



Nahuel Moreno

Nahuel Moreno's
report and
a debate
with Roberto
Santucho

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Foreword

Mercedes Petit¹

A debate between Moreno and Santucho over the slogan “CGT workers’ party”

In the second half of 1964, the militants of Palabra Obrera in Tucuman began an exchange with an organisation that had a presence in the North West, the FRIP (Indoamerican and Popular Revolutionary Front).

FRIP had indigenist positions and in defence of the Cuban revolution. The important rise of the sugar workers led them to appreciate the question of the role of the working class and interested them in the conceptions of Trotskyism and the permanent revolution. Both they and Palabra Obrera were active in FOTIA (Federation of Sugar Industry Workers). At the San Jose Sugar Mill, Leandro Fote, the leader of Palabra Obrera was active. Mario Roberto “Robi” Santucho, leader of FRIP, also had influence there. A process of debate began towards the unification into a single revolutionary party, whose congress was held in May 1965, giving birth to the PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party).

At that congress Moreno presented a report on the national document, which was published for the first time in 2012 in the Spanish edition of *From Illia to Ongania*, together with two pamphlets also by Moreno: *Argentina, a country in crisis* (1964) and **The struggle has just begun**, (1966), both available in www.nahuelmoreno.org. The report by Moreno is accompanied by the speeches of Santucho, who questioned one of the slogans to be raised by the PRT: the demand to the CGT to launch a workers’ party.

The context of the exchange of opinions was provided by the fact that in Tucuman, besides the important rise of the workers, there had been a change in the leadership of FOTIA. Although most of this leadership was quickly bureaucratized, in the heat of a numerous fighter vanguard, at the beginning of 1965, the old bureaucracy was swept away by this new leadership that opened the possibility of a development towards class consciousness. At the same time, there was a division in Peronism, and a neo-Peronist party, Accion Provinciana (Provincial Action), allowed more than half of its candidates to be workers, mainly from FOTIA. The unified FRIP-PO party gave its critical support, because it was a bourgeois party, to the Accion Provinciana slates, which came first in the legislative elections. Among the elected provincial deputies who formed the Bloque Obrero

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(Workers' Bloc) was Leandro Fote, who emerged as candidate at an assembly of the San Jose sugar mill and who was publicly known as a Trotskyist.

October 2020

Nahuel Moreno's report and a debate with Roberto Santucho

Discussion over the national document at the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) First Congress (merging of FRIP and Palabra Obrera)

May 1965

National Report

Nahuel Moreno:

I think rather than repeating the written report it would be more useful to discuss the method of drawing up the general line for a revolutionary party. With what method? Seeing the reverse side of the plot, how the movie is shot. Not the movie but the technique of filming it. Thus, today we will make a small report on what a transitional programme is, what a political report suitable for the party should respond to. Making party documents and above all those for a congress that will give the party the general line for one or two years, has an obvious aim, which, however, we need to point out in our character as a revolutionary party. The document starts and analyses the needs of the class struggle and the needs of the workers, to see how our party, based on those needs, can lead the workers to the working-class revolution. This is the essential goal of the documents and the essential goal of the Congress.

Our method

And to make this analysis we have a method, which we often forget, and today it is necessary to insist on it again, for when we later judge and study together the problem of the CGT transformed into a workers' political party. What is this method? It is: we judge all the phenomena and we judge our own activity and our own programme in movement. There is no phenomenon, we judge stationary. We judge every phenomenon not only how it is, but in perspective, how it will be. And in doing so we do nothing more than what Comrade Fote¹ does in Tucuman, or Comrade A in the San Jose sugar mill union, or Comrade N in the textile factory where she works, or the comrades who fillet fish in Mar del Plata. Every activist who fights against the bosses is a revolutionary. If he is consciously revolutionary, for his factory, for his comrades, he uses the same method; he sets himself the same goal, the same dynamic method of taking everything in motion.

For example, the San Jose comrades permanently ask themselves what they should do against the boss, how the situation is, whether the boss is on the offensive, whether we are on the offensive, etc. But in raising this question, in studying the workers' needs, the situation of the workers, the

¹ **Leandro Fote** (1937—disappeared in 1976): Worker in the sugar industry, in 1961 he was a union delegate at the San Jose sugar mill and by 1964 secretary general of the union. In 1965 he was a provincial deputy, integrating the workers' bloc of the Provincial Action party. Within this party, FOTIA formed an independent faction and raised workers' candidacies. That of Leandro Fote was proclaimed, for the first time in Argentine history, in an assembly at the San Jose sugar mill and became one of the best examples given by the working class itself, on how to use elections to develop their class independence politics. He was a militant of Palabra Obrera, PRT, and when this divided of the PRT-*El Combatiente*. He was kidnapped-disappeared by the Armed Forces on 12 January, 1976. [Editor]

relations between the classes in San Jose, they have a perspective: How to raise the San Jose workers, how to get those workers to fight to wipe the bosses out? And they take this in perspective. In the tasks being posed, they always see what perspective is. For example, if we consolidate the cell, if at the same time the revolutionary tendency of FOTIA (Sugar Industry Workers Federation) consolidates, we may reach the leadership of FOTIA. When the problem of the collective agreement arises, a dynamic plan will be made, a plan taking into account that everything changes, develops. I was chatting about the same thing, a moment ago, with a comrade of the fishery workers from Mar del Plata. The comrade also told me: "We've just suffered a big defeat, if we're not reinstated it will take years to get back on our feet." The real goal of the comrade, because he is a conscious comrade, from way back, is to achieve the revolution, to get the workers to defeat the bosses, but he sees things in movement and knows he cannot accomplish that in one or two months. If he thought otherwise, we would face a utopian revolutionary, if he didn't take reality as it is and as it develops. How does he move after a defeat? The comrade knows it will take at least months or years to revive the morale of 2000 fired workers, crushed by the bosses' repression. We have to do the same, i.e., start from reality as it is but projecting ourselves towards the future, towards a future we believe reality will inevitably give us, which is the workers' revolution. Take all the phenomena in movement, define them in their movement and see ourselves in it, too.

