

# Nahuel Moreno Not paying the debt is revolutionary

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## NAHUEL MORENO, DIRIGENTE DEL MAS, RESPONDE A STUBRIN

# "NO PAGAR LA DEUDA ES REVOLUCIONARIO"

**B**astante menos conocido por su verdadero nombre, Hugo Bresano, Nahuel Moreno es el más importante —veterano— líder de los trotskistas argentinos. Actúa en política desde su primera juventud, allá por los años '40, y desde entonces, fue protagonista de una azarosa militancia que lo ha convertido en una figura legendaria, en torno a la cual se tejen historias muchas veces inciertas. Ideólogo del "entrismo" al peronismo, en el decenio de 1950, agitación de las asambleas peronistas de la Resistencia después de 1955, creador del Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) "La Verdad" por oposición al militarismo que dio nacimiento al Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP) en 1970, Moreno es hoy el indiscutible mentor del Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS) y el popa de una corriente que se vanagloria no sólo de haber logrado una relevante incidencia entre los obreros fabriles del corcón industrial bonaerense, sino también de integrar una legión de entusiastas que trabajan por la revolución mundial en varias latitudes de América Latina: Uruguay, Colombia, México y Brasil.

En su diálogo con EL PERIODISTA, Moreno obvió la utopía, atacó al radicalismo, crítico y a la vez defendió al titular de la CGT, Saúl Ubaldini, y, contra lo que algunos podrían suponer, habló muy bien del Partido Comunista y del Partido Obrero.

"El ataque de los radicales al MAS es totalmente injusto", dijo Moreno refiriéndose a la nota del diputado radical Marcelo Stubrin publicada en EL PERIODISTA N.º 73. Recordó la campaña electoral de 1983 cuando "fuimos los locos de la deuda externa, en contra de todos los partidos de izquierda que decían que con este tema no pasaba nada y mucho menos el alfonsismo. En un debate televisado entre Silvia Díaz, candidata a la vicepresidencia por el MAS y Elva Roulet, la actual vicegobernadora de Buenos Aires, ésta dijo que los radicales tenían la solución. Creo que no había una total deshonestidad de parte de los radicales, jugaron como Perón lo hizo en 1951, a la tercera guerra mundial. Comentaban que la deuda se iba a pagar fácilmente por la desvalorización del dólar y la caída de las tasas internacionales de interés. Era un razonamiento vulgar y no creo que haya sido una mentira demagógica de los radicales montada al servicio del FMI sino que, en realidad, no existió un razonamiento antimperialista, ni nacionalista, ni nada, sino un cálculo frío como el que hacen todos los políticos burgueses, con el que después se pegan contra la pared".

"Los alfonsinistas la veían fácil en la campaña electoral, no le dieron importancia a la deuda externa. Nosotros fuimos los primeros en plantear el problema, cuando nadie lo hacía. Tan seguros estábamos de lo que decíamos que opinábamos como lo hace ahora el presidente del Uruguay, José María Sanguinetti, cuando afirma que el tema de la deuda externa estallará este año porque se acerca el momento en que no se podrá pagar, el momento del hambre total y el hambre sólo puede llegar hasta cierto grado".

Moreno mencionó los ataques del presidente Raúl Alfonsín en Villa Regina y respondió: "Tengo la impresión que la visita del banquero Rockefeller y las protestas afectaron mucho al gobierno en lo que a planes de inversión se refiere, porque en la prensa sería de los Estados Unidos, una

noticia como la de los incidentes callejeros modifica la imagen de la Argentina como un país seguro y tranquilo donde se puede invertir. El otro aspecto de este mismo problema es más claro e incluso lo insinuaron los diarios más ligados al gobierno como La Nación o Clarín cuando señalaron el peligro que significa la creciente influencia del MAS en las comisiones internas y cuerpos de delegados fabriles. Y me da la impresión que los servicios secretos del gobierno deben haber llegado a la conclusión de que nuestra unión con el PC es una cosa seria en el movimiento sindical porque podemos pasar a tener una mayor influencia. Los diarios mencionaron con preocupación la situación que se vive en Chile y la de Centroamérica en el sentido de que una posible invasión de los Estados Unidos a Nicaragua podría dividir al país en dos. Pero esto no es lo fundamental, el gobierno radical está preocupado por el tema sindical".

