

NAHUEL MORENO

On the historical Subjects

A talk-debate with Andre Gunder Frank, September 1984



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ANDRE GUNDER FRANK (1929-2005) was a prominent German Marxist economist who since the 1960s devoted much of his research work to the situation of the semicolonial countries, particularly in Latin America. He studied at the University of Chicago where he earned his doctorate in economics in 1957. He lived in Brazil, Mexico and Chile until Pinochet's coup. In the early 1980s he published his great trilogy on the global crisis: *Crisis: In the World Economy* (1980), *Crisis: In the Third World* (1981) and *Reflections on the World Economic Crisis* (1981). Moreno vindicated his place as an internationalist revolutionary intellectual and his vision of the capitalist economy, although polemised with Frank's definitions on the passivity of the working class in the imperialist countries and his "third-worldism".

On the historical subjects

A talk-debate with Andre Gunder Frank, September 1984.

[...] **A female comrade:** I think what comrade Gunder Frank says on the two Marxisms can be summarised in what is the engine of history, whether the development of the productive forces or the class struggle. I think there is a single Marxism. That there are contradictions, and they are those that have always existed between the objective and the subjective. It's correct that the development of productive forces is the engine. Which means it's almost impossible to change from one social system to another while the productive forces are still developing. But when this development stops and the reverse forces begin to work, then I think the rotation is reversed and the engine of history becomes the subjective element, i.e. the class struggle, and within that the political leadership of the class.

I think the pessimism of the comrade, who doesn't see an outlet for humanity, stems from the fact he doesn't see at all the role of the subjective element.

From 1914 the relationship is reversed. The subjective element begins to be the determinant. The October Revolution without the Bolshevik party, and even with the Bolshevik Party but without Lenin, it's very difficult it would have taken place. It took place and there is a fundamental change in the history of mankind.

From 1914 everything is determined by the class struggle. The decline in the USSR and the Stalinist triumph are determined by the class struggle.

Right now, I see that in Argentina and the world the class struggle intensifies more and more. And there isn't a single path posed, but two: either the triumph of the revolution or of the counter-revolution. And I think that the decisive factor is the subjective — the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat.

I agree with the comrade that the problem of leadership isn't solved. And I see it very difficult [to solve]. I don't know if it will be solved. The problem is whether it's raised to do it and we bet on that. For me, the whole triumph of October revolutions and the final outcome for humanity depends on this. The comrade sees it as impossible. And even if the revolutionary leadership exists, he doesn't see the role it can play. And that is the fundamental factor of his pessimism or, to give a more accurate name, scepticism.

Gunder Frank: I'm going to answer the comrade by testing you, Hugo, to see how much of an ally of mine you are, if you can save me from lynching after what I have to say.

All cases the comrade gave to support her thesis on the importance of the subjective factor, I think show the opposite. Each one is more proof of how unfortunately effective my thesis is.

First, that there is development of productive forces, but when it reaches a critical point the relationship is reversed. It's a fact, but temporarily. Because it turns out that the continued development of the productive forces resumes the driving. I give you just one important example: technology, which is what encapsulates the development of the productive forces best and what was thought most distinguishes socialism from capitalism, because there, on account of the change in production relations technology it could actually be developed. It turned out the opposite. Precisely because of the organisation existing there they cannot develop the technology well and are increasingly dependent on the capitalist technological development. It's just one example among many.

Second, now I'll touch on something that had never occurred to me before; and I appreciate this discussion which leads me to paths even more disastrous than before. Lenin, Stalin, etc., according to you are subjective developments and in the case of Stalin bad ones. I mentioned the Chinese thesis, but it seems it's not limited to the Chinese, of always finding that the leadership betrays its masses. I think that's one subjectivist illusion. In fact the leadership largely reflects the position of the mass that follows. And now I come to the point: it reflects the objective — read economic — conditions of the world economy. Why the deviation of Stalinism and if I may, of Leninism? I'm not saying it's the same, although — we have to be honest — at least part of the root of Stalinism is in Lenin and Leninism. At least part. It seems obvious to me. I don't know why I hadn't thought of it before. Why do the two subjective paths, of Lenin and of Stalin, respond to the economic circumstances which they were "forced" to take? Far from verifying the pre-eminence of the subjective, political factor, they show the exact opposite. They are evidence of my thesis, the predominance of the objective or real, which leads to these forms and subjectivist deformations.

