



# Nahuel Moreno

## Speeches at the Second Congress of the MAS

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# Foreword

The Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party, PST) led by Nahuel Moreno, which had been banned since March 1976 and had operated underground for years, at the end of 1982 promoted the founding of the Movimiento Al Socialismo (Movement Towards Socialism, MAS), converging with a small sector of traditional socialism headed by Ruben Visconti<sup>1</sup> from Rosario. In March 1985, during the government of the radical Alfonsín, the MAS held its second congress, on the eve of the world congress of the IWL-FI.<sup>2</sup>

Moreno had argued that in 1982 a triumphant democratic revolution took place in Argentina, which ended with the genocidal dictatorship, in the heat of the popular mobilisation that began with the attempt to recover the Malvinas and the workers' and popular resistance that had been growing for one or two years. It was triggered in June by the surrender of the genocidal military to the British, and led to the fall of the dictatorship imposed since March 1976. General Bignone, successor of the resigning Galtieri, in the face of the massive repudiation of the workers and the people, had to accept the imposition of growing democratic freedoms and sought to channel the revolutionary upsurge by agreeing with the traditional bourgeois political parties (Radicals and Peronists) to fully restore their legal functioning and calling for elections. That was the context for the launch of the MAS.

According to the MAS's internal operating rules, based on Leninist democratic centralism, the congress is the highest body of political elaboration and decision-making of the party and functions in a broadly democratic manner. The statutory rules allow for the formation of opinion groups, tendencies and factions during the pre-congress period. For this second congress, a group of militants formed the opinion group "Convocatoria" and participated in the discussion based on some written texts. The first text was promoted by Enrique Broquen,<sup>3</sup> who later disassociated himself from Convocatoria. Nahuel Moreno

1 **Ruben Visconti**, a long-standing political leader from Rosario. Co-founder, in 1961, of the Argentine Socialist Party (PSA). In September 1982, he was one of the founders and leaders of the MAS.

2 The IWL-FI had been founded in Bogota in January 1982. After Moreno's death in January 1987, the leadership of the International Workers League – Fourth International (IWL-FI) fell into increasing errors and deviations, which led to the division and dispersion of Morenoism. See in [www.nahuelmoreno.org/en/category/other-authors/](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org/en/category/other-authors/) the 1997 self-critical text *MAS: A Historical Balance Sheet*. Today, Moreno's followers in that organization – and who support the website [www.nahuelmoreno.com](http://www.nahuelmoreno.com) – from different countries, we are grouped in the International Workers Unity – Fourth International (IWU-FI).

3 Enrique Broquen (1908-1988), a lawyer and history teacher in high school, is one of the longest-standing figures in Argentine socialism, whose ranks he joined shortly after the overthrow of the Radical president Hipólito Irigoyen in 1930. He was secretary general of the Socialist Youth Confederation, and part of its left wing, which struggled to give a revolutionary orientation to the traditionally reformist Socialist Party (SP). With this perspective in mind, in 1937, with an incipient sympathy for Leon Trotsky, he headed the Partido Socialista Obrero (Socialist Workers Party, PSO) of which he became general secretary and which was later frustrated by the action of Stalinism. Broquen held leadership positions in the Uruguayan Socialist Party during the years he lived in that country. After Onganía's coup in 1966 he approached the Argentine Socialist Party (Coral Secretariat). In 1971, together with Juan Carlos Coral and other leaders, they began a political and programmatic exchange with the Trotskyist PRT-LV, headed by Nahuel Moreno. At the end of 1972, Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST) was founded and Broquen was a member of the Promotion Commission and legal representative of the party, which in a few months achieved electoral legality. In the 1973 elections he was a candidate for senator for the city of Buenos Aires. From 24

speaks in the congress responding to the political positions of this group. To do so, Moreno bases his discussion on the method applied by the group, as opposed to the Marxist method that must be applied in the analysis of the situation, in this case, international. In this way, Moreno's speech goes to great lengths to explain that the sectarian method of discussing based on abstract quotations and taken as absolute truths should be avoided.

After the congress, also in accordance with the statutory rules, "Convocatoria" was dissolved and some of its members began to distance themselves from the ranks of the MAS.

But Moreno does not only discuss the question of method, which is of utmost importance. Unlike this group that uses quotes to justify its defeatist analysis, arguing that in the post-war period what prevails is the advance of imperialism, Moreno argues that what prevails are revolutions, both social and political, as had occurred in the fall of the Argentine dictatorship itself, where the leaders of the first three Military Juntas and hundreds of genocide perpetrators were tried.

To delve deeper into the topic of the different types of revolutions and how they were unfolding in reality, particularly in Argentina, the reader can refer to Moreno's texts, available at [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org):

1982: *Letter from Afar*

1983: *Argentina, a Triumphant Democratic Revolution*

1982: *The Revolution Begins*

1984: *Party Cadres School (Argentina)*

1985: *International Manifesto*

Today, this discussion continues, as some sectors of the Trotskyist movement argue that the end of the military dictatorship and the achievement of political freedoms and elections was the result of an agreement between the perpetrators of genocide and the bourgeois politicians. As an example of these debates, see the article by Miguel Sorans "Debates in the revolutionary left/ PTS and Izquierda Socialista: Two opposing visions since the fall of the dictatorship and the politics of building a revolutionary socialist leadership", published in *El Socialista* 589 of 23 September 2024, available at <https://izquierdasocialista.org.ar/2020/index.php/blog/elsocialista/item/23287-debates-en-la-izquierda-revolucionaria-pts-e-izquierda-socialista-dos-visiones-opuestas-desde-la-caida-de-la-dictadura-y-de-la-politica-para-construir-una-direccion-socialista-revolucionaria>.

Moreno's speech at the international point of the congress was made with a recording, since his state of health did not allow him to present the report orally as planned. The recording was not reviewed by the author and was published by Ediciones Crux, Buenos Aires, in the "Unpublished Works of Nahuel Moreno" collection in 1991.

All notes are by the editors.

**The editors.**

August 2025

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March 1976, the genocidal dictatorship was imposed and the PST was proscribed and had to go underground. During those years, Broquen played a heroic and outstanding role by acting in legality and semi-legality as a defence lawyer for prisoners and disappeared, both of the outlawed PST and trade union or leftist fighters. He was kidnapped by a task force in July 1977 and later released. In January 1979 he travelled as a representative of the PST to a meeting of Amnesty International in San Jose, Costa Rica, where repression in the country was denounced. With the same objective he travelled to France. He made a stop in Bogota to visit Nahuel Moreno and other exiled PST leaders and militants. At the end of 1982 he participated in the founding of the MAS (Movement Towards Socialism), promoted by Nahuel Moreno. In the pre-congress of the second congress of the MAS, held in 1985, he promoted the formation of an opinion group, from which he later disassociated. Until his death in April 1988, he continued with his militant and work activities as a history teacher. The obituary in the MAS weekly *Solidaridad Socialista* N° 233, 4 May 1988, in recalling his career and his militancy until the last moment of his life, highlighted his participation in the great teachers' strike of that same year, the "maestrazo".

# Speeches at the Second Congress of the Movement to Socialism (MAS)

## Initial Speech

The emotional part of Congress is over. Let's start to think, to work with a cool head. The time has come for us to think well, to reflect and to bring resolutions adjusted to reality.

Let's start thinking, working with a cool head. The time has come for us to think carefully, reflect and make decisions that are in line with reality.

In my report, I will essentially answer the questions that have been raised about the International Theses within the Argentine party. Although there are more or less similar issues, explained or substantiated from other points of view, by other parties — Brazil, the United States — and other comrades from abroad, I am not going to respond to those issues because the report would be very long. We reserve this for what we will be discussing at the Congress of the IWL-FI.

Of the national criticisms that have been made to the Theses [I am going to respond to] the most abundant, which is the one made by the Comrades of *Convocatoria*,<sup>4</sup> both in their specific document regarding the international issue, and in their national document, in the part in which they refer to the existence or not of revolutions of a political character. If I have time, I will also respond to Comrade Gallego and some other questions raised both in written and oral form by different comrades. [For example] the question of relative and absolute surplus value. [Repeatedly I have asked these comrades to send me in writing] their precise, very interesting and deep observations. I do not know why none of them expressed them in writing; perhaps because of the tremendous activity for the preparation of this Congress. Other well-formulated problems were also raised in the Party Cadres Schools.