Three fundamental problems

Having clarified then the aim of every analysis of a congress and the method, we have to point out that every analysis, every essential document of a revolutionary party congress, has to give a categorical, clear and without doubts answer to three fundamental problems:

- One is the analysis of the dynamic situation, I insist. Not only how it is, but how it can unfold.
- Another is to point out very carefully how we operate, where we are operating, what workplaces we have.
- And the third aspect is the programme, which in itself is a big problem (we'll get to that later), i.e., how to build a revolutionary programme.

Any document that truly arms a revolutionary party has to have a clear answer to these three problems: an analysis of the situation, clearly identifying the workplaces, and third, the programme that we're going to work with, what we're going to put forward in those workplaces.

This is what we propose at a national level for every party. We must learn it in a definitive way because the local leaders, including the cell leaders, must include it into their theoretical and methodological baggage, to apply it at the level of each cell, each region, or each zone.

It is fundamental to specify these three aspects. The national party documents make an analysis of the situation, establish the places of work and develop a programme.

On the national situation

I am not going to dwell on every single point of the national document because in general we all agree. We are only going to highlight the most important aspects of the analysis of the situation. We insist that within a situation of a relative stability of the pro-imperialist and capitalist regime in the country, there is a total crisis. This total crisis encompasses all spheres of national life. It encompasses culture, politics and the economy. It is a chronic crisis as we have defined it, and it also encompasses the Peronist movement according to our analysis. The Peronist movement is also in crisis. Within this panorama of total crisis, we see a positive aspect, which is the emergence of a new leadership of the workers' movement. A leadership, a vanguard, an enormous number of union activists who are making an extraordinary experience, accompanied also by a student vanguard, which is also making a colossal experience.

We have called this overall analysis of the country chronic crisis on the one hand, and of ideological revolution, on the other. In one aspect, this crisis begins to be overcome, i.e., in the workers' movement a leadership begins to emerge that is increasingly clear, a class-struggle leadership and at certain moments revolutionary. This is how we see the situation dynamics. A crisis that becomes more and more acute, with its ups and downs, momentary stability, as now, but within this chronic, permanent crisis, becoming more and more acute. But there is another dynamic rise, which is of a students' and workers' vanguard that is learning more and more; that is perfecting its methods more and more and transforming itself more and more into a revolutionary leadership.

This is the overall analysis of the situation. We also add to this overall analysis the one of how the situation is in the workers' movement, the relationship between workers and bosses and the relationship with imperialism itself.

We believe the workers' movement since 1959 does not engage in large battles. There is a crisis in the workers' movement, just like in the Peronist movement; there is a crisis of leadership that is reflected in the fact that there are not great struggles of the workers' movement. But just as in the overall situation there is a spotlight that increasingly illuminates, which is the ideological revolution of the vanguard, a dynamic spotlight, in movement, that grows more and more. Also, at the level of the struggle between the bosses and the workers, there is also luminous spotlight, that lights more and more, which is that of factory struggles, that of confronting the bosses by means of strikes with occupation of factories and hostages, for example. It truly is a powerful spotlight of a colossal revolutionary potential because it poses a very serious problem for the capitalist regime, which is the dual power.

Every strike with factory occupation and hostages presents a very serious problem, though does not arise with all the seriousness it has, although it is general, but it is raising at factory level the problem of the future and the existence of the current regime itself because it puts into question who the real owner of the factory they have occupied is: the boss himself or the workers' movement, the workers of the occupied factory. In the analysis of the general situation, these two fundamental aspects are involved: the situation of the bosses and the workers' movement.

Where we work

From these two fundamental facts comes the question of where we work, which is the second problem we have to answer. The first was the analysis of the situation, in its essential aspects. The second was: the workplaces. From this analysis it becomes clear that our fundamental work is in the trade union arena, without any doubt, and within the trade unions, particularly in our union, our fundamental work is at the factory level, accompanying the process of the emergence of a new workers' vanguard leadership, on the one hand, and on the other, accompanying and developing, where possible, the process of dual power, of occupation, of fierce struggle at the level of the factories, that is, our work.

A contribution was brought to this congress, which perhaps has gone a little unnoticed, or because it is so well understood by the comrades, it has not been given much relevance, which is the problem of the importance of the student movement. Within the workplaces we consider the student movement to be of primary importance, always starting from the fact that our workplaces are unions and factories. But we consider the student movement and its vanguard have always played a role within the revolutionary process, to the extent that it is folded into the process of class struggle. Now, we consider the student movement is a fundamental workplace for us because it can mean our sounding board, the biggest little wheel, where the party is a small wheel. The student vanguard is a much bigger wheel, to have an echo or action on another much bigger gear that is the whole of the workers' movement, as the Congress rally, of repudiation of the American invasion to Santo Domingo, showed. Thanks to our influence in the student movement and the action of our student faction, the party could have a speaker, could get the rally done, which was the party line, and could achieve a great resonance for the problem of Santo Domingo.