And with Maoism, the same. And about saying — please! — that it's a problem of leadership, but unfortunately the people haven't yet been taken the leadership they deserve, is only a euphemistic way of saying that the leadership betrays the others. But why does it betray them again and again? Not because of the subjectivism of the leadership, but because of the objective conditions to which the leadership, and also the people or the party that are behind, respond. Of course this is pessimism. But it's the pessimism of optimism with experience. How many times have we had this experience? And how many times do you need to have it until you learn what is really decisive? That is the question. That's why I fear you'll lynch me. But I need proof of someone who has more experience than me yet.

To put it in plain language, why the betrayal of the Peronist bureaucracy? Is it because Vandor and the others are "traitors"?

[...]

[...] **Nahuel Moreno:** Comrade Frank believes that there is no leadership crisis. He isn't pessimistic for believing there is a crisis of leadership that is late in being resolved. He's of the view that Vandor is the great leadership of the Argentine labour movement, which corresponds to the objective situation.

[...] **Gunder Frank:** I would add that there are only two Marxisms and that both are in crisis. This crisis stems from the inability to resolve the contradiction between the two.

[...]

Nahuel Moreno: Ok, comrades, I request the floor. I didn't come prepared and listened intently to Comrade Frank and I could not take many notes. I think he raised three problems; that of Argentina and two other high-level theoretical problems.

The one of Argentina I'll leave it to the end as a light comment. First of all we must clarify some issues of Marxism and of the historical process that apparently fortify the comrade. So, we have to avoid a vicious argument; and he himself requested that there be no misunderstandings. What are the facts, the myriad of facts? Between the development of Marxism and reality there has been sharp contradictions. One contradiction is that the comrade is going to find Kautsky. Because the creator of semi-Stalinist Marxism was Kautsky, who created the name at the end of last century

and created a hard current, very hard, and claimed it was Marxist, following this semi-dogmatic tradition. This was the young Kautsky, hence his enormous prestige.

In Marxism, Stalinism has caused, among many other misfortunes, a very large one, which is the fact that it codified Marxism, and conformed it into a religious dogma. Until Stalinism, Marxism was an immensely rich political current. With great discussions, as this one we are having with the comrade. It was quite amongst comrades, with diametrically opposed positions from the theoretical point of view and often philosophically. That is, Marxism is a sounding board for all the outside world and above all science. We must never forget that rather than Marxism there are those who say we should it call Marx-Engelsism; we are scientific socialists and cannot be closed to any advancement of science, including history.

This phenomenon — Marxism — for us more than a theoretical or philosophical current, is essentially a socio-political current (in this I don't know whether we agree with the comrade). That is, Marxism, from 1880, is the political movement, along with anarchism, dominant in the workers movement. And this tends to transform it into a church, an ideology as any movement of social and political kind that creates ideologies to see if it can succeed, sometimes not respecting scientific truths. This, Stalinism took to its bureaucratic and totalitarian culmination; but it's an implicit tendency in every party, in every social movement, including our party, which is no exception to this law, also Marxist to me. I say this because Marxism, the one of Marx, is of the XIX century, Lenin's is the Marxism of the beginning of the XX century, of the first two decades, and Trotskyism is Marxism of the 1930s. And for me the crisis opens after 1940, for very profound reasons due to socio-political reasons, which is the new big rise of the world revolution.

By this I mean that Marxism, Marxist texts are full of errors. One, for example, the comrade pointed out of the three Stalinists stages which is taken from Marx too, though Marx said three stages in some books and four stages in others, with the famous Asian mode of production; it depends on what book is quoted. But for example the tremendous colossal mistake that livestock farming was the predecessor of agriculture — and this modern anthropology has already thrown out. And errors of historical type. Engels made less, Marx [some] terrible [ones], and many other issues such as the definition of classes.