Según Moreno, Ubaldini "entra en un plan de la Iglesia para América Latina y en especial para la Argentina y Brasil, ya que esta institución necesita construir una muralla contra las posiciones revolucionarias y de izquierda en el movimiento obrero".

### EL PROGRAMA ECONOMICO

"Para pagar la deuda externa, la Argentina tiene que endeudarse cada vez más y la situación se hace explosiva", dijo Moreno. "De algún lugar tienen que salir los dólares para poder abonar los intereses a los bancos extranjeros y en este punto no existen secretos: son los trabajadores los que producen mercancías que luego se convierten en dinero y que después se utiliza para pagarle a los bancos. Por eso es que coincidimos con Ubaldini, que ha demostrado tener la virtud de decir frases contundentes, en que el primer paso para resolver la crisis económica es reactivar la economía y para esto es necesario dejar de pagar. No paguemos la deuda, comencemos a producir, terminemos con la evasión de divisas, nacionalicemos la banca y esto permitirá aumentar la producción y luego podremos discutir con criterio nacional si se paga o no se paga. Yo estoy con la posición de que no hay que pagar y opino que los radicales son los que no tienen un programa claro y que tuvieron que improvisar. El programa de ellos es el de transformar a la Argentina en un país del siglo XXI y esto me parecería bien si no fuera porque es una política trágica para los trabajadores que ya perdieron el 20% de su nivel de vida en el último año. Los radicales tienen el plan de casi todos los países del mundo que les impone el imperialismo".

"Stubrin pide un debate serio y esto significa que deben responder si la economía argentina se puede arreglar pagando la deuda. Nosotros hacemos una pregunta opuesta: si continuamos pagando la deuda, permitiendo que las empresas extranjeras exporten sus ganancias, abriendo nuevamente la economía como lo obligaron los mandamientos del FMI, ¿a dónde va el país? En la Argentina una de las personas que habla con mayor franqueza es el embajador de los Estados Unidos, que dice que los capitalistas son cobardes porque invierten sólo donde tienen seguridad y posibilidades de mayores ganancias. Por eso todo el plan del radicalismo, que está basado en los grandes centros de la economía mundial fracasa completamente. Lo único positivo que se ha hecho son los pactos comerciales con la Unión Soviética. Esto es positivo pero escapa al plan alfonsinista y lo han hecho porque no tenían más remedio, pero no es su política".

Moreno asegura que "el imperialismo, y también el radicalismo, nos han hecho un lavado de cerebro respecto a que no pagar la deuda es algo nunca visto, algo espantoso". Recordó que el ex presidente de Colombia, Alfonso López Michelsen fue uno de los pocos que recordó que, a excepción de Finlandia, ningún otro país pagó jamás su deuda. Se habla mucho del milagro alemán de 1923 pero casi todos se olvidan de un detalle: "que los alemanes resolvieron no pagar la deuda. López Michelsen tuvo la virtud de haber puesto las cosas en su lugar, porque nos han pintado un cuco terrible y yo opino que existe una bomba a escala mundial más poderosa que la bomba atómica y que es el no pago de la deuda externa latinoamericana. Si nuestros países no pagan son las naciones acreedoras las que tendrán que ponerse de rodillas. Es una medida revolucionaria y por eso hemos hablado de la segunda independencia".

(Entrevista de) OSCAR R. GONZALEZ Y GABRIEL GRINBERG



Eduardo Botino

# Nahuel Moreno

## Not paying the debt is revolutionary

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# Foreword

This interview is one of the last —or perhaps the last— given by Nahuel Moreno, who died in January 1987. In those years, MAS and the Communist Party were the main parties of the left in Argentina. MAS had a very important insertion among the workers and was well recognised as Trotskyist.

On 17 January 1986, in a visit to the town of Villa Regina, in the province of Rio Negro, President Alfonsín delivered a fiery speech attacking both the MAS and the Communist Party and the leadership of the CGT, which had called for another general strike for a few days later, on 24 January. The next day, the main newspapers in the country — *La Nación*, *Clarín* and *Cronica* — had big headlines on their front pages commenting on these events.