In short: What workplaces do we have? Essentially the trade union and the factory, but we give special importance— as an indirect way of going towards the workers' movement itself, of acting on the whole of the workers' movement — to the student movement. This is the fundamental importance we give to it and at the same time to recruit vanguard elements who serve to generalise, to rise to a more general level the own struggles of the working class. Taking out these two workplaces, which we will combine, and which we have to see in the perspective of influencing each other, we don't have any other important workplaces.

The programme

And we move on to the third big problem, which is the problem of the programme. A programme, essentially, is a set of slogans, of a few words or phrases expressing great needs of the masses, or of the vanguard itself. How does one draw up a revolutionary programme? How do we, the leadership, develop a programme? By what methods?

First of all, to elaborate a revolutionary programme there is two problems. The first one is the programme tries to solve problems of different nature; it tries to solve the problems of the country colonised by the American imperialism. Put another way, we have a programme by sectors, either of the population, the workers, the whole country, the vanguard. The programme is made up of smaller programmes, by sector. We have a whole series of slogans to free the country, to develop the revolution in Latin America, to support the revolution in the world. This is one area of our own programme, we have another programme to respond to the most pressing needs of the workers' movement, we have another that responds to the needs of the vanguard of the workers' movement and another for the student vanguard itself. But this problem is secondary to the other big problem.

The different types of slogans

Every revolutionary programme has to have three types of slogans: minimum slogans, transitional slogans and power slogans. This programme as a whole can be called transitional programme because, between the minimum programme and the power slogans a bridge is established, a bond known as the transitional programme. Let's see what the transitional programme is and how our party solved it, and the power slogans.

The minimum slogans, the minimum party programme, involved in the programme as a whole, is those tasks, those urgent needs of the workers' movement of the country that are revolutionary. For example, today to propose an increase of 40, 50 or 60 per cent for the workers is a need that cannot be postponed, it is a need felt by all the workers, but this programme does not liquidate the capitalist regime, it does not put it in danger. Capitalism can survive by giving that increase. Let us suppose that at the San Jose sugar mill the workers are fired or suspended from work, or not paid for their fortnightly work. The proposal they be paid is a minimal programme. The fact the owner of San Jose pays the fortnight does not limit the capitalist regime, nor does it even put it in danger; at most it begins the mobilisation of the workers. That is why it is called a minimum programme or a minimum slogan.

Our party, the leadership itself, the comrades of the Tucuman Central Committee, received a hard lesson from a comrade worker. It was Comrade Mali who posed: "this whole programme is very good, very useful, but I think what the comrade workers will feel most is the problem of the need for a general wage rise because of the high cost of living and around this economic problem is what the workers will pay more attention." Comrade Mali was explaining to us how the revolutionaries do not shrug off the problem of minimum tasks, minimum slogans and minimum programme. On the contrary, they are the champions for these demands.

If we were to remain at these mere proposals, we would be very honest anti-bosses trade unionists but not revolutionaries. What makes us revolutionaries is that we accompany this minimum

programme, these proposals of the minimum needs of the workers, with another programme, which is the famous transitional programme, which are those slogans the workers understand, they feel they respond to the deepest workers' needs, but they are already beginning to undermine the regime. For example, if we propose, as the northern comrades have proposed, control of the companies' ledgers, so that they do not hide the money to avoid paying wages, the workers have to understand this perfectly. The sugar bosses are constantly saying: "we can't pay you because we haven't earned money for it". There is no simpler slogan than: "let's check their ledgers to see if they lie: control the ledgers". This is already a transitional slogan. Another transitional slogan is "sliding scale of working hours and wages".

Suppose we impose on all the bosses of the country that wages never go down. A loaf of bread increases five cents, wages increase by five cents. They lose their jobs and still get paid. This does begin to undermine the capitalist regime because it breaks the whole structure and laws of capitalism. Let's assume workers' militias. There is a strike; we put forward workers' militias to take care that the scabs cannot work. This undermines the regime because this capitalist regime has a structure. For the regime, the army is forces of repression; the armed forces are at its service. The emergence of workers' militias means a start of dual power, it means the beginning of the liquidation of the bosses and the bourgeoisie power of repression. All these are slogans that are felt to be very necessary, which are linked to others as in the case of the sugar workers. The minimum: "that we get paid for the fortnight". If they pay us for the fortnight, nothing happens to the capitalist regime, but we have to be champions of this slogan. Just because we are revolutionaries, we should not shrug our shoulders. But we must link this slogan to the slogan of ledgers control. This slogan is already beginning to undermine, it is a transitional slogan, because it is beginning to bury it, it is beginning to dig the grave, these are the first shovelfuls of the grave that will serve to bury the bosses and imperialism and the oligarchy. The workers' power begins to develop.

And the third kind of slogan we have to raise is the slogans of power. Because all these slogans of transition, which undermine, which destroy the armed political and economic power of the bosses and imperialism, have to culminate in a permanent proposal that has to be given by the programme itself, at the present moment it is: How do we show the working class, how do we carry out our campaign that there is no definitive solution to any problem of the country, nor of the workers, if the workers themselves do not take over the government? In which way do we seek to present to the workers: "the government must be yours" But doing it in an accessible way, one they understand; not: "You have to take over the government" but by adopting another way. [...]

Indeed, we, as revolutionaries, want the workers' organisations to take over the government to show them clearly that our struggle is a struggle for the problem of power and it is not a struggle for power for us but for the workers themselves. Thus, there must always be slogans that show the workers that's our approach: the slogan of power. This set, these three types of slogans, dynamically linked, in the perspective of the analysis of the situation, the minimum slogans, those transitional and those of power, is what makes a revolutionary programme. And the whole art, the tremendous, the difficult, the exciting, and the sometimes almost impossible art of achieving a harmonious combination of these slogans, is the task of revolutionary Marxists. Of the conscious, capable revolutionary socialists.