This is a terrible gap of Marxism because there is no strict definition. And something even bigger, there is no independent type Marxist who agrees in the definition of Marxism. Lefebvre for example, says it's the theory of alienation, we say other things. [Milciades] Peña says other things, Kautsky says others, and Bukharin gives another. That is, Marxists disagree on what is Marxism. So notice that the comrade when he makes a warning that seems to some extent iconoclastic, he takes up a tradition that now is becoming richer, and that is to see Marxism with scientific criteria; in other words, the own Marx, Lenin and Trotsky would be glad of all these observations we're doing.

[...] The Comrade then relies on a number of important facts. There have been great revolutions, tremendous struggles of the mass movement, hundreds of deaths by the counter-revolution, hundreds of thousands killed fighting for the revolution and in general, seen from the angle of whether humanity is better or worse off, humanity is at the edge of an abyss. At the edge of the possibility of nuclear war, everything seen from the bourgeois and objective angle is a disaster. For example, the Russian proletariat in the USSR is now the only country with industrial development with increasing child mortality and where the elder die younger. It's a great phenomenon being studied by modern demography. So if someone tells the comrade that "the Russian revolution was a marvel", he brings statistics, he comes and tells us, "Well, for the development of mankind what is better, that New Zealand, that all the advanced capitalist countries have decreased and every year they decrease more the mortality rate and at the same time the average life expectancy increases. New Zealand has already exceeded the 75 year average and the USSR is going down year after year". You cannot answer "that the crisis of leadership, this, that", because it would be a discussion between madmen.

And the same with regard to the Nicaraguan revolution. The Sandinista government is paying the debt and increasingly gets into debt with the IMF. Was the Nicaraguan revolution useful or not? And other issues like this. That is, nothing of what we Marxists said as overall prognosis took place. Trotsky said in 1940 that in 1948 we would be millions, those of the Fourth International. Reality was that we were 25 in France and 300 in the United States, and they were the two largest parties we had. That is, they did not reach a thousand. I have been arguing for decades with the Trotskyists saying we should tell the truth. The first economic plan of the USSR was of socialism, to abolish money. What the Comrade says, that afterwards the objective laws imposed and forced to impose the NEP is true. It was Lenin who imposed it, and a year before Lenin it was proposed by Trotsky. In spite that they wanted the world revolution, they carried the NEP and not the first program of the Bolshevik party, which was to start with much more socialist measures. They had to retreat.

And we could go on, how all prognoses kept failing. This to me is the introduction. Let's see now the problem of the two Marxisms — the development of productive forces and the class struggle. The Comrade is right. There is an old discussion (I'm not sure about the English, but the one of the Italians, [Lucio] Colletti and others, was quite big) on the issue of whether the engine of the historical process is the development of the productive forces or the class struggle. What is the main element? For the Comrade, neither. Is this so?

Gunder Frank: It's neither, but rather that [the development] of the productive forces has not taken place as it was thought it would, but in another way, and the class struggle isn't.

Nahuel Moreno: I think that the answer came from the Comrade himself. On the problem of the class struggle, the Comrade demanded proof that he is wrong and I give the proof of Comrade Frank.

What proof? He says or does an unconscious ruse of theoretical type. What does the Comrade say? History shows that Spartacus did not succeed, that the serfs did not succeed...

Gunder Frank: More than that, history did not change either because of Spartacus or the serfs. It changed, but for other reasons.

Nahuel Moreno: Let's see whether or not it was changed by Spartacus and the serfs. Under Nero comes out the imperial decree of full protection to slaves. It was a great revolution in antiquity; that slaves were not to be killed. This is why Nero was later painted as a monster, for centuries, because of his famous decree that all slaves were not to be killed when a boss was murdered.

Gunder Frank: I don't think it was for the revolution of Spartacus.

Nahuel Moreno: Not directly, not Spartacus, the class struggle. You asked for facts, and I begin with the facts.

The Comrade makes another manoeuvre. He says: not the class struggle, not between exploiters and exploited. Where is his big mistake? He is confused; he mixes the class struggle with who triumphs in the class struggle. And hence, we will arrange the truths. So far the class struggle has never achieved the success of the exploited classes, it's true. But from this truth it cannot be generalised that the class struggle isn't the engine of the historical process, because the own Comrade recognises that one class replaced another, even though they are exploiters.

Then the most that can be said in the historical process is that until now the class struggle has never led to the triumph of the exploited class and always to sectors of the exploiter class.