With regard to *Convocatoria*, [I want to clarify that] the attitude of the comrades regarding the Credentials Committee, and the note that they sent, made me change a little the focus of my answer. I was seeing them as already disillusioned comrades, forming [what is described by] that sad but happy metaphor of the Socialist Workers Party's leadership: the "broom" groups or tendencies, that is, [those that] sweep away what is no longer useful. The disciples of Cannon<sup>5</sup> used to say that in every well-organised party, [this phenomenon] had to take place every four or five years. Well, that's not my opinion. Comrades who have had the courage to acknowledge mistakes or exaggerations in the polemic are comrades who deserve the deepest respect and, in this sense, I will discuss with the comrades. Not only for being comrades, for which they deserve all our respect, but because after that attitude of the comrades, it is really good that

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4 *Convocatoria* was an opinion group formed during the discussion prior to the Second Congress of the Argentine party, the MAS. It presented and defended its documents during the pre-Congress discussion, presented a counter report to the Congress and it dissolved afterwards.

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

we begin to think that we are deeply united in the prospects of the party although we disagree deeply on many issues.

It seems to me that *Convocatoria* is a clearly sectarian group. In everything — in the method, the way of dealing with all the criticisms, their conceptions.

First, the method. I wondered whether it was good to dwell on a problem as abstract as the problem of method and I came to the conclusion that it was indispensable. Trotsky himself, arguing against the ultra-leftists about Spain, began a very deep discussion of politics [starting] with the method. Well, I believe [it convenient to do] the same thing.

The comrades have several methodological characteristics that are antagonistic to our method and very dangerous. The first is the negation of contradictions; Trotsky pointed to this as characteristic of the ultra-leftists, and perhaps of the sectarians. That is, taking a true element of reality separating it from the rest, amplifying it enormously, and believing it is the whole reality. For example, the comrades believe that the imperialist counter-offensive throughout the world is the whole reality. It is as if the masses did not fight or have victories. The entire description they make is the same as ours. They themselves take our document and say, “Yes, the Theses say this, this and that; which shows that imperialism is winning colossally throughout the world”. And they forget the other side of the Theses and the other side of reality, which is that [although] imperialism does all that, the masses do things as well, greater than [what] imperialism itself does.

For us dialecticians, Marxists, reality is a combination of many elements, different elements, in struggle. The sectarian has the habit of taking only one element. For example, a sectarian is the one who goes to a strike where there is a need to fight and make armed pickets and he says: “The strike is useless because the true solution is socialism.” And it is true that the real solution is socialism but it is also true that the reality of that moment is a strike, and the reality of that moment is that an armed picket is necessary.

From all of reality, the comrades have separated and taken only one element: the imperialist counter-offensive. This is the first very serious deficiency of the comrades. The second deficiency is what Comrade Broquen calls “Talmudic” [method] — Comrade Broquen advises them very well; I don’t think he answers well but the advice is very good — that is, to analyse Marxism as if it were the Bible, a fierce struggle of quotation upon quotation. Think through quotations and discuss quotations with quotations. I brought, for example, some quotations — I do not want to bore you, they are very long — of Marx and Engels about Bismarck.<sup>6</sup> They are almost from the same time; in them, Marx says one thing and Engels another. Engels says that Bismarck made the greatest bourgeois revolution and Marx says it is feudal. Can you imagine the mess the comrades would have? Look what a mess!

The comrades forget the main Marxist law. And the main Marxist law is that every quotation is wrong because Marxist thought is relative. Every law, no matter how true it is, has errors.

And the other great Marxist law is that reality is superior to any schema, including Marxist schemas. For example, the comrades quote Lenin about Russia, and I have here a multitude of quotations in which Lenin says that Tsarism was already the government of capitalism...

[Here Moreno was forced to interrupt his report because of an indisposition.]

6 **Otto von Bismarck**, Prince of Bismarck and Duke of Lauenburg (1815–1898), was a Prussian statesman and politician, architect of German unification and one of the key figures in international relations during the second half of the 19th century. During the last years of his life, he was nicknamed the “Iron Chancellor” for the determination with which he pursued his political goals. fundamentally the creation and maintenance of a system of international alliances that would ensure the supremacy and security of the German Empire.

## Main Speech

[This report was presented by Nahuel Moreno to the Second Congress of the Argentine party by means of a recorded tape because his state of health prevented him from doing so personally, after having tried twice.]

After two failed attempts to speak before this Congress because of the heat and some slight health deficiencies that I have — according to my doctors' report — and on the advice of comrades of the Party leadership, I have chosen to do the report through this medium. I beg the comrades to excuse the inconvenience of having to pay much more attention to a report transmitted by this medium. It is doubly regrettable that I had to use this technical channel because this medium is intimately linked to dire pages of national politics since it was the traditional means of communication by Juan Domingo Peron.<sup>7</sup> As I don't intend to keep using it, I hope it will be further proof that the crisis of Peronism is irreversible and that we do not copy anything from them.

Comrades, in my report I will specifically address the most general objections and criticisms that have been made within the Argentine Party, and not to those that have been made in other International Workers League (IWL)<sup>8</sup> parties. I intend to reserve my reply to these comrades for my report to the IWL.

The most extensive criticisms that have been made of the International Theses<sup>9</sup> are those made by the comrades of *Convocatoria*. There are other written or oral criticisms of the Theses, notably Comrade Gallego's criticism of our characterisation of the Israeli State. There has been much criticism to the problem of absolute and relative surplus value in terms of the methodology of over-exploitation of imperialism, and some other partial criticisms. However, I am going to dwell just with the majority of the criticisms that have been made to us, which are those by the comrades of *Convocatoria*.

I have to admit that, specifically starting with *Convocatoria*'s third document, the comrades raised themselves to a whole conception, to a whole theory of international and national reality, and even relative to our own Activities Report, coherent and therefore respectable and worthy of being taken into account, even if the comrades of *Convocatoria* were very few — as they are — or were many, or even if it were just one comrade. Specifically, the comrades have risen to what we might call a Marxist elaboration. All the previous documents, the first two, are not worthy of being taken into account in serious Marxist literature.

Well, comrades, for me *Convocatoria* as a whole is characterised by being a clearly and totally sectarian opinion group which, like any sectarian organisation, has strong opportunistic traits. As they demonstrated in the first document, which I do not want to take into account, these opportunistic traits are clear,

7 **Juan Domingo Peron** lived in exile for 18 years, after he was overthrown by the military coup of 1955. From abroad he sent his instructions to the Peronist party and the union bureaucracy by means of recorded tapes.

8 Following on Moreno's death in 1987, the International Workers League – Fourth International (IWL-FI) went into crisis and in 1990 it began to split. Currently, Moreno's followers in that organisation, and the keepers of the web page [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org), are grouped in the International Workers Unity – Fourth International (IWU-FI), [www.uit-ci.org](http://www.uit-ci.org).

9 Moreno makes reference to *Theses on the World Situation*, available on [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

almost scandalous, as far as the organisational problem is concerned. Also, they demonstrate it in the last proposals — they continue with the same position although they have changed the appearance.

But in everything else, the comrades are sectarians. This sectarianism is reflected both in the method with which they judge problems, by how they analyse them, as in their own conceptions. In my opinion, this has been exhaustively demonstrated in the discussion on the national issue when it was shown that the comrades do not see the total crisis of the country. In this sense, we have to recognise they practically hold a record because they must be the only ones in this country who believe the country is not in a total crisis, absolute, not just economic but also political, social, cultural, police, public security, etcetera, and etcetera. They are unique. It's a record. Their sectarianism acquires almost tragicomical characteristics.

All this is due to the method of the comrades. Trotsky had already pointed out this method when criticising the ultra-leftists in Spain. The comrades deny the essence of dialectics, which is the science of the concrete, of what is studied, of the present. Dialectics tells us that the concrete is a combination of abstractions. This is why it is very difficult to be a good Marxist analyst. Because first, you have to take, to discover the infinity of elements, of characteristics that every phenomenon has, and then see how they combine. It has two difficulties — one of an analytical nature, and another one subsequent, how to combine what has been analysed.

The comrades make the very serious mistake that Trotsky points out. It is necessary that we agree once and for all on this methodological question, because otherwise, at every Congress, we will have discussions with comrades who have not fully assimilated Trotsky. They take a single element of reality, sometimes even very important; they separate it from the context, do not combine it with any other element, and believe this is the whole of reality.

For example, it is a fact that the bourgeois counter-revolution exists in the world, but the bourgeois counter-revolution in the world is not the reality of the world today, it is an element, and for us, it is not even the most important. Much more important is the revolutionary upsurge and the revolutionary struggles of the masses.

Another example: What would you say, comrades, if someone comes and defines Trotsky saying “He is a man who has clear blue eyes”? You would laugh at him. This is not what defines Trotsky. What defines Trotsky is the combination of the infinity of characteristics he has and that make him unique. Even defining him by saying “Trotsky is a genius” defines absolutely nothing unless we start by saying that he is a revolutionary politician, [we add] that he is brilliant and we do not clarify well why he is brilliant. In other words, a Marxist always defines by combining infinity of characteristics and pointing out how they relate to each other.