The magazine *El Periodista* was published in Buenos Aires from 1984 to 1989. It had positions on the left, in defence of democratic rights and rejection of the 1976-1982 dictatorship. Given the prominence given to MAS by the Radical government's attack, in February 1986, in Issue No. 75 it dedicated its back cover to this interview with Nahuel Moreno, which we have reproduced for the first time in its entirety since then.

Notes are by the editor.

**The Editors**

August 2021

## Nahuel Moreno, leader of MAS, responds to Stubrin

# “Not paying the debt is revolutionary”

Far less known by his real name, Hugo Bressano, Nahuel Moreno is the most important — and veteran — leader of the Argentine Trotskyists. He has been in politics since his early youth, back in the 1940s, and since then, he was the protagonist of an eventful militancy that has turned him into a legendary figure, around whom often uncertain stories are woven. Ideologist of “entryism” to Peronism, in the 1950s, agitator of the Peronist assemblies of the Resistance after 1955, creator of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) “La Verdad” in opposition to the militarism that gave birth to the People’s Revolutionary (ERP) in 1970, Moreno is today the undisputed mentor of the Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS) and the priest of a current that boasts not only of having achieved a relevant impact among the factory workers of the Buenos Aires industrial belt but also of integrating a legion of enthusiasts who work for the world revolution in various latitudes of Latin America: Uruguay, Colombia, Mexico and Brazil. In his dialogue with *El Periodista*, Moreno ignored utopia, attacked Radicalism,<sup>1</sup> criticized and at the same time defended the head of the CGT, Saul Ubaldini<sup>2</sup> and, against what some might assume, spoke highly of the Communist Party and the Workers Party.

*“The attack by the Radicals on the MAS is totally unfair”, Moreno said, referring to the note by Radical deputy Marcelo Stubrin published in El Periodista No. 73. He recalled the 1983 electoral campaign when “we were the madmen of the foreign debt, against all the left parties that said nothing was happening with this issue, much less Alfonsinism. In a televised debate between Silvia Diaz, the MAS vice-presidential candidate, and Elva Roulet, the current deputy governor of Buenos Aires, Roulet said the Radicals had the solution. I think there was not total dishonesty on the part of the Radicals, they gambled, as Peron did in 1951, to the third world war. They commented the debt would be easily paid because of the devaluation of the dollar and the fall in international interest rates. It was vulgar reasoning and I do not think it was a demagogic lie of the Radicals mounted at the service of the IMF but, in reality, there was no anti-imperialist reasoning, or nationalist, or anything, but a cold calculation like the one made by all the bourgeois politicians, with which they later hit the wall.”*

*“The Alfonsinists saw it as easy in the electoral campaign, they did not give importance to the foreign debt. We were the first to raise the problem when no one did. We were so sure of what we said that we thought as the president of Uruguay, Jose Maria Sanguinetti, does now when he states that the issue*

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1 **Radicalism:** It refers to the followers of the Radical Civic Union (UCR), a traditional bourgeois political party founded in 1891 and which won the presidency for the first time by the universal male vote with Hipolito Yrigoyen in 1916. Yrigoyen was overthrown in his second presidency in 1930 by the conservative military coup led by General Uriburu. Radicalism opposed Peron since the 1940s with pro-Yankee positions. He actively participated in the pro-US coup of 1955 that overthrew Peron. In 1983, its leader Raul Alfonsin won the presidency

2 **Saul Ubaldini** (1936–2006) was an Argentine union bureaucrat, Secretary General of the CGT between 1986 and 1990. From the small beer industry union, he was linked to the Catholic Church and called 13 general strikes against Alfonsin,



*of foreign debt will explode this year because the time is approaching when it cannot be paid, the time of hunger total famine and famine can only reach a certain degree.”*

Moreno mentions the attacks of President Raul Alfonsin in Villa Regina and responds: *“I have the impression that the visit of the banker Rockefeller and the protests greatly affected the government in terms of investment plans because, in the serious press of the United States, news such as street incidents changes the image of Argentina as a safe and peaceful country where it can be invested. The other aspect of this same problem is clearer and was even hinted at by the newspapers most closely linked to the government such as La Nacion or Clarin when they pointed out the danger posed by the growing influence of the MAS in the factory internal commissions and delegates committees. And I get the impression that the government secret services must have concluded that our union with the Communist Party is a serious thing in the trade union movement because we can become more influential. The newspapers mentioned with concern the situation in Chile and Central America in the sense that a possible invasion of Nicaragua by the United States could divide the country in two. But this is not fundamental, the Radical government is concerned about the union issue.”*