Now let's see whether it's accurate. But this doesn't mean from any point of view that the engine has not been the class struggle. The class struggle between bourgeois sectors, the class struggle between nationalities, and I say more, the absolute and total engine of the historical process is the struggle — struggles between tribes, struggles between nations, struggles between races, struggles between groups, struggles between bureaucratic sectors, struggles between tribal groups. Today modern anthropology has shown that the tribes were not as Marx and Engels and Morgan thought, but much more complex organisations formed by groups of artisans and groups with organisations of secret type within the tribe and it was a much more complicated social life than what Marx and Engels believed. That is, struggle is a constant of the historical process. Now

let's see, then there were struggles and the exploited never triumphed, says the Comrade. I say, first you need to consider whether the USSR, China and all these are not triumphs of the exploited, or whether at any time, at a juncture, there was a triumph of the exploited. This is already a concrete historical discussion. It seems to me that the Russian working class through the soviets, the Bolshevik Party, and all parties, including the cadets in workers' democracy, when they take power, is the Russian working class, the peasantry and the soldiers, that there are newspapers for each sector. And that is an exceptional period of humanity, but there are others, others in Latin America; and I am astonished a researcher of the Comrade's calibre doesn't know the phenomenon of the Quilombos and doesn't know the phenomenon of the Palenques.

Palenques and Quilombos are the free communities of the uprising of black slaves in Latin America, which made free communities. That is, they resemble the case of Spartacus and he managed to dominate half of Italy. So, if we take the objective facts, we can say that the triumphs of the exploited have occurred in exceptional cases, for short periods of time, if we want to be as objectivist as a partner; but they have happened. This is very important.

Then, there is class struggle, struggle between sectors, there is struggle of the exploited against the exploiters, which in general have never led to any historic triumph but partial and short-term wins, and sometimes marginal as the Palenques and Quilombos, who go into the jungle and are isolated from the colonial capitalist regime.

Gunder Frank: So, what is more important, whether there are triumphs or whether they very short-term, marginal?

Nahuel Moreno: Now we will discuss it, we will discuss different hypotheses. Then, there have been struggles and partial victories.

Gunder Frank: And why are they partial and short-term?

Nahuel Moreno: Due to the problem of the control of the world economy, if the world economy isn't dominated each triumph is partial, [Gunder] Frank said. But the struggle exists. Here already come into play the hypotheses, because it's an insoluble contradiction that history has. For this reason to argue with the Comrade saying "you have to accept our position" ceases to be scientific, because they are respectable and scientific hypotheses. The Comrade drew from this situation a scientific conclusion, but he doesn't say it's a hypothesis, and this is very dangerous, that's all I'm going to fight of his position, that the world's workers, the exploited are doomed forever to barbarism, to slavery, and another position.

Gunder Frank: I did not say that.

Nahuel Moreno: Well, I drew the wrong conclusion, I apologise. So, we do share the same hypothesis that there is a possibility, because there is a struggle in progress, that imperialism be defeated within imperialism itself. Because this is the key to the whole problem, and we all agree. Every triumph of the mass movement against imperialism, and I believe that there are some, is for short time and has dire consequences before five or ten years, if imperialism keeps existing, which means to dominate the world market and global production. Because there is no socialism if it's not global, and there is no socialism if it doesn't come from the United States, or tomorrow from Japan, or from Europe to the world. Everything else is peripheral, contradictory and is a relative contradiction. You cannot defeat imperialism from country to country, from the periphery to the centre, but it must be within imperialism.

And here come two valid hypothesis of scientific type. And these two hypotheses have to do with the two historical subjects that were discovered in this century and this is the contribution of Leninism to Marxism, for me one of these subjects. Which are the subjects? One is what exploited sector will lead the revolution, who is going to do it. To this there are two answers: neither the proletariat nor the peasantry, nor the people of the world will make that revolution to defeat Yankee imperialism. It's not going to be done from outside or from inside the Yankee proletariat. It's one. I am not going to discuss as for the existence of God. I discuss in general, give my opinion, but there comes a point where I say you don't have proof to show that there is [a God] and I don't have proof

to show that there isn't, because I cannot speak in the clouds with San Pedro and tell him... so we end the discussion. There comes a point where we stop the discussion. Here it's the same. Can or can't imperialism be defeated by the workers in the United States? I think there is a possibility.