The comrades have another serious flaw that combines with the previous one and makes their method truly catastrophic: their obsession to strictly conform to certain quotations. I insist, I emphasise “certain quotations”, because the comrades are not scholars either who take all the quotations and make a historical analysis of the context of the different quotations, but they take only one or two. Comrade Broquen advises his comrades well — although later he does not apply this advice to himself — when he tells them not to make a Talmudic discussion, as if it were the Bible, about whether such a quotation applies or not to reality. I am going to dwell a little on this problem of quotations, because it is praiseworthy to handle the quotations, provided this is done with extreme care.

With quotes and facts, you can prove absolutely any theoretical position, or explain any reality because there are quotes and facts to explain everything. For example, we can say that Argentina's economic situation is exceptional because it has reversed the agrarian crisis of 1930, in the sense that increasingly more grain is produced and exported. That is a truth as big as a mountain. We can give facts, quotations, statistics, everything. However, we think that, despite this, if we take all the factors of the economic situation, the Argentine economic crisis is total, tremendous.

Let us now turn to the problems caused by wanting to prove only through quotations. Within Marxism the definition of Bismarckism is a very serious issue, also it is so for us. We have defined a senile Bismarckism, which means having a well-defined or precise understanding of what Bismarckism is because we have added that qualifier. Let us suppose that a Marxist scholar resolves — like the comrades of *Convocatoria* — that this quotation is the desideratum, that is, the beginning and the end of everything.

First, he would find the most famous quote by Marx [regarding] Bismarck, as a definition: “Nothing but a police-guarded military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture, already influenced by the bourgeoisie and bureaucratically carpentered, and then to assure this state into the bargain that one imagines one will be able to force such things upon it ‘by legal means’.” [Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1875.] (It is no coincidence that Rosa Luxemburg loved this quote because it is the most literary of definitions.) As we see, it has many adjectives and few precisions. But if there is any precision it is that it is feudal.

If this studious, erudite comrade continues with the works of Marx and Engels, he will find that Engels’ opinion was diametrically opposed to Marx. The quote, categorical and now of a social nature, fundamental, Marxist, without adjectives, is as follows: “Bismarck recognised the German civil war of 1866 for what it was, namely, a revolution, and that he was willing to carry out that revolution with revolutionary methods” [Frederick Engels: *The role of force in history*, December 1887–March 1888]. In other words, in Germany, there was a bourgeois democratic revolution, carried out by Bismarck no less than in the year 1866. The feudal elements disappeared, not even as a source of pressure.

On the other hand, I would like to clarify that this quote was the one I had saved for those who told me that there can be no revolution without the destruction of the Armed Forces of the regime, because in this case, Engels speaks of a colossal revolution with the Armed Forces of the feudal regime that make, without touching anyone, a bourgeois revolution. In this case, this quote was my secret, the ace up my sleeve, for those who also wanted to fight me with quotes regarding this characterisation of the revolution. But this is not the case.

Look at the troubles in which those who work only with quotations get into.

But let us now turn to the comrades’ favourite quote — the one from Lenin where he says that the February Revolution was indeed a revolution because power passed from one class to another. Well, with Lenin also there are quotes for everything. In general, he has defended the position that tsarism was an essentially feudal power. But since the reform of Stolypin,<sup>10</sup> there was an entire period in Lenin’s life when he considered the possibility of a process similar to the Prussian one, considering it was a misfortune. Even at the time when he held that it was feudal, there was a moment when Lenin argued that the tsarist government was not feudal but in fact bourgeois. And even in 1917, shortly before returning to Russia to make that great revolution, which according to the comrades is revolution because it was a bourgeois revolution against an absolutist feudal regime, when saying farewell to the Swiss workers, Lenin pointed out that the bourgeoisie had already economically ruled the country for a long time. By this, I do not mean to say the comrades are not right in arguing that Tsarism was a feudal absolutism and [that] what happened was a bourgeois democratic revolution. But we could look for quotations to show that it was a bourgeois revolution within a bourgeois regime.

Let me clarify that this is a very serious issue under debate. For example, there is a very serious and very deep historical school, closely linked to Marxism, which holds that the English Revolution was not [anti] feudal because before the revolution itself all feudalism had already turned to capitalism. This does not mean this interpretation is correct. The only thing I want to point out is you can search for quotes to prove any issues, also with facts.

Well, comrades. But the problem of quotations involves other very serious problems of the Marxist method. Very serious because they can educate the comrades poorly, depriving them of the essential vision of what the Marxist method is. The Marxist method is the method par excellence that relativises absolutely everything. It is the method of relativity, of relationships, of changes. Marxism holds that there is no absolute truth. All truth is relative. And quotations are also relative, comrades. Marxism, dialectics, holds that every truth, like every true quotation — and the true quotation is part of the truth — is relative. This means it has a part of falsehood, a part of error. In everything, there is an element of truth and an element of error. We say it is true because it weighs the most, but not because there is no error. And quotations, least of all, cease to belong to this fundamental law of Marxism.

10 **Pyotr Stolypin** (1862–1911), chairman of the Council of Ministers, served as Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire from 1906 to 1911. His tenure was marked by the implementation of agrarian reforms to appease the complaints of the peasants.

Therefore, together with this principle of the relativity of everything, starting with truths and Marxist quotations, Marxism — taking into account the relativity of the subjective, schemata, laws, quotations, definitions — formulates as one of its most absolute principles, another principle that is almost a Marxist axiom: that reality absolutely surpasses any schema. This happens in medicine, in all sciences. But more than anywhere else in the historical process, because the historical process is an endeavour, that is, what is going to happen in history. I am not talking about history but about the historical process. History can come to truths because it judges the past. But [in] what is to be done and has not yet been done, reality will always be completely superior, different from all the schemas that have been made, however perfect they may be. We have already discussed this in the Activities Report, in relation to the achievements and goals. It is an expression of this infernal dialectic that reality always surpasses absolutely any schema.

There is another already concrete, very Trotskyist issue. This was advised by Trotsky not only with regard to quotations but [also] to definitions, even concerning the richest, most abstract, and most enduring of Marxism: the theory. Trotsky says that every new revolution enriches the theory; it doesn't close the theory; [rather] it opens infinity of new quotations and destroys infinity of quotations, changes them, modifies them. We have to soak this up thoroughly.

We make all these very general criticisms of our comrades because we are terrified; on the one hand, they tell us, rightly so, that a true revolutionary militant is a rebel, argues with his leadership, argues with Trotsky, argues with Lenin, argues with everyone; and then they call us to a passive, total submission to an absolute servility, not to all the quotations of Marxism (because they would be in a mess when finding that there are all kinds of quotes and contradictory), not to the Secretary General, but to two or three quotations.

And I say that the one who lives wrapped up on two or three quotations is a mental bureaucratic servant. And I say this because the famous quotation of Trotsky<sup>11</sup> that they have given and which the comrades abide by is one of the greatest crimes. Abiding to this quotation resulted in us arguing that the Chinese Revolution was not a revolution, that the Yugoslav Revolution was not revolution, comrades.

In 1948, we held that they were counter-revolutions because they did not follow the four conditions that the comrades point out. It is the greatest shame of the Fourth International. In 1949, Hansen,<sup>12</sup> Pablo,<sup>13</sup> and I were the ones who started to say that we had to throw the quotations away because they prevented us from seeing the greatest revolutions of the century.

The same happened to us in the Second Congress of the Fourth International — the first of the post-war period — which I was lucky enough to attend. When the Czechoslovak CP seized power, which began the expropriation of all capitalism no less than in Eastern Europe, we were meeting. We did not give it any importance, it was not even an agenda item, because what could this mean? Nothing at all, the four

11 This discussion refers to Trotsky's definition of a revolutionary situation. One of the versions of this definition is the one that exists in the "Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution" (Trotsky, *Writings of Leon Trotsky [1939–1940]*, Pathfinder Press, Second Edition, New York, 1973). There Trotsky defined a situation with "the basic conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution" like that one in which the following conditions occurred: 1) the bourgeois impasse and the resulting confusion of the ruling class; 2) the sharp dissatisfaction and the striving towards decisive changes in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, without whose support the big bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself; 3) the consciousness of the intolerable situation and readiness for revolutionary actions in the ranks of the proletariat; 4) a clear program and a firm leadership of the proletarian vanguard – these are the four conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution." Sectors of Trotskyism took these four conditions to deny that revolutionary situations could arise without the existence of a revolutionary party, or even to deny that revolutions could occur and succeed without being led by a revolutionary party.