How have we solved this problem? By proposing the plan of struggle and the need for a general wage increase for everybody. That is our minimum programme: everywhere to achieve wage increases that compensate for the rise in living expenses.

What are our transition slogans? Many. We have already cited the case of sugar, which is one of the best, most felt, real examples. We have raised the problem of ledgers control. Whether it is approved or not, any sugar worker understands it perfectly well and it responds to a deep need of reality. On a national scale we propose that where the bosses are on the offensive against the workers, we propose the workers respond with a general strike with occupation of factories and hostages. This is a tremendous slogan that has already been taken up by important sectors of the Argentinian

workers' movement and immediately raises the problem of dual power. It is a tremendous transitional slogan. Like this one, there are many others in the programme.

What about power slogans, comrades? We have raised the slogan of the Constituent Assembly and the need for the CGT, with all the parties that support its programme, be it the one taking the government, to call for this Constituent Assembly or to demand it. That is our slogan of power.

On the slogan on turning the CGT into a workers' party

Having clarified the mechanism with which our national documents have been elaborated and taking into account all this methodology, we will consider the problem of the CGT, the workers' party.

Comrades, I did not want to explain our programme at all, I insist again, I did not want to summarise the report, I consider it read, known and I will try to stop at a point like this: the CGT as a workers' party offers many doubts.

Let's start for what we said at the beginning. We have to make a dynamic analysis of the situation. Take a phenomenon and place it in its moment. For example, we even have a physical repugnance to (as Comrade Negro would say), the Sepoy left. But we even have a physical revulsion to them because they are the greatest "revolutionaries," among them old "friends" of ours, who we have defined in a more intellectual way, as the famous "revolutionaries" of the Cafe Tortoni. Because they are people who have been living in that famous cafe in Buenos Aires for 25 or 30 years; they divide the tables by factions: one, is that of the Luxembourgests, another is that of the putschists A or that of the group B. You enter the cafe and find revolutionaries of all kinds. Here there are people who have friends of this kind; I have friends of this kind too. They are quite picturesque. Ultra-revolutionaries, with great theories, that Lenin was a poor wretch, that he made the revolution by chance, and tremendous currents, for example, those with Rosa Luxemburg, who without making any revolution was the genius, etc. etc.

These people exist. What is it that makes us have this great aversion towards them? It is our method of definition. Because for us, those people, who are revolutionary and honest, who are against the capitalist regime to the bitter end (they have been against the regime for 30 years and they will end this struggle with death, but it is death in bed, with their boots on, by natural death). What is it that makes us have physical repugnance of all these people? And instead, when Catholic and humanist currents emerged over two years ago, more or less, they were not on the left of Lenin, like those people, but came from the ultra-right, from the Argentinian Socialist Party or the Communist Party. What is it that makes us take these comrades with sympathy and those with repugnance? Our method, our way of defining phenomena. Because for us, the first were a stagnant phenomenon, they were in a swamp, they no longer had a cure, and so our dynamic definition: left-wing centrism of the worst kind. This definition means that these elements are gangrenous, that they have no cure. In contrast, the comrades who were furious Catholics, who came from gorilla backgrounds, we defined them as a process in motion. And our definition, our methodological obligation is to define every phenomenon in movement and this led us to classify this process as positive. Because their movement was a shift to the left, towards increasingly revolutionary positions. This is our method, which confuses many of our comrades, not to define things in movement but by the past or the present.

For the problem of Peronism, for the problem of the CGT as a workers' party, we have to use the same method. Where we give up this method, we can lose our way. Today the working class expresses itself electorally, to a lesser extent politically, electorally, I insist on this definition: through Peronism.

If we were to define the problem in this way, the problem of power and of the place where we have to work, it would be very simple: we have to work in Peronism, and our slogan of power would be "Peron to the government surrounded by the workers' movement, to apply a revolutionary

programme.” But if we were to do this, we would commit the first methodological crime because we would not be defining either the workers’ movement or Peronism in its dynamics but we would be defining it in a static way, as it is now, not as it was, not as it will be.

The possible Peronist dynamics

We have an obligation to start seeing how things will happen and how they have been happening dynamically. And what has been happening? A fabulous crisis in Peronism. Peronism is a political movement that electorally has the support of the working class, but in a growing crisis, in increasingly sharper dynamics. As, indirectly, we have seen in Tucuman because the official Peronist leadership got almost no votes. This is also part of the crisis we are talking about. What will happen if this crisis of Peronism continues growing? This is the first thing we have to start discussing among all of us. To start discussing the slogans, where our work mates are going, how they are going to express themselves politically. It is going towards anarchy, towards Peronist or neo-Peronist leaders — bourgeois politicians, as bourgeois as Peron — being voted; it is going towards a dispersion, it is going towards some elements turning to the CP, other minority sectors, parallel to those of the CP, will come towards us, others will even vote for the Christian Democrats.