I am against fatalism and fatalistic optimism, which has led us to disaster. But my attitude isn't fatalistic-optimistic. On the contrary, it's a call to a struggle bigger, not smaller, than ever, but with rage, with hatred, like a boxer who is told the other will kill you if he can, but you can fight and fight, as you can win. And if that boxer is bleeding, he goes and fights with his everything. That is, the hypothesis that imperialism can be defeated is a new hypothesis, the past doesn't serve, because history — unlike that cartoon the Comrade referred to, that drawing of a newspaper in the country — isn't always the same, but it's totally different, because it's done by men. Every revolution is different, every phenomenon that exists is different and the history of humanity, of the whole French Revolution is one, of all the renaissance is another, of all the Russian Revolution is another, and after each development of the productive forces is another. And that is made by men. What men do is unpredictable until it's done. There is no science other than of the facts. Anything else is a forecast. They are hypotheses. However, the scientific basis is that the struggle exists. The scientific basis is a terrible struggle. The exploited never succeeded. But it's also scientific that you cannot say in the historical process "that issue isn't going to happen". We don't know what will happen when the proletariat of the advanced countries enters the fight. This is the first subject, i.e., the social subject. The second is the subject of the parties.

The Comrade also said a truth as big as a house: Vandor was leader of the Argentine trade union movement because the vast majority of the Argentine labour movement was with Peron, and Vandor was the representative of Peron. They were Peronists, they weren't Trotskyists. But this is also due to objective reasons. Within the class there are progressive and regressive sectors. For example, the Enlightenment philosophers in France were a sector of the bourgeoisie, they were a small sector that saw the possibility of a revolution and then came Robespierre, Danton and Marat, and the *Enragés* [Enraged Ones] and the *Montagnards* [mountaineers], etc., who brought to earth the political struggle they had seen in the philosophical field. Here, in what was later Bolivia, [Francisco de] Miranda raised the Latin American liberation in the late XVIII century. There were five or ten who believed in Miranda and later the process of liberation began. That is, every class has different sectors, different parties claiming to be of it, minority and majority parties, according to the development of the class itself — because the class learns. Always every exploited class begins and develops from the mentality and ideology of the other class. Because it goes to school from the other class, listen to the radio, the TV of the other class. That is, it's being systematically poisoned with bacilli another class, to make them think otherwise — white workers in the US think that Latin Americans and black workers harm them, are their competition, and they have to be racists and other issues like such. This is also why a very difficult factor in the historical process is the mentality of the working class, it's the hardest, the most difficult to change.

But this doesn't mean that the working class doesn't struggle, and this dialectic finds a contradiction between what it does and what it thinks. For example, during the Korean War, the famous strike of the level crossing gatekeepers which turned President Truman crazy. They were the most backward sector of the Yankee proletariat. It was an important factor in the semi crisis he had. Along with the miners' strike, they were two strikes that harassed Truman during the war and the miners had at least a large trade union consciousness. The gatekeepers had a very backward union consciousness but they came out for the economic problem and didn't back down. In fact they were making a revolutionary strike, although all they wanted was the increase in wages. It was an objectively revolutionary process. Subjectively it wasn't, because they still thought the American way of life was formidable and did their strike to fit the American way of life. This contradiction takes place. The great struggle of the revolutionary parties — of the political subject — is precisely this struggle against the mentality of the working class. And against something much more serious of imperialism — imperialism has methodically stratified the working class, allowing the emergence of a privileged layer, the bureaucracy. And this is a terrifying weapon. If you're not able to defeat the bureaucracy, if the phenomenon of bureaucracy and the labour aristocracy shows to be endemic the

Comrade may be right — it will be demonstrated that the historic inability of the working class and the exploited for revolution against US, Japanese or whatever dominant imperialism. The secret is to pull apart from within the dominant [imperialism], because through war there's no way out. This has to do with the problem of leadership. And for this problem there are also two answers: one, it's impossible to change; and another, there's a possibility of change. And if there is a possibility of change we must brutally fight to make a party that achieves it. Just as there have been short periods of time in which the exploited have managed to make a revolution and have it in their hands, I have seen short periods of time where having big strikes and revolutionary processes, and revolutionary leaderships begin to lead. And a fact that you never mention it: there was a Third International. Was it a positive or not? You answer me later. For me it did exist, and as the Third International existed there may be other international of masses. The misfortune is it has not yet happened.

