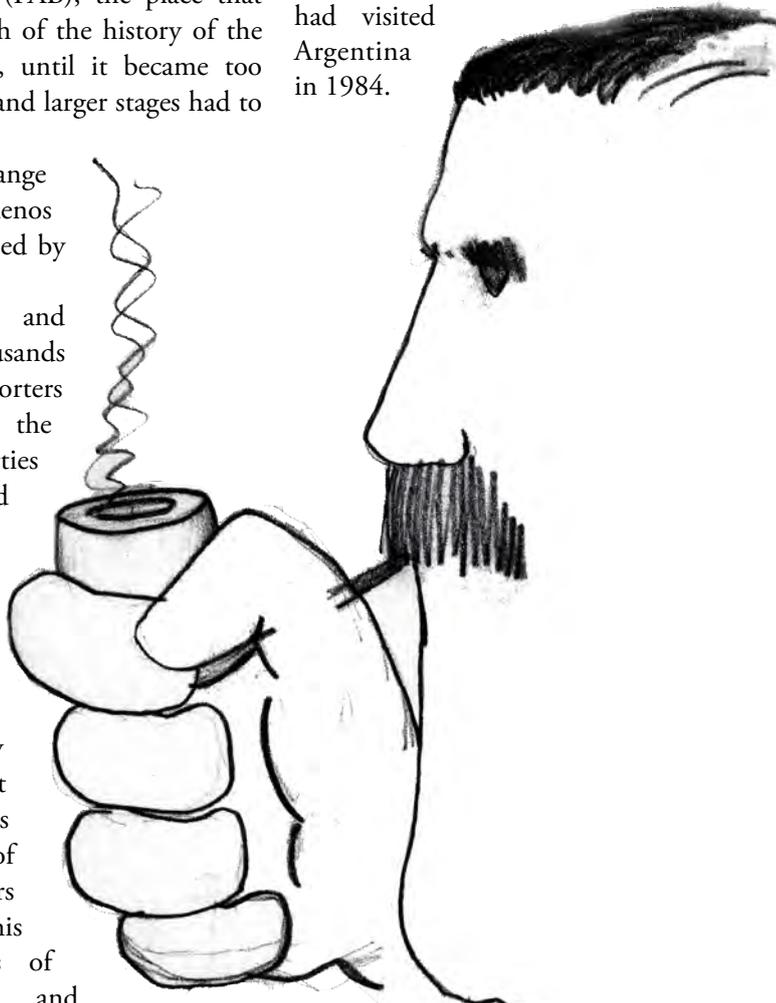
On Monday and Tuesday, thousands of friends, supporters and leaders of the International parties who had travelled especially, paraded through the Boxing Federation to honour him.

In the farewell ceremony were present Comrade Elias Rodriguez, one of the first workers Moreno won for his group, delegations of Trotskyist parties, and

of parties of the IWL-FI and the MAS leadership. According to the newspaper *Clarín* on 28 January 1987, ten thousand people participated in the funeral.

Subsequently, a four-kilometre long caravan accompanied the coffin to the funeral home, and the next day he was buried in the cemetery of Chacarita.

Condolences were received from important cultural figures, like Luis Franco, one of the best Argentine writers whom Moreno admired, Eduardo Pavlovsky, one of the most outstanding actors and Latin American playwrights, former candidate of the PST and a friend of Moreno, writer Ernesto Goldar, and actress Inda Ledesma. From Amsterdam called the known Marxist intellectual Andre Gunder Frank, a friend of Moreno, who had visited Argentina in 1984.



Present with their greetings were all leftist parties in Argentina, student organisations, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, human rights organisations and many Latin American leftist parties. Condolences were received from the Embassy of Nicaragua and greetings of the large worker's confederations of the continent — the Bolivian COB, Workers Commissions of Spain, the CUT of Colombia, CUT Brazil, the PIT-CNT of Uruguay, and numerous trade unions of Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia and Argentina.

Messages were received from Trotskyist organisations and leaders: Livio Maitan, a leader of the United Secretariat, called personally because he could not arrive on time, Hugo Blanco wrote a warm greeting, and also messages from Socialist Action of the United States, Alain Krivine of the French LCR, Workers Revolutionary Party of England, and Dario Renzi of Italy.