According to Moreno, Ubaldini *“enters into a plan of the Church for Latin America and especially for Argentina and Brazil since this Institution needs to build a wall against the revolutionary and left-wing positions in the labour movement.”*

## The economic program

*“To pay off foreign debt, Argentina has to borrow more and more and the situation becomes explosive”, Moreno said. “Dollars have to come from somewhere to pay interest to foreign banks and on this point, there are no secrets: it is the workers who produce goods that are later converted into money and then used to pay the banks. This is why we agree with Ubaldini, who has shown to have the virtue of saying forceful phrases, that the first step to solving the economic crisis is to reactivate the economy and for this, it is necessary to stop paying. Let’s not pay the debt, let’s start producing, let’s end the evasion of foreign exchange, let’s nationalize the banks and this will allow us to increase production and then we can discuss with national criteria whether it is paid or not. I am for the position that we should not pay and I think that the Radicals are the ones who do not have a clear program and who had to improvise. Their program is to transform Argentina into a 21st century country and this would seem fine to me if it weren’t for the fact that it is a tragic policy for the workers, who have already lost 20 per cent of their standard of living in the last year. The Radicals have the plan of almost all the countries of the world that imperialism imposes on them.”*

*“Stubrin calls for a serious debate and this means they must respond whether the Argentine economy can be fixed by paying the debt. We ask the opposite question: if we continue to pay off the debt, allowing foreign companies to export their profits, opening up the economy again as mandated by the IMF, where does the country go? In Argentina, one of the people who speak most candidly is the ambassador of the United States, who says that capitalists are cowards because they invest only where they have security and the possibility of greater profits. This is why the whole plan of Radicalism, which is based on the great centres of the world economy, fails completely. The only positive thing that has been done is the trade pacts with the Soviet Union. This is positive, but it escapes the Alfonsinist plan and they have done it because they had no choice, but it is not their policy.”*

Moreno maintains that *“imperialism, and also Radicalism, have brainwashed us that not paying the debt is something never seen before, something frightening.”* He recalled that the former president of Colombia, Alfonso Lopez Michelsen was one of the few who recalled that, except for Finland, no other country ever paid its debt. There is much talk about the German miracle of 1923 but almost everyone forgets one detail: *“that the Germans decided not to pay the debt. Lopez Michelsen had the virtue of having put things in their place because they have painted us a terrible bogeyman and I think there is a global-scale bomb more powerful than the atomic bomb and it is the non-payment of Latin American foreign debt. If our countries do not pay, it is the creditor nations that will have to get on their knees. It is a revolutionary measure and this is why we have talked about the second independence.”*

Another issue that deputy Marcelo Stubrin introduced to the debate was the low popularity of the left as a result of the reduced number of votes obtained in the national elections. On this aspect, Nahuel Moreno commented that *“the problem should be analysed the other way around because the one who began to lose popularity and prestige is the Radical government, which in the last legislative elections lost half a million votes. It is something similar to what happened with Belaunde Terry in Peru, who assumed government with an overwhelming majority of votes and came out transformed into a small party. That is why I believe that Alfonsín’s popularity is not increasing, but rather decreasing.”*

*“Stubrin also talks about democratic parties,”* continues Moreno, *“and a Latin American journalist, Daniel Samper Quijano, said that at this time all nouns have changed. The Americans carried out terrible bombings in Vietnam and said they were providing logistical support without touching the civilian population. President Reagan says that we must prepare for another world war against evil and the American press points out that the space shield is the most pacifist thing in the world. And the Radicals speak of democratic parties and when they refer to the CP, they point out that it was for decades but that now it has ceased to be so because it joined us. It is also a phenomenon similar to the change of nouns because what they call democratic parties are all those who collaborated with the dictatorship and with the coups d’états, and the authoritarian and coup parties are those who, like us, were always against the coups d’états.”*

(Interview by) Oscar R. González and Gabriel Grinberg