Gunder Frank: Well, I'll answer that part quickly and easily. It was negative in the era of social fascism that allowed Hitler's rise...

Nahuel Moreno: No, but I say the first four years, those of Lenin...

Gunder Frank: And after 1934 it fought fascism supporting the popular front and it was a positive but limited...

Nahuel Moreno: No, but for me it's the Third only in the four years of Lenin. It's also a short period of time, but I put forward just as there was a Third, it's raised historically to make a similar International, but much superior, with great democracy, taking all the now critical elements, uniting them all and to the whole process. I think it is [possible], because the big negative factor against the construction of this international was the existence of Stalinism. But you can also bet that is impossible. If so, then neither the class nor a new party can lead the revolution to victory in the developed countries.

We, scientifically, today and without any fatalism, because fatalism is negative, and then I will end up with the old argument, since you are going to return to Kautsky among the neo-Kantian at the turn of the century and the Marxists. We, without being fatalistic, believe that there are two fights: one of the exploited against the exploiters, which can be won and it's only won if it succeeds in the most advanced countries in the world; and two, that there is a fight for making an international, because the solution is an international, not national parties, and the Comrade is right when all his criticisms point there. There is no national solution to the problem, there is no national socialism. Then only an international party or a revolutionary national party of masses in the United States which takes power and then immediately makes an international, only that process can succeed and you can fight and do it, because there has already been six years of humanity where that was achieved. And later on we had the Stalinist apparatus against, which today is in total crisis and there isn't today any other apparatus in the world, which explains why, despite the extreme youth of our comrades in other countries they are advancing with relative ease, taking into account that we are mosquitoes or ants, i.e., we walk fast, but on the basis of this phenomenon.

Negative fatalism, as well as positive fatalism, is terrible for the Marxist movement. At the beginning of the century there was a great discussion within Marxism between neo-Kantians and Marxists as Kautsky — orthodox- at the time. Kautsky and Plekhanov, one said that for biological reasons socialism would ineluctably triumph; and the other argued that for economic reasons socialism would ineluctably triumph. And the neo-Kantians posed a problem very well raised in the polemic (they solved it horribly), where they said; yes, it's inevitable for biological reasons, and if not for biological reasons it's for economic reasons, then why fight for socialism? Let us dedicate ourselves to any other issue. I don't think any of the two possibilities is inevitable; I think this is also part of the class struggle in which we are immersed. No fatalistic optimism. I don't believe the victory of socialism is inevitable. Then what is essential is to fight, fight furiously to see if we succeed, it's essential, because we can succeed. There is no God who has established we cannot do so.

Gunder Frank: [...] a few comments, I hope short. Party means bureaucracy, until today, and still cannot be seen how you can avoid this, and it was you who spoke of bureaucracy. Of

course class and party are not the same and there is an entire experience in this regard. Historical subject... I would go further and say it doesn't exist, it's a fiction, because today is only the objective and the so-called historical subject, which would be the proletariat I don't think so. And even the objective process is increasingly eliminating the kind of proletariat that it would be the historical subject. And I don't believe either there was previously in history this historical subject in the sense that you say and talk. Back for moment to opportunism, and, if you want to, add revisionism. At one time some, such as — if I remember correctly — [Enrico] Berlinguer, and perhaps already [Palmiro] Togliatti before him, said that there is nothing wrong with being a revisionist. And I think that's something that would apply to you. On the contrary, it's good to be revisionist to the extent that if the dogma not only is dogmatic but also wrong, you have to revise it and it's better to revise than not to. And if we revise it, by way of opportunism, even better. I see there in the middle, the gentleman Don Karl Marx. Question: why have we inherited *Capital*? Answer: Because of the defeat of the 1848 revolution. Because before there was the voluntarism, if I'm allowed to call it so, of the Communist Manifesto, in which the proletariat united, etc., etc. And it's because of the defeat of the revolution in 1848 that Marx said it's the opportunism of the opportunity to begin to study the reality of writing *Capital*. The other [comrade], to my left, didn't speak politically, but geographically, who has been the greatest master of opportunism, but Lenin? On February 1917, October 1917, in 1905. Remember that in the April Theses he said that the revolution could not even be seen yet, and he took the opportunity with opportunism to diametrically change the line to make the October revolution, he led to the whole history we know and you yourself quoted. Then, the great opportunist Lenin began and promoted and imposed the NEP, the new economic policy, responding to the new reality that, according to him, it was necessary and timely, and opportunistic to make NEP at that time. Besides that, we must not forget that in between the Russian, now Soviet, proletariat was destroyed by the war; there was no longer even a working class.