Given the impossibility of reproducing all the greetings, we chose one for its testimonial value, the one from Ernest Mandel, the leader of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, who polemised and argued so much with Moreno:

“The death of Comrade Hugo has deeply touched us all. With him disappears one of the last representatives of a handful of leading cadres who, after World War II, maintained the continuity of the struggle of Leon Trotsky in difficult conditions, while our movement was still very isolated. Beyond the differences between us, we were united in a common resolve to maintain that continuity against all odds.

“Today, in many countries, having crossed the desert, we find clear growth possibilities, based on the joint crisis of imperialism, capitalism and Stalinism, combined with rising workers’ militancy. So the facts confirm that Hugo’s generation, which is also mine, has not fought in vain.”

But perhaps the most important tribute was that of the thousands of comrades and friends who farewelled him in the rally, in the impressive procession throughout Corrientes Avenue, and in the cemetery, shouting: “Today we have come to say good-bye, old Nahuel. We will form the Fourth, as he did, to take power” and singing “Comrade Moreno, today we come to say goodbye, we will follow your example, as well as Trotsky’s and Lenin’s”.



# His written work

## We said in 1988:

The following enumeration of Moreno's works which have been published is not intended to be exhaustive. First, because the written work by Moreno is only part of his enormous work of theoretical and political development. Another part, equally or more important, was exhibited at courses, conferences and speeches in national and international party bodies, which were never published.

But even what came to be printed was carried out and published to the rhythm of the demands of the political struggle, and is largely dispersed in internal documents without his signature or are texts of the party organs, letters, newspapers, magazines and brochures. If we add the additional difficulty caused by the vicissitudes of the class struggle, that have subjected the author to long periods of hiding, imprisonment and exile, and which hinder the orderly gathering of the works, it can

be understood that the task of compilation and ordering requires time and hard work. We have tried here to offer a vision as complete as possible, aware of the risk of errors and omissions, as a contribution to that task. Criticism will be welcomed as a valuable aid to face this collective work which has barely begun.

## We say today:

Nahuel Moreno's works have been published for years in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org) and in other places (in Spanish and several already translated into English, French and Portuguese). In addition, since 2012 the editorial *El Socialista* has reprinted numerous texts, and the same has been done since 2015 by the editorial Centre for Human and Social Studies (Cehus).

Works already translated into English and available at [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org) are shown in italics. Other works will be available in the future.