12 **Joseph Hansen** (1910–1979) was an American Trotskyist and the main leader of the Socialist Workers Party after the death of its founder, James Cannon. He was Leon Trotsky's secretary and lived with him in Coyoacan, Mexico City, when he was assassinated in 1940 by one of Stalin's agents. From the 1970s onwards, he led the alliance and capitulation to Mandelism, supported the bourgeois Sandinista government and the repression of the Simon Bolivar Brigade in Nicaragua in 1979, and the subsequent total shift towards Castroism.

13 **Michel Pablo** (1911–1996) was the pseudonym of **Michel Raptis**, a Greek Trotskyist living in France and the main leader of the Fourth International after the Second World War. Together with Ernest Mandel, they promoted a revisionist policy of capitulation to the Stalinist communist parties, social democracy and bourgeois nationalist movements such as the MNR in Bolivia. They promoted "sui generis entryism", which meant the dissolution of the Trotskyists in the Communist Parties. In the 1960s, he distanced himself from Trotskyism and was an advisor to the bourgeois government of Ben Bella in Algeria.

conditions of Trotsky were not present. We calmly followed the Congress sessions [taking this news] as we would take a minor police news item.

And in general, considering the period, the last 40 years, taking the quotations from the Theses of the Permanent Revolution and everything we said (a library of quotations): didn't we always say that there was no possibility of not even solving the problems of bourgeois-democratic revolution in any country if the proletariat, led by a revolutionary communist party, did not lead the revolution? Or have you forgotten the Theses [of the Permanent Revolution] and all that Trotskyism said about it? There are hundreds and thousands of quotations written by Trotsky and all the Trotskyists, by all of us, [saying,] I repeat, that absolutely no fundamental problem of the bourgeois-democratic revolution could be solved without the leadership of the proletariat and a revolutionary communist party.

Against these thousands of quotations there is only one quotation given in passing in a program, which said that as a huge exception, almost impossible to happen, due to the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, and a terrible crisis, it could be that the opportunist parties would go beyond what they wanted and would take power and go against the bourgeoisie.

I ask the comrades to tell me: on balance, what is useful? The thousands and thousands of quotations or that exception we almost certainly were not going to see? Reality shows that we have to throw away thousands and thousands of quotations. Reality destroyed all these quotations, burned them, incinerated them; and transformed, on the contrary, the other, the exception, into the only true law. Reality wrote millions of times the exceptional quotation and burned all the other millions of quotations we gave [about the need] of the revolutionary party to solve the bourgeois-democratic tasks.

Notice what it cost us our obsession with sticking to quotations and not seeing reality, not seeing the great revolutions. This is why, in 1949, a movement led at that time by Comrade Pablo, Comrade Hansen, and myself began in the Fourth International, saying that we had to see reality, that Trotsky would be proud of us burning his quotations that did not fit the reality, and that we had to see the reality of the great world revolution that was taking place. And the reality was more Trotskyist than Trotsky had believed. The revolutionary upsurge was so powerful; the permanent revolution was so intertwined with the development of the mass revolutionary movement that reality had been far superior to Trotsky's quotations. That is, reality had been much more Trotskyist than Trotsky himself had written. That was our conclusion.

This does not mean that quotations and definitions are not of enormous importance. But they have it in order to discuss them, adjust them, modify them and, above all, to know that they are tools to understand reality, and not tools superior to reality.

Principles are indeed very important. Principles are issues that can be discussed, like any other issues. But they require very deep, serious and lengthy discussions because they are the pillars. Quotations, such as what is or isn't a revolutionary situation, are not pillars of the revolutionary process, they are not pillars of our program. Instead, principles are pillars of the program and can only be modified when an exhaustive demonstration allows us to show that some of our principles are mistaken.

Let us now proceed to study in some detail the analyses and positions of the comrades regarding the current world reality. The comrades say, when beginning their work on the concept of revolution and reform published in *Discussion Bulletin* No 6, that "to speak of revolutionary situation it is necessary in our opinion, to define what we mean by revolution". I think this is a theoretical insight of the comrades. (Unfortunately, they raise it in the national discussion but it involves all this international discussion.) I believe exactly the same as the comrades. They do very well in linking the two phenomena; although in the international theses they do not dwell on this theoretical problem of substance. Then the comrades quote Lenin and rely on him, with that famous quotation where he says that "the passage of power from one class to another is the first, main and basic symptom of a revolution, both in the strictly scientific sense of this concept as in the political-practical sense". [see final Spanish version]

The comrades make these quotations with the aim of demonstrating that we are completely confused when we call political revolutions those that have taken place in different parts of the world with the fall of genocidal dictatorships, including Argentina, Bolivia, Portugal, Greece, we do not know whether Nicaragua, etc.

For us, this is indeed a fundamental discussion; which has to do not only with the revolutionary situation but also with the character of the very era in which we are living. It is an even deeper problem.

Well, besides discussing fundamental methodological issues, everything I said earlier about quotations had the obvious aim of preparing all of you so that you would not be impressed by the quotation from Lenin. In other words, with one quotation, nothing is proven. I do not know whether I have achieved it. If I have not succeeded with everything I said before, I hope to see whether I succeed in destroying with everything that follows the “quotation” obsession once and for all.

The question is whether or not regime changes can be called revolution. The comrades categorically say no; there is a revolution only when power passes from one class to another. The comrades are a little inconsistent because they have a very serious problem. Here too there is a very orthodox quotation that makes to the essence of Trotskyism. If the comrades are consistent with Lenin, either we start to farewell them from the Fourth International, or they stay but clarifying that they completely disagree with the Fourth International and with a quotation as large as a monument. That quotation does not fit in this building, because that quotation is almost all the Fourth International, and says exactly the opposite of Lenin. [I refer] to the quotation made by Comrade Trotsky, and all the Trotskyists of the world, which says that in the USSR all that needs to be done is a revolutionary change of the political regime. Trotsky called it political and not social revolution because the power doesn't pass from one class to another.

If we are not among charlatans who try to win with quotes, the comrades, in all honesty, have to define Trotsky as they define us — as revisionists of Lenin. How many quotations do you want us to provide them to say that all Trotskyism thinks that in the USSR what we have to do is a political revolution and not a social revolution? How many do you want? Ask, we will give them to you. One thousand, five thousand, ten thousand, fifteen thousand, one hundred thousand of all Trotskyist literature. Yes, or no? Quote against quote, it already falls apart at the base.

Also, taking now the reality, the problem is very serious. Because Angola was liberated after more than 10 or 15 years of civil war. And everyone, all world Marxism, except *Convocatoria*, talks about the colossal colonial revolution of Angola, or of Mozambique, or of Guinea-Bissau, or of hundreds or tens of revolutions of this character. For *Convocatoria*, it was a reform, because — as far as we know — the property regime did not change, the class did not change, nothing changed. In these and in all the other countries the political regime changed, from colonial to semi-colonial. And we call it a “great revolution”.

Another revolution — so far, all Marxism has been structured [pointing out] that in 1910 there was a colossal revolution, which was the Mexican Revolution. More than that, we denounce — if it may be denounced, because these are limitations of them — that the great crime of European Marxism, including Lenin and Trotsky, is that it never studied this revolution. We consider it as great as the Russian. And because the Russians did not study the Mexican Revolution, because Trotsky did not study it, he did not write anything about guerrillas in the *Transitional Program*. A serious crime for the quotation of Trotsky, because the greatest revolutions were made with guerrillas that we never quote. And we do not quote them because we did not study the great Mexican political revolution. Because in Mexico in 1910 the regime of ownership of the land did not change. It changed much later. Nor was imperialism expropriated. Only the regime of electing president changed. The [re-election] was liquidated. It was an entire revolution so that the presidents could not be re-elected. It was for a change of institution — from re-election to no re-election. This belongs to the first course on the Mexican Revolution of the first grade of civic instruction of all the Central American countries. What do the comrades call it? “The Mexican Reformation”? Please! Do not make everyone die laughing! “Mexican Reformation” with tens and tens of thousands of dead? It was a revolution.

Comrades are also wrong about the revolution of 1890. According to oral tradition, Engels wrote insightful letters to the engineer Lallemand, who was in Argentina, commenting on the Revolution of 1890. Thanks to you we have learned that the Revolution of 1890 was a social revolution. Until now we believed that it was a political revolution, for imposing the right to free voting.

And Urquiza's national war against Rosas in Argentina, was it a social or political revolution? And the revolution of 1848 in France, and all the revolutions that Marxism studied saying they were political revolutions, that it was one class sector against another, to change a structure, what were they?

In brief, comrades, they exist. During these decades, there were colossal colonial revolutions, colossal democratic revolutions like the Mexican. And there were also colossal social revolutions like those of China, Cuba and Eastern Europe. All these revolutions existed and exist. Put another way, that quote of Lenin categorically does not help. And if it helps, the Fourth International is ill-founded, because it was founded to make the political revolution and not the social revolution [in the USSR], as one of its most important tasks.