Later on, you can make the same history in terms of opportunities and opportunism of Comrade Trotsky. No need for me to do so. I make a huge leap to someone who perhaps doesn't deserve or I don't like appealing to as an authority. But he does reflect something, and I quote, [Leonid] Brezhnev, not long ago, he said that the crisis, and there you agree, that the capitalist crisis greatly affects the socialist world. The Bulgarian President said not only that, but that hopefully the capitalist crisis were to end as soon as possible so they can return to "business as usual". And recently, [Konstantin] Tchernenko, this is why say I don't like to give those authorities, and perhaps you don't trust what they say, but by the mere fact that they do say it, it doesn't have to be discarded it, just in case he's right, and also the fact he acknowledges it it's a fact of relevance and importance. Tchernenko, addressing a commission to do the program for the next congress of the Soviet Communist Party, said that they must review the program of the CPSU of 1961, which spoke of the relatively early triumph of communism over capitalism and says — I quote Tchernenko verbatim (I have to translate from English translated from Russian) — that "capitalism still has a lot of life and the reserves of capitalism are very, very far from being finished", and you have to be aware of this reality and, I suppose opportunely and opportunistically, adhere to this reality.

And to show the opportunist I am, I will leave my old and so far best ally I have in the room, and I'll turn coat and I'll ally with the previous comrade who spoke, who raised the issue of Argentina and the strike on Monday, and then I stick to him to return to that topic. I left in the pipeline — forgive me — speaking of the historical subject, one thing. Your historical subject and I quote exactly, is man. And while man is the historical subject patriarchy is never going to end, and women will never be better off than they are. This is another proof that your historical subject isn't useful, but even that there isn't one, because I also believe that this historical subject man you say is also an instrument of social reality and social history. And of course, while it's not the woman who isn't only aware of that, but she becomes what you would call the "historical subject", nothing essential will change in this field and neither will it give any true socialism. Where I cannot accompany the feminist comrades is that I don't see that in the future, even distant, something essential will change in this regard. But as this is so far away, why don't we return to the Argentine definitions of time

that are a little different than normal, because there long-term less is than a month and short term is the day before yesterday. Let's go to the medium term which is the strike on Monday.

What can the strike on Monday solve? Be it as historical subject, be it as opportune or not opportune, but opportunistic to a given situation; that is my question. In the medium term, which is until Monday.

Nahuel Moreno: What can it solve? Weaken the government and US imperialism. That it happens as in Bolivia, where the workers managed a large increase in wages and a break with imperialism. Workers, and peasants, were much worse before the general strike they imposed to [Bolivian President Hernan] Siles Suazo, They would be much worse if they don't respond. For example, the Paraguayan peasantry and proletariat are much worse the Bolivian. The Chilean is far worse than the Bolivian. This is an obvious fact, because it struggles. That doesn't mean they will completely divert the IMF program, but it must be applied carefully. You who are careful, and who like to read magazines, for example the problem of Britain, to give another example of a strike. According to *The Economist*, the strike is almost lost, unless dock workers come into it.

Gunder Frank: Lost for the miners?

Nahuel Moreno: Yes, for the miners. But chances are good they can win, against your opinion, according to *The Economist*. Here it is. If the dock workers come on strike. After *The Economist* saying this, they went on strike. That is the class struggle. Here it is. And if a third come on strike, they already won. And it's possible.

Gunder Frank: They won what?

Nahuel Moreno: They win everything, the fall of Thatcher.

Gunder Frank: They gain nothing.