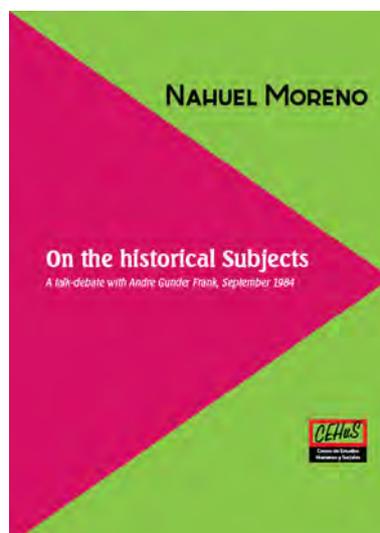
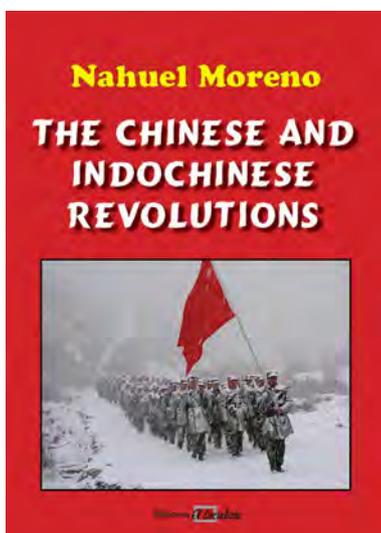
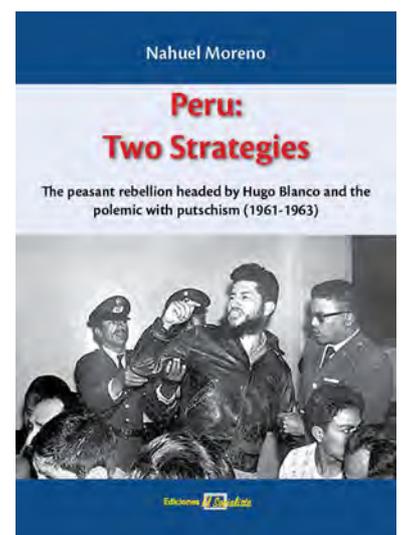
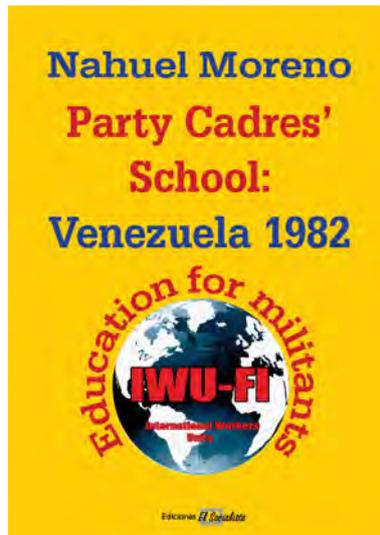
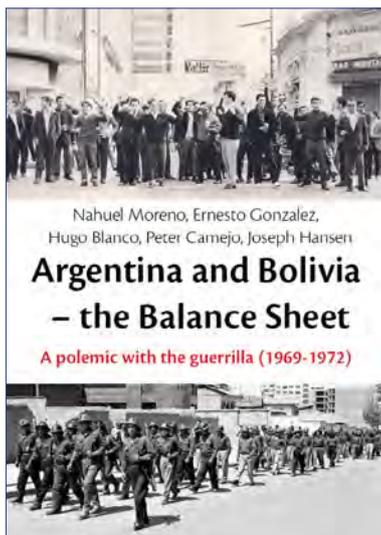
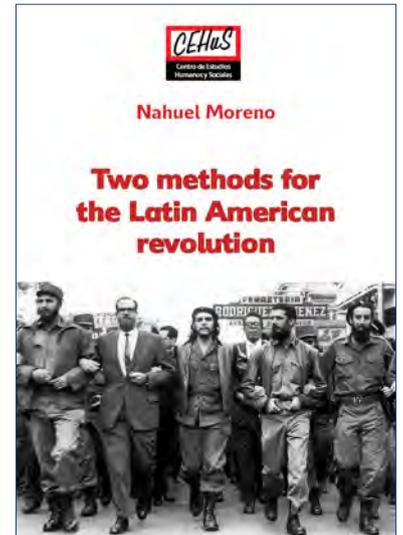
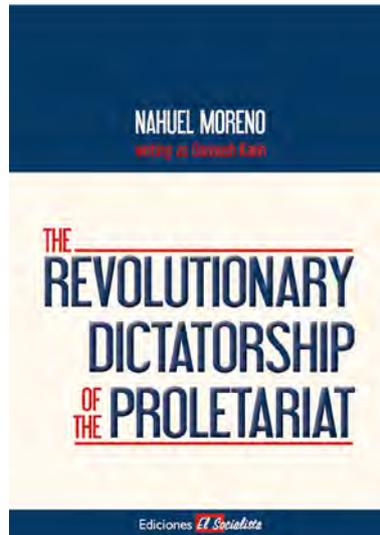
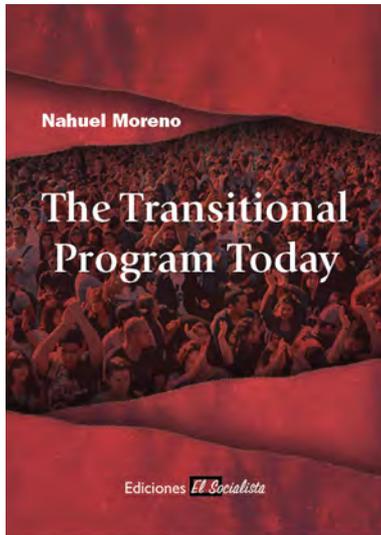
- 1948 The Argentinian economic structure ("agrarian thesis", "industrial thesis", and "Centrism in figures").
- 1948 *Four theses on the Spanish and Portuguese colonisation* (published as part of the leaflet *Feudalism and Capitalism in the Colonisation of America*).
- 1954 1954, a key year for a study of Peronism.
- 1956 And after Peron, what?
- 1957 The historic framework of the Hungarian Revolution
- 1957 Who knew how to fight against the Liberating Revolution before 16 September 1955?
- 1958 *Leeds Theses (Theses on the United Revolutionary Front)*.
- 1959 The permanent revolution in the postwar period (Critique of a document by Farrell Dobs, of the American SWP).
- 1963 *Peru: two strategies*.
- 1963 Argentina, a country in crisis.
- 1964 *Two methods for the Latin American revolution*.
- 1965 Basis for a scientific interpretation of Argentine history.
- 1966 The fight has just begun.
- 1967 *The Chinese and Indochinese revolutions*.
- 1967 *Guevara: Hero and martyr of the permanent revolution*.
- 1967 Latin America and OLAS.
- 1969 After the Cordobazo.
- 1971 Marxist logic and modern science.
- 1972 *Argentina and Bolivia the balance sheet* (co-author).