That is, the perspective is one of crisis of Peronism on the one hand, and on the other a ditch, a moment in which the workers’ movement that managed to express itself politically in a massive way, with Peronism, by a bourgeois nationalist movement, stopped expressing itself in this massive way, solidly united, and this great achievement that was the workers’ movement voting united, is lost because of the tremendous crisis of Peronism, we insist. If so, politically the Argentinian working class is entering a stage of enormous danger, a tremendous political vacuum. This is the perspective. We have already seen this in Tucuman because those who have voted for the 62 Organisations,² let us not deceive ourselves, have also been workers and in a great number (I would ask the comrades to tell me if otherwise). I don’t know the comrade’s analysis, but I have the impression that behind the candidate of the 62 Organisations for national deputy, there would also be important sectors of the Tucuman workers’ movement. If this is the case, what I am saying is confirmed, that the workers’ movement runs the risk of losing one of its great achievements: that of voting united. This is a beginning, a symptom, and this process is possibly irreversible. In other words, the working class will accompany the crisis of Peronism and will begin to stop voting en masse. Peronism had a positive and a negative aspect. The positive one was that the whole working class voted massively, the negative one was that they voted for a national bourgeois leadership. It is not a question of eliminating the negative aspect by eliminating the positive aspect, which is the mass vote. In other words, it is a question of preserving the positive aspect which was the working class voting together as one man, expressing itself politically, and eliminating the negative aspect which was voting for a nationalist bourgeois programme and leader.

How do we avoid this danger? How do we avoid this leap into the unknown? How do we get the working class to rise above, not to retreat into anarchic voting and overcome the negative aspects, by continuing to vote *en masse* but instead of voting for nationalist bourgeois candidates start voting for class candidates and a class programme? This is the great programme we have in mind. We believe, first of all, that the phenomenon of Peronism is a phenomenon in relation to the class struggle, essentially electoral.

The essential tasks of the party are not in the electoral arena but in the arena of the class struggle. Therefore, there is a general agreement regarding the reports. What we are discussing, after all, is essentially an electoral problem. Let us not derail it, what we are discussing is: if there are new elections, what do we propose from now on for the working class to vote en masse for a class programme and class candidates. This is the strategic problem we have posed before us. And there can be no other answer to this question than the one we gave in Tucuman. The crisis of the

² The **62 Peronist Trade Union Organizations** were the organization of struggle of the Argentine workers’ movement against the regime of the “Liberating Revolution”, born from the *coup d’état* that overthrew Peron in 1955. Later they transformed themselves into a grouping of the bureaucratic leadership of the Peronist trade unionism.

Peronist party is accompanied by the permanence of a body that brings together the entire workers' movement, which is the CGT, which are the trade union organisations. We have to achieve the leap towards a class policy from those organisms that already exist and not consider it in an abstract way through propaganda. That is, we have a lever to avoid falling into the vacuum of the electoral anarchy of the working class and that lever is the unions and the CGT that already exist. That is the lever we have to use because there is no other.

Just like to make a great national campaign, the party has said "we have a fabulous lever that is the student movement", to this overall political and electoral analysis, to this analysis of the march into the void, since Peronism has entered a crisis, and there is a tremendous danger the workers' movement will begin to scatter electorally and politically, we give it a complement: that the CGT and the big union organisations act as political parties to precisely prevent the workers' movement from regressing and scattering politically. We have to make sure the workers' movement continues totally united, expressing itself politically but instead of national bourgeois candidates and programmes through a class programme and class candidates. This great problem we face is posed by reality because this is the dynamic of reality. To this objective, real problem, we have to give an answer from reality itself. There is only one lever that can avoid this process at the present time: the large trade union organisations and essentially the CGT. There is no other. Otherwise, we will be mere spectators of an inevitable process. And then we will be acting like the revolutionaries of the Cafe Tortoni, having to subscribe to a little table and comment: "Too bad there's no revolutionary politics or revolutionary candidates." There is no other actual policy. The disintegration of the electoral Peronist movement, its crisis, can only be overcome today, in the electoral arena, through the trade union organisations because they are the only ones that exist. Here we are not importing a policy; we are adapting a policy to reality as it is.

Summarising

To summarise, comrades, the perspectives are of crisis, the perspectives are of going to a void, the perspectives are concrete, there will be workers who will say "vote for such a current of Peronism", vote for other one, or vote for a neo-Peronist leader. The perspective is varied, many voting for a favour, even voting for bourgeois leaders, especially in provincial towns. The perspective is of falling apart, of a crisis. In the face of this, we have a strategy: to defend with tooth and nails what has been conquered: that the workers' movement expressed itself in en masse. To overcome the political defects of the old workers' movement, such as voting for a bourgeois programme and candidates. How to achieve this? Although our position may well be: "No one can stop this". It is also for serious revolutionary politicians to know when a defeat is a defeat. But we believe there's no defeat yet. Because there are tremendously powerful organisms, which have unified, in an organic way, the workers' movement, which we have to use as a lever to avoid this retreat, this disaster, and to push forward to overcome the previous stage of the vote for the bourgeois nationalist programmes and candidates, so that they vote for class nationalist programmes and candidates.

This task reflects in reality itself. It is the way to avoid another of the most dangerous manifestations of the crisis, which is trade unionism, of extraordinary trade union activists who, tired of the crisis of Peronism, will begin to think: "workers should not do politics; their only policy is to confront the boss in the factory or the union". With this policy we establish the dialogue with the best elements who often are the greatest anti-capitalist fighters and in this way are expressing their repudiation of the programme and the bourgeois candidates unconsciously, through a negative way they are expressing the anguish because there is no class policy and candidates. This position allows us the dialogue, to convince them what is in crisis is the bourgeois politics of a bourgeois organisation: Peronism, the Peronist party. But from this we should not conclude that there should not be a class policy and class candidates. That is, let us use the levers offered by the current reality, a fabulous lever that are the trade union organisations and the CGT, to push the workers' movement forward, towards a class policy, with a class programme and class candidates and let us avoid, above

all, a real disaster for the workers' movement, which is to stop voting and acting politically all together, which was the great achievement of the Peronist stage. Nothing else, comrades.