Nahuel Moreno: Well, that's our opinion. If the Thatcher falls this is very positive. So that's the criterion. We think they do win, not the taking power, but they do win. For example, the other day when we were discussing with you, you had the view that the fallen fascism in Portugal was not any gain. For us, it was. Not absolute. Thatcher's fall is something very, very positive, because the historical process progresses through stages, and there can be no breakthrough of the working class in England if it doesn't begin with the fall of Thatcher. If Reagan fell by a general strike in the US, it would be an extraordinary event, because it would weaken [the US] greatly. That Vietnam has won changed for ten years history around the world. Nicaragua's victory, the victory of Iran, all the victories and setbacks of US imperialism that took place.

For example, even in small facts. The SWP held a trial to be told what police spies and betrayers had within the party. And because of Vietnam, the US government was forced to give the names. That's because of the process of class struggle. This isn't yet the triumph of socialism, but it's the path to success. That doesn't mean that there will be no setbacks. So here in Argentina it can be achieved a small victory, the triumph of stopping something. If the strike doesn't win, next week the Argentine people are going to have less pay, there will be more unemployment and more misery.

Gunder Frank: And if there is a strike and triumphs next week will also have less pay.

Nahuel Moreno: No!

Gunder Frank: Of course! Because inflation is going to eat it anyway.

Nahuel Moreno: But I think the Argentina bourgeoisie the previous quarter profited more than ever, then there is where to take from the Argentine bourgeoisie.

Gunder Frank: Of course there is where to get, but not how to get it. That's the key.

[Statement by a comrade].

Gunder Frank: Comrade, do a bit of history, or let's do a bit of history. How many strikes that we have accompanied? How many demonstrations in which we participated, where we said that

apart from the immediate demands that can be won or even lost, do they raise and mobilise and contribute to the organisation of the working class or people, etc.?

Nahuel Moreno: If you lose you go back, only if you win.

Gunder Frank: Even if you lose we said that something is gained.

Nahuel Moreno: No, we believe that if you lose it's a disaster.

Gunder Frank: Well, be that as it may, in the best of cases, even if you win, how many have there been just in Argentina, from whenever you want to start counting? And what consciousness, what revolutionisation, what path to socialism in Argentina, not to mention a certain comrade who said that in Argentina [socialism] cannot be reached because it has to be made by the American working class? To how much consciousness and how much progress towards socialism has this led in Argentina in history, either distant or recent, or whatever? To none! Why will Monday's strike be totally different in this sense?

Nahuel Moreno: I'll answer you. You ask for concrete facts. All military coups, either in Bolivia as in Peru as in Argentina, were defeated by general strikes, and Pinochet will burst amid a large popular mobilisation and general strikes in Chile. And for me this is the path to socialism, it's not socialism, it's not the triumph yet, but it's the path to the triumph. Pinochet's defeat is a colossal historic fact for me, when it happens, and when democracy returns to Chile. In Argentina, I don't say not to make the revolution in Argentina; I say that the solution to the problem of the world economy, that you raise, can only be solved when the centres of development of the productive forces are controlled, when it's possible to handle that. Whoever has that, historically controls, that's all I say. And that can only be achieved when we win where there is the great technological development. Socialism can only triumph when you triumph in the place where computers are, where information technology is because the control of information is going to be a tremendous battle of the class struggle, but it depends on what class controls it. Therefore, in Argentina, general strikes defeated Aramburu, and then defeated Onganía because Onganía sinks after the Cordobazo and a general strike that continues the Cordobazo; Aramburu sinks because in 1956 there is a metalworkers strike, and in 1957 and 1958 there is a wave of general strikes that forced him to leave. Because general strikes force the bourgeoisie to the triumph of the sector of the bourgeoisie inclined to an understanding. Because just as within the working class there are sectors, in the bourgeoisie there are sectors, and there are opportunistic sectors that say you have to make concessions to the working class, for economic reasons or fear. Hence there is a reciprocal action and reaction. Specifically this is what general strikes are useful for, when they succeed, because it's a great triumph. In addition, what the [female] comrade said is the ABC of the class struggle. In addition, when you have something taken away you got to fight, it cannot be your philosophy to say "as they will take it away, let's not fight". That's a horrible thing.

Gunder Frank: I didn't say don't fight. I said that there should be no illusions.