- 1973 *A scandalous document* (republished later under the title *The Party and the Revolution: Theory, Program and Policy a polemic with Ernest Mandel*).
- 1974 *Revolution and counter-revolution in Portugal*.
- 1975 Method for the interpretation of Argentina's history.
- 1977 Mandel y his capitulation to Eurocommunism.
- 1979 *The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.
- 1980 *The Transitional Program Today*.
- 1981 General considerations on the Central American Revolution.
- 1981 Complement to the draft resolution on Poland.
- 1981 The Mitterrand government. Its perspectives and our policy.
- 1981 *Letter to the comrades of the Central Committee of the Partido Obrero Socialista Internacionalista of Spain*.
- 1982 *Venezuela: Party cadres school* (on the popular fronts and the capitulation of Lambertism)
- 1982 *Why does Fidel negotiate in secret with Reagan?*
- 1983 *1982: The revolution begins*.
- 1983 *Argentina: A Triumphant Democratic Revolution* (Report on the fall of the genocidal dictatorship installed in 1976).
- 1984 *Revolutions of the XX century*.
- 1984 *Problems of organisation*.
- 1984 *Argentina: Party cadres school* (on the thesis of the permanent revolution).
- 1984 *On the historical subjects* (a talk-debate with Andre Gunder Frank).
- 1985 Israel, a Nazi state.
- 1985 Four pieces of advice from Lenin (on the self-criticism of the Argentine CP).
- 1986 *Elementary political concepts* (co-author).
- 1986 *Conversations with Nahuel Moreno*.
- 1986 *A Marxist defence of Nicaragua* (published in the book *The Simon Bolivar Brigade*).
- 1986 *An iron dilemma: Cuba or Nicaragua* (letters with Eduardo Pavlovski, published in *The Simon Bolivar Brigade*).
- 1986 Theses on guerrillaism (co-author).
- 1986 The Tiger of Pobladora (unpublished dialogue with Raul Veiga).

#### **Other out of print or archival work:**

- 1943 The Party.
- 1951 Fourth International Group, an ideological agent of Peronism.
- 1953 Letter breaking out with Pablism.
- 1953 Two lines for the Bolivian masses: the revolutionary and the opportunistic.
- 1955 Letter to the Latin American Committee (CLA) about Bolivia.
- 1955 Let us perfect the aiming on the Bolivian Revolution.
- 1957 Comments about some Marxist theses on national movements.
- 1958 The left in the Argentine political process (a compilation of works of several left personalities, Moreno among them).
- 1960 Cuba, politics and class struggle.
- 1961 Cuba shakes America.
- 1961 Cuba, the vanguard of the revolution.
- 1962 The Latin American Revolution.
- 1966 The Latin American situation
- 1967 Latin America and the OLAS.
- 1969 Bolshevik or spontaneist morality
- 1972 Guillermo Lora renounces Trotskyism (polemic about the Bolivian FRA)
- 1972 A revolutionary electoral campaign.
- 1974 Memorandum on Democracy.
- 1977 Angola: the black revolution in underway.
- 1981 Supplement to the draft resolution on Poland.
- 1986 Our experience with Lambertism (co-author)

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I do not think  
that the triumph  
of socialism is  
inevitable. I believe  
the result depends  
on the class  
struggle, in which  
we are immersed.

And that, then,  
what is essential is  
to fight, to fight with  
rage to triumph.  
Because we can  
succeed. There is  
no God who has  
determined we  
cannot do it.

*H. Moreau*