Here we must speak clearly. There is no need to resort to manoeuvres against the leadership if you hate the leadership and love Trotsky. You have to be clear. In this, the leadership is with Trotsky and against Lenin. We think that there is indeed no social revolution in the USSR because in many places there are no social revolutions. What we do say is that every political revolution within the capitalist regime is, at its core, socialist. This is another problem altogether. But [the political revolution] exists.

We also say something else that would be very interesting for the comrades to discuss. We say that a new type of democratic revolution has emerged, which is the anti-colonial, or nationalist, democratic revolution. They are democratic revolutions against capitalism. For example, we believe that the struggle of the Basques in Spain today is not an anti-feudal but anti-capitalist struggle. And we also believe there are democratic revolutions of a political kind, which is when a genocidal dictatorship is overthrown. As we also believe that a new phenomenon has emerged, which is the counter-revolutionary dictatorships of the bourgeois type. This is why Mexico is so fundamental in the history of the world revolutionary process. What is the struggle against Porfirio Díaz,<sup>14</sup> a great bourgeois dictator? Porfirio Díaz is not feudalism, he is bourgeois. And this phenomenon, so complicated from the Marxist theoretical point of view, was not analysed by the European Marxists because for them every democratic revolution was anti-feudal. They did not grasp the meaning that on the periphery there were anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist democratic revolutions against capitalist governments. This is why they did not grasp that there were three types of revolutions, and not just two, as the theory of the Permanent Revolution proposed. And today we have more than two or three types of revolutions.

All of European Marxism was built around two kinds of revolutions. For the 20th century, two types of revolutions were posed: the capitalist social revolution against feudalism, and the socialist revolution against capitalism. And they did not see the revolutions against the bourgeois counter-revolutions, [which are] a third type of revolution, whether they are colonial or semi-colonial. It was a third kind of revolution, and they did not see it. And this is why they did not see the guerrillas. This is why they wrote nothing [about] the guerrillas. Because if they had studied Mexico, they would have seen that it was a type of revolution in which the axis was the guerrilla and the popular mobilisation, with different sectors, even without having the proletariat as the vanguard.

And the same thing happened, dozens and dozens of times, in this post-war period.

This is shutting the eyes to the fact that there are several patterns of revolutions — some are political, others are social, and there is also a political [revolution] against the workers' bureaucracy, which is also a new kind of revolution. The comrades refuse to see the richness of reality and our blindness, that of the Marxists. A blindness which doesn't come for being Marxists, but because we are conditioned by the same environment. European Trotskyists saw the European revolution thoroughly and theorised about it.

We do not deceive anyone. I insist; we do claim that we have incorporated a new type of category of political revolution, which is also socialist at heart; it is part of the permanent revolution. What is this new democratic political revolution that is anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist (and for me anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist is the same) and not anti-feudal? [This revolution] exists and is political in its initial

14 **Porfirio Díaz** (1830–1915) was a Mexican military officer, politician, and dictator who ruled Mexico for over 30 years, from 1876 to 1911, in a period known as the Porfiriato. His rule was characterised by the modernisation of the country, but also by political repression and social inequality, which eventually led to the Mexican Revolution.

effects; it is “Down with Somoza”<sup>15</sup>, it is “Down with Videla”<sup>16</sup>, it is “Down with the Tsar”. But “Down with the Tsar” was “Down with feudalism”. When we say “Down with Videla” or “Down with Somoza”, we are saying: Down with the counter-revolutionary expression of capitalism, not feudalism.

That is, there has been a change, and we must reflect that. We must enrich our Theses of the Permanent Revolution, incorporating the political revolution against the bureaucracy and these political revolutions that are fundamentally socialist, because it is the masses who are defeating the most important bastion of capitalism, which is its counter-revolutionary political regime. [We agree] that they should not stop there, but they do exist. And the existence of this democratic revolution is very important, as important as the existence or not of the bourgeois-democratic revolution [in its time], because [denying it was to be] ultra-leftists. The ultra-leftists considered that in countries like Russia, the only thing on the agenda was the socialist revolution. And the theory and the Theses of the Permanent Revolution insist that the bourgeois-democratic revolution exists. We are for the permanent revolution because we think that it is combined with another revolution — in the process, they are one and the same revolution. But the bourgeois-democratic revolution existed — it was “Down with the Tsar.”

We say the same thing now — the democratic revolution exists. Ending Angola’s colonial status was a revolution in itself — a democratic revolution, which is not the same as expropriating landlords and capitalists, although it initiates the dynamics towards the expropriation of landlords and capitalists. It is a fundamental historical task — the Angolans have to rule Angola, “Out with the Portuguese governor of Angola”. [It is a task] as historic as “Out with the Tsar”, only that its class dynamics are different. “Out with the Tsar” was “Out with feudalism”; “Out with the Portuguese governor” was “Out with the government of imperialism, of capitalism”.

This is why for us there are revolutions of all kinds. About [the revolution] being only social, I already gave the comrades the quotation on the political revolution in the USSR.

But the comrades do not take into account our insistence on the February revolution. The Mandelists have laughed much about it and are polemising. Mandel,<sup>17</sup> who lives revising all Trotsky, in this case he wants to be a Trotsky fanatic. At the risk of this reaching the Mandelists — given the obsession among the left of talking so much — I make it clear that, as I have a categorical quotation of Engels on Bismarck, I have two quotations — not one — categorical, brutal [of Trotsky on the revolutions of February] that destroy not only Mandelism but all the schematic speculations of this type. (I make it clear that I am not at all uniting the comrades of *Convocatoria* with Mandelism.)

Trotsky defined the great French general strike [of 1936] with factory occupations as a February revolution, that is, as a revolution. And on another occasion, he says the same thing about great workers’ mobilisations — that they are February revolutions. Can you explain to me what class change that general strike caused? It caused absolutely nothing. It confirmed the popular front government in France. And furthermore, Trotsky said that with this general strike the revolution had begun in France. Of all the things you apply [to define] revolutionary situation and revolution, what does it apply there? A general strike with factory occupations that consolidates the government of popular front. Everybody is for the popular front. [And yet] Trotsky says, first, that the revolution began in France, and second, that the February revolution began. In which way does it agree [with what you pose]? In nothing. Instead, with our characterisation

15 **Anastasio “Tachito” Somoza** (1925-1980) was President of Nicaragua from 1967 to 1972 and again from 1974 to 1979. He headed the dictatorship of the Somoza family dynasty (in power since 1937) between 1967 and 1979. He was overthrown by a revolution led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in July 1979. The current led by Nahuel Moreno participated in the armed struggle against his dictatorship by forming the Simon Bolivar Brigade. Somoza managed to flee Nicaragua and was assassinated in 1980 while in exile in Paraguay.

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

17 **Ernest Mandel** (1923-1995), born in Belgium, was one of the main leaders of Trotskyism since the post-war period, and also a Marxist economist. Together with Michel Pablo he pushed for the reorganisation of the Fourth International after Trotsky’s assassination, and from the early 1950s they headed the opportunist sector that pushed for capitulation to Stalinism, social democracy and the bourgeois nationalist leaderships. They were responsible for the crisis and dispersion of Trotskyism ever since. From the 1960s until his death, he headed the so-called “Unified Secretariat” of the Fourth International. Moreno has numerous polemical works against Mandel including *Argentina and Bolivia — A Balance Sheet* and *The Party and the Revolution*, which can be found at [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

— that there are different types of revolutions, infinite types of revolutions; even democratic revolutions of a new character, because they are against the bourgeoisie, and are revolutions because they overthrow a regime and inaugurate another regime — the concept of revolution is indeed enriched enormously.

All this must be incorporated into the theory of the Permanent Revolution. But it must be done thinking about the enormous richness the epoch gives.

The other very serious flaw of the comrades [is that] this discussion is one-sided if we do not clearly define the character of the epoch. What epoch have we been living since 1943 to date? And if it is still the same epoch, what does it have to do with this? We do not know exactly what definition the comrades have. I begin to be terrified that we have an abysmal difference with respect to the character of the epoch. This is much more serious than [the definition of] revolutionary situation and everything else.

We believe that from 1943 to the present, we have lived through an epoch of revolutionary and mass multitudinous mass upsurge worldwide, and of systematic and incessant revolutionary triumphs. I insist and emphasise this point about systematic and incessant. It is directly the opposite of the previous epoch, from 1923 to 1943, which is the epoch of the triumphs of the world bourgeois counter-revolution. It is the opposite by the vertex.