Discussion

Robi Santucho: I will refer to question of the CGT as a workers' party. Through the document, it is clear that because of the crisis of Peronism as a traditional leadership of the exploited sectors of the country, a great vacuum is left, which has to be filled. We find the exploited classes are beginning to free themselves from bourgeois leadership and bourgeois politics but at the same time are orphans of a political organisation. This, as a general conclusion of the whole first part of the document. Along with this, according to the activity reports and considerations of all the comrades, we find that our organisation is stronger than ever. For the first time we are in a position to take a major leap forward. I remember well the words of Comrade Ernesto, which I think have been very clear, in the report of activities, of all the possibilities of our revolutionary political organisation.

These two considerations are fundamental for me, to suppress, to not propose that the CGT functions as a workers' party. I believe that from these two characteristics, or characterisations, it emerges today more than ever, with the perspectives our organisation has, that the political vacuum left by Peronism, representative of the exploited classes, must be filled with a policy that is bolder and more determined than ever, clearer, more independent, and that the line of the organisation must be that it must occupy the political place left by Peronism, which has transformed itself into the bourgeois opposition to the regime, in just another bourgeois opposition, as the document says. Our organisation must explode, as I say, taking this position ever more boldly, decisively, to occupy this place of leadership. I believe this is the fundamental problem. That we cannot, I believe, make this capitulation to the CGT, to propose the CGT should take the place of political representative of the exploited classes. In this we are capitulating, giving ourselves up, by proposing that the role that we, as a revolutionary organisation, should assume should remain in the hands of the CGT.

Tomorrow we will have to ask why the CGT has not done this or that. I believe at this moment, we, by giving the line of the CGT as a workers' party, are giving up our revolutionary responsibility. On the other hand, we have to have a clear conscience and not be aside from this analysis of the problem of the CGT leadership. We know all analyses have to be concrete, as we do not talk about the CGT in the abstract; we talk about a certain CGT, with a certain leadership. I believe at this moment, we, by proposing the CGT should be transformed into a political party of the workers, are giving credit to the bureaucratic leaderships of the CGT that we fight so much. Regarding the arguments of Comrade Hugo, concerning the electoral problem, and that the slogan is only intended to fill, to solve the problem of the mass pronouncement of the working class in the elections. I believe this is not the moment to raise it.

If we see that we have to raise the slogan of the CGT as the workers' political party, I believe this goes beyond the mere fact of elections. We are proposing to the class: the CGT is our political party, not just an electoral one. Another thing is that we, in the moments close to the next election, begin to raise, as we have done with respect to the problem of Tucuman, that the CGT present its candidates, that the CGT, as an official party, present its candidates. This is another problem. In this case, this slogan, with which I am in complete agreement, if it is posed in the electoral perspective. I believe that if we raise this slogan now, as the document states, we are transcending the electoral fact and we are resigning our role to deliver it, by proposing to the working class and the exploited sectors that the role of a revolutionary party must be played by the CGT. Let's not say revolutionary party but a party representing the exploited classes.

On the other hand, this slogan of the document is contemplated with the fact that after this slogan we do not raise again our role as a party. That is why our capitulation, the abandonment of our role as a revolutionary party, is for me more dangerous. Later, we don't raise the role of our party again, except in relation to the united front, which is a tactical problem, discussed, approved and of secondary importance. Consequently, comrades, I propose that this paragraph of the document of

the CGT as a party of the working class should be deleted from the national document and replaced by a chapter that states the need for our organisation, with all audacity and assertiveness, to definitively establish itself as a representative of the working class and other exploited sectors of the country. Nothing else, comrades. [...]

Unfortunately, the report was not entirely congruent. We have not resorted to the classics, to the whole history of the world revolutionary movement. Therefore, I will raise the problem as I see it but I make it clear this discussion must not end here. [...]

First of all, the comrades have raised here the difference between revolutionary party and mass organisation, mixing revolutionary party and mass party. It is clear to all of us that mass organisations are places where the party has an obligation to work, with a view to being the leadership of the masses in the pre-revolutionary period. But what is confused here is mass party with mass organisations, and it is argued that a revolutionary party cannot be a mass party and must always be a minority. I understand that a revolutionary party cannot be a revolutionary party if it is not a mass party. A party to make the revolution cannot be a small core of intellectuals. [...]

Second, the difference between party and trade union is totally obscure, we speak as if there were no difference between party and trade union, as if the classics were not tired of raising the differences between them and the absolute need to differentiate them, the only way to lead the class because otherwise the party does not exist, for the class. We are going to make the revolution as a revolutionary party, not as trade unions. I think this confusion comes from the tradition of Palabra Obrera, that a correct tactic has been confused and transformed into a strategic line, mechanically, as a solution to a whole series of problems. In Argentina there was a mass nationalist movement where the revolutionary vanguard had to work doing entryism.

This doesn't mean we will be permanently searching for which party to enter, or creating one if it doesn't exist. Now there is no mass party to do entryism, so we will create the CGT as a mass party. It's a totally circumstantial tactic but which transformed into a strategic line is a disaster. As comrade Elio said, we have the concrete experience of this same slogan stirred up by the POR (T), the Posadists. We have seen revolutionary comrades who take refuge to avoid the discipline of a revolutionary party in that slogan: the FOTIA or the CGT, revolutionary party. This is the workers' party that Comrades Amaya and Aparicio³ put forward, whenever the problem of the revolutionary party arises. It is a slogan that helps confusion. It is a refuge for the whole unionist tendency, which will even enter the best comrades of the workers' movement.