This has to do with our discussion with Lambertism about the imminent revolution. We found that Lambertism had this category of imminent revolution —which is very nice— and that they had a terrible mess. They did not know at what date to define that the era of the imminent revolution had opened. Stéphane Just,<sup>18</sup> whose greatest hatred in the world was Stalinism, was of the opinion that the counter-revolution had advanced colossally until 1953, the year in which the revolutionary process had begun because the first great movement against the Stalinist bureaucrats took place in East Berlin. He considered the Chinese Revolution and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in one-third of the world as great triumphs of the world counter-revolution. (This incredible discussion, worthy of a comedy magazine, not of a serious magazine or discussion, is recorded.) Stéphane Just's hatred of Stalinism may be justified, but what is not justified is that all his analyses have to do with his hatred of Stalinism.

Lambert<sup>19</sup> believed that [the rise began] in 1968.

For us the category [of imminent revolution] was very good, but if it had to be placed perfectly. It is the expression that in 1943 an epoch began in which revolutions broke out everywhere and many of them triumphed. As simple as that. For us, the epoch of the imminent revolution was the one that began since the year 1943. That is, the epoch where the revolutions triumph. As simple as that. And the best example is that the revolution triumphed in China, the most populated country in the world, almost a quarter of humanity. This has to do with the revolutionary triumphs.

In the previous postwar period, there was only one revolutionary triumph — Russia — and a few revolutions: Hungary; Germany; China; and to a lesser extent Italy — due to the strike with factory occupations. We can say with Trotsky that a revolution was initiated in France, the Spanish Republic and a few others, as far as we know.

18 **Stéphane Just** (1921-1997) was one of the main leaders of the Lambertist current and of the Internationalist Communist Organisation (unified), OCI(u), until 1983-84, when he was expelled with accusations typical of Lambert's bureaucratic methods in the face of his growing criticism and questioning. Of working-class origin, he had joined French socialism and after the Second World War joined the PCI, and with Lambert and others began the reconstruction of the French section of the Fourth International. From 1951, he was part of the sector which confronted the political opportunism and bureaucratic methods of Pablo and Mandel.

19 **Pierre Lambert** (1920-2008). French Trotskyist leader. Headed the PCI (Internationalist Communist Party) since 1954. He left the Fourth International and formed the International Committee with the Irishman Gerry Healy with sectarian positions regarding the Cuban revolution. They denied the character of a workers' and socialist state in Cuba. In 1979, Lambert rejected the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade by the bourgeois unity government of Sandinismo in Nicaragua (which was supported by Mandel and the SWP of the USA). This led in 1980 to a unification with the international organization led by Nahuel Moreno (they formed the Fourth International-International Committee, FI-IC). But they split soon after when Lambert broke with the commonly approved revolutionary program (the "Draft Theses" of the FI-IC) and turned to opportunism, supporting the bourgeois-imperialist government of the Socialist Party in France, headed by Mitterrand. From then on, Lambert's organisation entered into a pronounced decline. See *The Mitterrand Government, Its Perspectives and Our Policy* (1981), *The OCI(u)'s Betrayal* (1982), *End of Unity with Lambertism* (1982), and *Our Experience with Lambertism* (1986) at [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

As an aside, we do not know how the comrades define the Spanish Republic — whether it was a political or social revolution. [We would like you to explain to us] how the King of Spain was representative of feudalism and what came was representative of capitalism. This discussion would be very interesting.

All these revolutions failed, led to the triumph of the bourgeois counter-revolution. Only one remained, the USSR, but also with a colossal counter-revolutionary triumph that did not bring the bourgeoisie to power but did lead to bureaucracy and a totalitarian regime to power.

Instead, what has happened in this postwar period is incredible, comrades. During the Second World War, the entire world — except England and six or seven other countries — was fascist. All of Europe [was fascist]; all of Africa was a colony; all of Asia, including half of China, the richest part — was colonial. The rest was semi-colonial, dominated, and in almost all of Latin America, the governments were fascist, semi-fascist, or reactionary oligarchic. Well, if today we look at the map of the world, we see that there are 16 more workers' states. According to data published today in a newspaper, there are 70 colonies which were freed, they are independent. All of Europe is democratic, whereas before it was all fascist. The trusts and imperialism say they achieved this. I believe that comrades of *Convocatoria* will accept that it is a by-product of the revolutionary process. They managed to stop it there, but it is a colossal triumph.

Contrary to what the comrades may say, the Portuguese Revolution is a colossal revolution that won a colossal victory, even though all it achieved was a change of regime, from fascist to bourgeois-democratic. Nowadays the entire world and almost all of Latin America is bourgeois-democratic. We do not believe this is so because imperialism granted it, or that is a reform. We believe it is a colossal triumph of the revolutionary rise of the mass movement. All Latin America today is in a revolutionary situation.

Now, having discussed the character of the epoch and the character of the revolutions — and for us, all of these are revolutions — we can discuss whether or not there is a revolutionary situation.

There is a question of method. There are two ways of defining [the situation]. The traditional, Marxist, way is to look at the structure, the situation and the dynamics, that is, whether there is a colossal crisis of the world capitalist regime and whether there is a colossal rise of the world revolutionary mass movement. Not whether it is so in the USA or in the USSR, but as a whole, everywhere, and whether the dynamics are increasingly worse.

We believe that yes, there is a colossal crisis of all kinds. It starts with a tremendous economic crisis, and we believe it is getting worse. It is a social, economic, moral, and political crisis of all kinds and everywhere in the world: The entire world is in this situation, with growing misery and no way out. And we believe that along with this, there is a colossal mass revolutionary upsurge; which is uneven, very uneven, according to the Marxist law that everything is uneven. But what prevails, the essential element, is the revolutionary upsurge of the mass movement; and what prevails at the other pole is a growing crisis. Within the dynamic, we expect that the USA, which is the exception, which is the only one that relatively has no economic crisis, will also exploit economically.

This is the whole key to the discussion that we have with the comrades regarding the definition. For them, there is only a colossal development of the counter-revolution. They do not believe, as we do, that what prevails in this epoch and also at this stage are the revolutionary triumphs. We believe that the revolution has been winning, winning and winning for the last 40 years. Not to the extent of having defeated imperialism but that is another issue.

The epoch is revolutionary and has not yet closed. It will only close with the defeat of imperialism; and as long as imperialism is not defeated, there will always be counter-offensives. This is also inevitable. It is a fight. And there is even the historical possibility that it will win. We are not fatalistic, but what prevails is the revolutionary rise of the mass movement and the crisis of imperialism, which cannot fix anything. Instead, the comrades say that on a world scale, imperialism dominates over the socialist revolution. This is for them what takes precedence. Their position is given through a question: "Is or isn't this a symptom of imperialism's world-class domination of the socialist revolution?" Frankly, we are stunned.

This discussion is similar to whether or not Alfonsín<sup>20</sup> dominates the national economy and politics. It seems that the comrades have a, obsession with the word “domination”. Let us see with an example whether imperialism dominates world politics. I get the impression that Reagan<sup>21</sup> wants another government in Nicaragua. He’s a very bad actor. But I do not think he’s doing a great theatre play — he [actually] loves the Sandinista government and he’s doing all of this as a rehearsal for a new policy in which he plays the role of a bad guy or something similar. And if he were doing a theatre play, we would realise this, precisely because he is a very bad actor. We believe that Nicaragua is an expression of the world revolution and is not dominated by imperialism.

I have a very vague impression [the same thing must happen] with the Colombian guerrilla, with *Sendero Luminoso*<sup>22</sup> and the Salvadoran guerrilla. But after reading *Convocatoria*, I’m starting to doubt everything. Reagan must be a colossal actor, a fanatic of *Sendero Luminoso*, that he dominates and orders it to do everything it does. And the guerrillas that did not enter the truce in Colombia [did not do so because] they received a telegraphic order from Reagan, and have very subtle contacts with the Salvadoran guerrilla, to which he has given the line of bursting Duarte<sup>23</sup> as much as possible. Or this is false. That is, [imperialism] does not dominate the socialist revolution on a world scale. Or perhaps, are El Salvador, *Sendero Luminoso*, the Colombian guerrillas and the Nicaraguan government, with all the criticisms we may make of them, not an expression of the socialist revolution? And if they are an expression of the socialist revolution, are they an expression of imperialism’s class domination over them?

What about Lebanon? This great actor sent the marines to Lebanon to extract them three months later. And he gave the order that every time there is a big mess in Lebanon, the Israeli army should be busted. Because I believe that the Lebanese masses are part of the world revolution, and here I am told that Reagan, imperialism, on a world scale dominates the socialist revolution. As I consider [the Lebanese masses] part of the world revolution, thanks to the analytical depth of the *Convocatoria* comrades, I have learned that Reagan is supporting the Lebanese masses with weapons to bust the Israeli army in the south [of Lebanon]. And thanks to them I also learned that Reagan’s murderous hand was behind the three Sikhs<sup>24</sup> who killed Madame Indira Gandhi<sup>25</sup> in India, and that he is also with the Filipino guerrillas.