Then there was another confusion. We do not in any way propose to make another CGT. It is tremendously positive that the workers' movement is united in the CGT. We understand the CGT, as a union organism is positive, but as such, we do not force it through our slogans to transform itself into a great reformist party, like English Labour, which br our great enemy against which we have to be constantly fighting, when we talk about an independent organisation, we forget that the fundamental thing is to know how to present itself to the eyes of the masses, as a different organisation, that not only the activists but the masses see the party as their party. Thus, by carrying out a policy that shows us as independent in the eyes of the masses, we will achieve everything else.

If Vandor⁴ calls for the formation of the CGT as a workers' party, that is another problem. We'll see what happens if Vandor calls it, let's not call it ourselves. That's why I propose we keep discussing this problem. Let's discuss all the theoretical, historical material. If we cannot fight against this capitulating unionist tendency, of many comrades within the organisation, we will not do our part as revolutionaries. [...]

3 **Mario Arnaldo Aparicio** was the Secretary-General of a new leadership of the FOTIA, which in 1963 displaced the old bureaucracy. For a brief period, he pointed to class-struggle positions, although he quickly bureaucratised. [Editor]

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

Nahuel Moreno: I want to congratulate Comrade Robi who has been consistent with his position. I want to start by pointing out the problem. We are here arguing with a clearly sectarian and schematic tendency. Let's start at the end, when comrade Robi makes the overall analysis, that we have a trade unionist deviation, that we discuss trade union with party, etc., that we capitulate if the trade unions set themselves political tasks. This is a typically sectarian and schematic reasoning and I will say why. So schematic that, if we look a little bit at Latin America, we find a country where the unions made the greatest workers' revolution in Latin America and where the unions posed the seizure of power, which is Bolivia. And this is posed by a comrade who is in Tucuman, next to Bolivia. We find that life is much richer than any schema and it throws down all sectarian proposals because in Bolivia the revolution was made by the unions in 1952 and what was permanently proposed was the workers' revolution through the COB taking power. No revolutionary party, because none had any strength, was our slogan for a long time and we are proud of it. It had not happened in other countries in the world.

Santucho (interruption): Precisely Bolivia's problem is the closest to the Russian Revolution. The COB and the soviets.

Moreno: No comrade, that is the defect, they have nothing to do with the soviets. I'm talking about the role of the unions in Bolivia. We had to raise the slogan of power to the COB in Bolivia. We had a worker's revolution made by the unions. Aparicio is much accurate than we think, he responds to a real, not utopian, proposal. He sees no other force to make a revolution in Argentina. Instead of pontificating: "look Aparicio, you capitulate", what we should do is to give him a programme, so that through the organism he considers able to make the revolution, he does it. Otherwise, we are acting as sectarians. The problem of Aparicio is posed by almost all the vanguard, except for the one we have recruited. Aparicio reflects a deep workers' problem, like the Bolivian workers' vanguard. In Bolivia there is nothing but unions; unfortunately, there have never been, unfortunately, inter-factory committees which are superior to unions.

In Germany there were, and the great theoreticians proposed "power to the inter-worker committees", because they were the ones the masses gave themselves. Sectarianism is the desire to impose forms that the masses do not give themselves. Robi has put forward the role of the party very well but now we will dwell on this problem. There are no fixed schemas for the revolutionary outline or for seeing how the historical process shapes up; on the contrary, it varies from country to country. In Bolivia there was a revolution made by the unions. In Spain it happened in a similar way. In Catalonia a workers' revolution made by the anarchist workers' centre but in the rest of Spain a revolution made by a popular front, even with bourgeois parties, that acquired Soviet characteristics. So, it means the revolutionary process varies from country to country and the difficult thing is, without capitulating, not to cut the cord that joins us to the mass movement as it is, with its own organisations.

A comrade's question: In Russia, who made the Revolution, the soviets or the party?

Moreno: The soviets, that's the big discussion, whether it was the soviets or the party, where Lenin later criticised himself because Lenin was saying: the party. Lenin, with the support of the Bolshevik majority, is asked whether making the revolution with the party means liquidating it because you cannot win. This is the famous image of the little gear; the party is a little gear and it acts on the masses using other bigger gears. If you take out that big gear, it is a small gear that spins in a vacuum, it does not move another. So, I accept your point that the revolutionary party can be a party of the masses to the extent that it leads the mass organisations. I fully accept your criticism. The revolutionary party does not have to be a party with millions of members, it can be one even if it has a minority, it always has a minority of members influencing and leading through the bodies the masses give themselves. We begin to be sectarian as soon as we say: we will lead them through an organism where we feel at home, and not through the one the masses have given themselves. As soon as we consider the gears that don't exist in reality, we have a sectarian there.

We should also have a policy, not only for Aparicio but for the other Aparicios who are in the union and are great fighters against their factory boss. What is this policy? That they come to

our party and join it? It has to be the opposite, they have to be proud of the organism they have already created; my whole proposal revolves around a problem of structure and superstructure. I hope that all our structural efforts will totally and absolutely surpass the CGT and that other bodies will emerge. We will do everything possible. The development of factory organisations may possibly lead to the emergence of inter-factories. We are permanently raising this issue in the Party, but we are not playing our cards for it because the masses are the ones who are going to create it and not us as a schema.

We permanently consider this possibility because it is the one we most desire because one of the deficiencies of the Bolivian revolution was that the masses only created unions. So, it had to play all kinds of roles, just like the agrarian unions in China. Thus, we tend to the emergence of superior mass organisations, hopefully the inter-factory ones but today they have not yet emerged and who knows if they will emerge because the masses are stubborn and learn through their experience. It is possible that the plenums of regional and national CGT will emerge again, as they did in 1957, 1958 and 1959. Some will remember what those plenums were, with numerous groups of supporters and ending at 5, 6, or 7 am. This was the great body of the workers' movement. It was a plenum of the Central of the workers' movement, much more democratic than now; it was a true permanent union congress. Our art is to see which the second gear is. The first gear is the party: between the party and the masses there are other gears. That is the whole problem.

We say: all our analysis starts with the following premise: "Today, in Argentina, there is absolutely no other cogwheel or gear between us and the masses other than the unions." That is the basic question of any policy. We can have any policy, we can discuss our strategy and our tactics but we believe that there is no other way to present any problem now, as the following fact shows: why don't we raise the problem of the need for an economic plan with the masses? We are putting forward an economic plan for discussion throughout the country. And who are we raising it to? To the CGT, because there is no other alternative to have an echo or to explain how an economic plan has to be applied, other than the CGT. Because it is also part of the reality, if the CGT does not take it up, there is no possibility of developing anything at all.

But now we are going to go in order. What is it that Robi raised, independently of this, of the confusion between union and revolutionary party, which I don't think is confusion, but to take well the relationship of the two gears. Our party, which is very small must, as Comrade Negro proposed, use the unions that exist, which are a lever. Robi was completely consistent: this vacuum left by Peronism and the need for class politics can be filled by the party. And in his second speech he explained the contradiction between the events in Tucuman and what the comrade is advocating, saying that these events are a tactic. Well then, we have to discuss what is tactic and what is strategy. A vicious discussion. If it's a tactic for next year, then it's a strategy because we are discussing here all the tactics for next year.

Comrade Robi said: not to confuse a tactic with an entire strategy. It's very well posed. Because, what was Comrade Robi the champion of? Of the proposal that FOTIA should run in the elections. What is Comrade Robi champion of at the moment? That the FOTIA deputies form a workers' bloc dependent on FOTIA, as comrade Robi proposed very well. And not of Palabra Obrera or FRIP [Indo-American and Popular Revolutionary Front]. Well, give it whatever name you want, that's what we want to do, absolutely the same thing the comrade proposed. We call this the fact that FOTIA has already begun to act as a working-class party, or hasn't it? I want you to explain. If FOTIA does this, it begins to act as the party of the working class, yes or no? There is a contradiction between what the comrades say and what the comrades do.

Comrade Robi has tried to solve this contradiction by saying: this is tactical. Of course, we're not married to the line; it's tactical for us too. So, it's a question of terms, regarding that it's tactical. Of course, it's tactical; our real aim is to create soviets, to take power. Let's hope this slogan will be eliminated as soon as possible, that reality will surpass us. Let's hope that in Tucuman we overcome this reality and say: this slogan, out. But as long as reality does not overcome it, there is no other slogan than the one you are applying. And you are applying a slogan opposing what the document

says. The document says what you're doing because the document says: instead of the national CGT and the regional CGT branches, let's say that FOTIA start acting as a working-class party, and that's what you're doing. You are demanding that the bloc of deputies be controlled by FOTIA. What the FOTIA deputies will do should be discussed in the FOTIA plenum. Not only that, but you have proposed that FOTIA structure its own CGT. I believe that you will not be against submitting to the discipline of FOTIA but also to that of the CGT.

These contradictions, this clash between reality and your positions, are the result of a sectarian, schematic approach, which does not start from reality but from the schema that the union should not be confused with the party. And here we are not confusing the union with the party. The revolutionary line in parliament, are we not going to give it for the workers' deputies of FOTIA? Won't this be the little cog? Or not? According to our line, our Comrade Deputy Leandro Fote will break the discipline, for the time being, of the FOTIA workers' bloc and will put forward whatever wishes or not? Or will Fote's proposal be taken to the workers' bloc, to FOTIA, and taken to the bloc for approval?

Santucho: Another thing is to propose, as it is done in the document, the CGT became a political party I think the CGT, as FOTIA, while lacking a revolutionary leadership, will be incapable to provide a class and revolutionary leadership to the masses.

Moreno: How are you planning to explain this to the masses, comrade? Will you ask the workers to be ultra-disciplined to the FOTIA? Yes or no? Will you tell them the FOTIA is a disaster, which is worth nothing?

Santucho: We won't propose it is worth nothing. We won't raise or need to raise that FOTIA will solve the political problems.

Moreno: We don't propose the CGT will solve any problem. We agree with you on FOTIA. And we are saying exactly the same as you say on FOTIA, absolutely the same as [Comrade] Elio said. It is not by chance that you and Elio for Rosario raise the concrete line. You have not realised that each one of you, in your province, is proposing what we are proposing at the national level. You are making the tactical applications of a strategic line. Because what Elio says: "we have to propose it to the new 62 Organisations in Rosario, which has become a political party", agrees with what we say. The same thing has happened with FOTIA. So, you have to start asking yourselves why this line is being taken all over the country. It means that a strategy must be made as a whole, nothing more than a year. We call a line for one year strategy because it goes from congress to congress. There cannot be another line. Because, otherwise, we urgently need to see what tactical line we will apply to break up the workers' bloc in Tucuman. And what tactical line we apply to break it up as soon as possible.