And Bolivia? Bolivia is the actor Reagan’s masterpiece. The comrades say that in Bolivia there is a revolutionary situation. But Bolivia must be the only place where Reagan doesn’t dominate, I don’t know. Thanks to the comrades, I also realise that in the [mining] strike against Thatcher,<sup>26</sup> Reagan is a great traitor to his great friend. And his great friend is a complete moron — she doesn’t realise that for a year Reagan has been paying the miners to destroy her. I say this because I think the English miners are part of the world socialist revolution, and [the comrades’ quotation] says that Reagan dominates the world socialist revolution.

20 **Raul Ricardo Alfonsín** (1927–2009) was an Argentine lawyer and politician leader of the Radical Civic Union (UCR). He was the president of Argentina, between 10 December 1983 and 8 July 1989, following the military dictatorship.

21 **Ronald W. Reagan** (1911–2004) was an American politician and actor who served as the 40th president of the United States from 1981 to 1989. A member of the Republican Party, he became an important figure in the American conservative movement. His presidency is known as the Reagan era.

22 **Sendero Luminoso** (Shining Path) was a Peruvian Maoist guerrilla group. It was founded in 1970 after a split in the Communist Party of Peru. It came to have a presence in almost 50% of Peruvian territory and 5,000 militants.

23 **Jose Napoleon Duarte** (1925–1990) was president of El Salvador from June 1, 1984, to June 1, 1989. With the support of Reagan and the CIA, he facilitated numerous abuses and massacres of the civilian population by Salvadoran forces and paramilitary “death squads.”

24 **Sikhs** are an ethnoreligious group who adhere to Sikhism, a religion that originated in the late 15th century in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent.

25 **Indira Gandhi** (1917–1984) was Prime Minister of India from 1966 to 1977 and from 1980 until her assassination in 1984 by her own Sikh bodyguards. She was a leader of the non-aligned movement. During her administration, banks and strategic resources were nationalised, promoting India’s technological and nuclear development.

26 **Margaret H. Thatcher**, (1925–2013), British Prime Minister (1979–1990), Conservative, led a “neoliberal” shift with massive privatisations, faced the 1984–85 miners’ strike and consolidated her power after the Malvinas War. Strategic ally of Ronald Reagan. In 1981, she refused to negotiate with IRA prisoners, leading to the death of Bobby Sands on hunger strike.

Well, I think that's delusional. As delusional as saying that Alfonsín dominates the strikes and everything; as delusional as to believe that Alfonsín made the concertation so that there would be a strike that same day.

We have to take into account the dynamics of the current situation. And everything seems to point out that the dynamics inevitably goes towards an economic crisis in the US, which will further accelerate the process of class struggle.

Furthermore, the comrades do understand about the imperialist counteroffensive. They quote everything we say about this counteroffensive but they do not quote what we have called the "crazy firefighter's law", that is, the mass movement's response to this counter-offensive, how they systematically defeat it, and how, as we say, the class struggle, the struggle between the counter-revolution and the revolution becomes increasingly tense. This is what they do not understand — how can the situation become increasingly tense.

Nor do they understand the law of the "crazy firefighter" — how imperialism is in a crisis so acute, so tremendous, that whatever counter-offensive it launches, it backfires; the masses end up defeating it.

The best example of this — to take one directly linked to Argentina — is that of the Malvinas Islands. Malvinas Islands meant a colossal counter-revolutionary victory for Thatcher. However, today the mining strike has recovered with interest all the successes that Thatcher had achieved. They have been on of strike for almost a year, they have her almost on the canvas, Thatcher's prestige is in tatters, at any moment she can be defeated, fall. What the Argentines did not achieve in Malvinas, is being achieved by the English proletariat in England. The comrades don't see this dialectic, this unity of the world revolutionary process.

Nor do they see [the relationship] between the economic and the political. Economically, until the proletariat achieves socialism in the world, there is no guarantee that its triumphs will mean more or less permanent economic improvement. It is even quite possible that there will be tremendous sacrifices.

For example — the comrades give Bolivia as an example of a revolutionary situation. For us, it is a totally flawed definition because what exists in Bolivia is much more than a revolutionary situation. There is an acute and almost chronic crisis of a revolutionary nature. It's a distinct phenomenon, similar to 1918-1919 in Germany. We have coined this category of "chronic" revolutionary crisis after observing the Bolivian situation. Because this is not a revolutionary situation, it is a revolutionary crisis. That is: in Bolivia, you can take power or start the revolutionary struggle to take it, in a minute. This is a revolutionary crisis. In other words: in minutes, in days, power can be seized.

But in Bolivia, the economic situation is increasingly catastrophic. And according to the comrades' definition, it is where one can least speak of revolutionary crisis or revolutionary situation, neither pre-revolutionary nor non-revolutionary. What we have is a counter-revolutionary situation from the economic point of view. Because we do not see in the whole world a working class that, as a dynamic, is being starved more and more every day. Statically there may be others who live in a worse misery, but we do not believe there are any whose standard of living is reduced by 70% or 80% every six months.

If they define only by this element [they fall] always in the sectarian method of isolating a fact from reality and transforming it in general — if the economy goes wrong, everything goes wrong. It's the other way around. The economic problem exacerbates the political and social struggle and further exacerbates the revolutionary process. How could it be otherwise? Perhaps there will be a defeat. But for now, this is the reality of Bolivia and it causes colossal political victories for the mass movement, such as the many times they stopped the *paquetazos*,<sup>27</sup> etc., even though they were later reimposed. Today, the International Monetary Fund dominates Bolivia. It is a lie that it isn't being paid. The International Monetary Fund gets along very well with the Bolivian government, and they agree in common. Precisely the contradictory economic-political issue is the characteristic of every revolutionary process. In other words, there is no possibility of overcoming the economic situation until power is seized in a country. And after taking power in a country there can also be a bigger famine than ever before. Imperialism can block us, wreak havoc on. And none of this means that there is no revolutionary situation or revolution.

To conclude, I will touch on the problem of the revolutionary united front.

27 **Paquetazo**, Spanish for a set of austerity measures and neoliberal policies.

First, whether or not it is propagandistic is a false discussion. We say it is concrete. And it will be more concrete to the extent that there is a crisis of the traditional apparatuses of the mass movement. The condition of the revolutionary united front is that there is a colossal crisis of the revolutionary apparatuses of the mass movement. We shouldn't forget this objective condition. The revolutionary united front is propagandistic in a country where the mass movement isn't totally controlled by a party, which is increasingly rare because there is a general crisis. In this sense, it is a policy to be implemented.

We also see a false debate as to whether the great task is to consolidate the party or to make the revolutionary united front, together with another false discussion which is the one that since Leeds<sup>28</sup> until now we have been raising the revolutionary united front, and in fact almost never it has been put into practice, almost never has it been applied.

I do not see an antagonism between the revolutionary united front and the revolutionary party; rather, I see two complementary tasks. The revolutionary party is strengthened by the revolutionary united front. The problem I do see is that the revolutionary united front opens the possibility of the emergence of parties of mass influence different to ours, by us joining other currents. If this is interpreted as meaning that the mass revolutionary party in Argentina, Colombia or Brazil will be our own parties growing, with regular Congresses, etc. and not the product of mergers, then we have an abysmal difference. And indeed, the revolutionary united front will be a theoretical-political discussion of the first order because it will not be so. Not even the Bolshevik Party itself, which was a power, seized power alone, but it joined forces with the Inter-District Organisation, which was a very strong working-class organisation. And to seize power it joined the left wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries. That is, it was not the same Bolshevik Party that existed until 1917. There was no merger but there was a massive inflow to it from other political organisations, without taking into account the number of anarchist groups that joined the Bolshevik Party.

The other discussion is whether or not the revolutionary united front is useful, given that in these twenty-something years it has not worked. This is like asking whether our great slogan of building Trotskyist parties with mass influence is useful or not. If we put forward one line 25 years ago and the other 50 years ago, and so far, neither has worked so far, then neither would be useful. And I believe both are magnificent lines that complement each other and are for practice and not for propaganda. The issue of timing has to do with the situation of the crises of the apparatuses. That is, as long as there is no brutal crisis of the bureaucratic apparatuses of the mass movement, there is no possibility of making Trotskyist parties with mass influence or of making the revolutionary united front.

This particular discussion on the revolutionary united front, now, right now, at the time of the IWL Congress, is very important, and it has already enriched us. It has allowed us to make some reflections that lead us to redouble our conviction of the revolutionary united front as a matter not only strategic but tactical, and which has to do with reality.

The apparatus that has practically been pulverised, disappeared, is Maoism. Stalinism is in a tremendous crisis but it still survives. It is strong in some countries, such as Italy. It still has structural apparatus, it survives.

For now, this colossal crisis of the apparatuses, and the crisis of leadership — perhaps because Stalinism is still strong — are reflected rather in the emergence of groups, individuals, small sectors that question everything. We are at a stage in which the crisis is expressed rather than by strong national, centrist, and progressive type tendencies, but by the existence of groups and organisations rather partial that arise, limited, questioning the opportunist leaderships.

This means we have to adapt our policy of revolutionary united front to these groups. We must be the great interlocutors, with enormous and a long-term perspective, of all groups and organisations that outline positive positions in any sense. As happened in Colombia, when we defined that a wing of independent trade unionism was deeply revolutionary, despite sometimes taking positions with which we completely disagreed. We took the line of having a fraternal attitude — for years we have been having it

28 In 1951, the Fourth International split in between the International Secretariat (IS) and the International Committee (IC). In 1958, a conference of the IC was held in the British city of Leeds. The IC was the sector led by the SWP of the United States, which opposed the revisionist and opportunist sector of Pablo and Ernest Mandel's IS. Moreno presented two texts: the *Theses of Leeds* and *The Permanent Revolution in the Postwar Period*, both available at [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

— starting from the premise that, in the sense of the struggle, everything united us and nothing separated us, and that in the struggle itself we were going to keep consolidating the programmatic agreements that would first lead us to a revolutionary united front, and later to a single revolutionary party.

Because the revolutionary united front is a tactic in the path of building revolutionary Marxist parties with mass influence, and within the strategy of building a revolutionary International with mass influence, Trotskyist or non-Trotskyist. This problem of the revolutionary united front is crucial to combat sectarianism in every sense; as the leadership has tried to fight it and discuss it throughout this Congress.

I don't want to dwell on the history of our tendency, the number of militants and all that that the comrades touch on.<sup>29</sup> It is overwhelmingly favourable to us. Nothing of what the comrades say is true. We are fanatical about not inflating numbers. We are fanatical about exact figures. And we have overwhelming documentation. For example, all the inflated figures that have been made in Argentina were made by that scoundrel Ruben Visconti. We have the reports in his own handwriting. And we fought all those reports. But we don't want to dwell on that. Nor do we want to dwell on whether we thought that the FI-IC [Fourth International-International Committee] would have 20,000 militants and the IWL-FI has fewer. It is logical: FI-IC was much stronger than IWL, 20 times stronger. It was logical that we should give bigger figures. We do not understand where the criticism lies regarding this problem.

I want to touch Israel in passing. First, to make a self-criticism — Israel is not a fascist state but, in the sense that we define it, it is Nazi. Nazism brings methods of civil war, not only against the proletariat but also against races, especially the Jewish and Slavic races. It is one of the greatest monstrosities of imperialism. I do not want to dwell on the historical problem; that Nazism has given us everything that is possible in the future of mankind if capitalism triumphs. From the point of view of the monstrosity, the Nazi dynamics are brilliant because it is the attempt to transform the exploited into distinct species, into distinct races. The monstrosity of capitalism, in this sense, was perfectly on target. There can be no greater human monstrosity than the attempt to divide humanity into sectors that will end up as distinct species; some working and others living at the expense of the others. That is why the methods of civil war against races existed, not just against the working class.

This is the whole discussion with Comrade Gallego, who understands absolutely nothing about this.<sup>30</sup>

We know perfectly well that the working class of Israel — especially the Ashkenazi [i.e., Jews of European origin] — are not prosecuted; we know they have Histadrut [the trade union centre], they have everything. Comrade Gallego almost treats us like mental retards, believing we don't know there are parties. What we denounce is that there is a systematic genocide of a racial type. This is typical of Nazism rather than of fascism. That's why I am self-critical.

We did not grasp the depth of what we have now learned. Also, one of the greatest Israeli jurists, a member — if I recall correctly — of the Supreme Court, said that Israel was Nazi. We changed our minds and said that it was fascist, without [grasping] how deep he was. He understood better than we did, and he even knew that as a member of the Supreme Court he could afford to say that Israel was Nazi, he had the freedom to say so. He was right; it was Nazi in that sense — the methods of civil war against a race. Where a race is persecuted with methods of civil war; these are Nazi methods because they are methods of civil war.

Well, comrades, that's all.

29 *Convocatoria* pointed out that the numbers of militants of the Argentine party and the International had been magnified by the leadership of the International.

30 Comrade Gallego had questioned the definition of the State of Israel as Naci, alleging that there were political and union liberties, among others things.

## Reply to Comrade Broquen

Unfortunately, I could not be present when Comrade Broquen had the floor. I only read his document, and when I saw that he proposed that the model of organisation for our party had to be [the model of] the Catholic Church, I was horrified. I thought he had let slip such a barbarity in his eagerness to write an answer quickly. But afterwards, I was told that the comrade, orally, has defended this position. So, I asked for the floor to explain, not only this question — which Comrade Aldo answered very well — but a more fundamental problem, which is the method.

Comrade Broquen's method [is expressed] both in the first document of *Convocatoria* — of which he is responsible, regardless of whether he signed it or not — [as] in this second document of his; [it becomes evident] even in the profound methodological differences existing in *Convocatoria* when it is with Broquen and when it is without Broquen. Subsequent documents [to the first] of *Convocatoria*, for example, are clear, unequivocal political documents. In this sense, they are within our method. I think they don't put forward any correct position and that, as I said yesterday, the position of the *Convocatoria* comrades is [politically] sectarian and organisationally opportunist. [But it is] crystal clear, and the discussion is categorical.

Instead, the first document of *Convocatoria* and this second document of Comrade Broquen use [the same method]. First, we have to understand it and be patient with Comrade Broquen. And then to repudiate it totally and absolutely, because it is the [method] of trying to cover the backside and gaining prestige. (Later on, I will explain why we have to understand him.)

What is the document like? It is a document of “addition and subtraction”, [a definition] that many years ago we learned from a great English Marxist. What does “document of addition and subtraction” mean? Pablo, for example, to maintain his prestige as a leader of the Fourth Internacional, always wrote like this: “There will never be a revival of the capitalist economy, never again, [the economy] will be in stagnation and atrophy, it will be a disaster, there will be 50 years of uninterrupted crisis and growing misery of the masses; but it is not ruled out that the capitalist economy will rise and that the economic situation of the masses will improve much more”... “It is not ruled out that the Cuban leadership is the greatest revolutionary leadership in the whole world, but it is not ruled out that it will betray”.

What I'm telling you is true. All his documents were like this: they were all long, full of “buts”. They were given the name of addition and subtraction documents because the second part of all sentences subtracted everything that the first part said, and always ended up with zero.

Comrade Broquen is a genius — he far surpassed Pablo and Mandel. Read it for yourselves: “The leadership is very great, made this great party”. And then read the second part: “it didn't get a single thing right, nothing”. But if it doesn't get a single thing right, it's not great; it's terrible. And [Broquen does] also the same with respect to the party, because in one part he says that it has to be like the Church and another part he says that it has to be as the Third International said, which is the opposite of the Church. He has already [prepared] his defence.

Why is this so, comrades? Comrade Broquen is new to Trotskyism. Comrade Broquen comes from the Social Democracy. You cannot remove the vices of 50 years as a Social-Democrat, and in Social-Democracy it is discussed in this way. In this sense, Comrade Broquen is different from Ricardo Napuri,<sup>31</sup> or Ruben Visconti. Napuri is a colossal figure of the Latin American revolutionary movement; he led large parties. You have the misfortune of not seeing him here. He is old, like Comrade Broquen, but [if he were here] he would say: “I am old as a revolutionary but new as a Trotskyist; almost everything I’m going to say is an atrocity”. Broquen’s crime is that he uses age to make believe that what he says is worthy, instead of saying, “I have 50 years of the wrong method, of betrayals, on my back; I am learning from you and every day I say more atrocities than anyone else”.

Well, this is all I wanted to say to make my small methodological contribution. Nothing more, comrades.

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31 **Ricardo Napuri** (b. 1924) is a Peruvian Trotskyist leader who was a senator and constituent deputy, leader of the Peruvian POM-R and the OCRFI, the Lambertist current. He participated in the founding of the FI-IC in December 1980 when the OCRFI was unified with the international current of Morenoism. When differences arose in 1981, that would lead to the division of both forces, Napuri leaned towards the positions of Morenoism and disagreed with Lambert. Lambert began to implement an infamous public campaign of moral slander against Napuri. See more in *Our Experience with Lambertism* (1986), chapter IV, available at [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org). In the crisis of the 1990s Napuri, based in Buenos Aires, accompanied the positions of the BT and later of the New MAS.