



# **MAS: A Historical Balance Sheet**

Period 1987–1992

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## Period 1987–1992

Document approved by an Argentine party congress in 1997

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Buenos Aires, 2024

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# Foreword

This text was approved by an Argentine party congress in 1997.<sup>1</sup> It is a self-critical assessment of the period 1987-1992 that we went through without our teacher and conductor Nahuel Moreno, who died in 1987. In those years we experienced very important events of the class struggle and the most serious crisis in our history that led us to a serious setback.

The Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Towards Socialism, MAS) was the party founded by Moreno in 1982, as a continuation of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party, PST) which had been banned since March 1976 by the genocidal dictatorship that fell in 1982. The high point of the crisis was the split in April 1992 of the MAS and the international current founded by Nahuel Moreno. Thus began the crisis of the Morenoist current, which has had different interpretations of its causes. In other words, there have been different balance sheets.

This is the balance sheet of our Morenoist current, which was rearmed with the foundation of the International Workers Unity-Fourth International (IWU-FI),<sup>2</sup> which began to take up the legacy of Nahuel Moreno, not without difficulties, continuing the fight to build the party and the international without any self-proclamation. This is a self-critical assessment that essentially recognises that it was the mistakes of the old leadership without Moreno that led to the crisis by distancing itself from his political and theoretical legacy, giving “wrong political responses to the great events of the global and national class struggle and the method in the building of the party and its leadership.”

It is a balance sheet opposed to that of the leaders of the majority of the MAS at the time and of the IWL-FI, who, as will be explained in this paper, contributed to dividing the international current, who refused to recognise those errors and continued to distance themselves from Moreno’s legacy. Among them, we can mention Andres Romero, Nora Ciapponi, Roberto Fanjul, Marina S, or Eugenio Greco, who were grouped in the Bolshevik Tendency (BT), who formed a bloc together

1 The 1997 congress was of the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers’ Movement, MST), which had been set up in 1992 as a continuation of the Morenoist Tendency (MT) of the MAS. In 2005, the MST split into two sectors because of profound political and methodological differences. The sector of the MST led by Alejandro Bodart, Vilma Ripoll, Carlos Maradona and Guillermo Paganini distanced themselves from the IWU-FI and turned to opportunist positions of support for class-conciliatory governments such as those of Chavez and Maduro in Venezuela, or Syriza in Greece, at the international level, and to make electoral alliances of the centre-left. for example, with Pino Solanas’s Proyecto Sur or with bosses’ leaders such as Luis Juez, in Cordoba, later leader of the liberal right led by Mauricio Macri. Until now, the MST continues to claim these opportunistic actions as “correct tactics”. It was only in 2019 that they joined the Front of the Left and the Workers-Unity (FITU).

The other sector set up Izquierda Socialista (Socialist Left), current section of the IWU-FI, headed, among others, by Miguel Sorans, Juan Carlos Giordano, Gabriel Schwerdt, Carlos “Piqueta” Rodríguez, Mercedes Petit, Guillermo Sánchez Porta, Liliana Olivero and Norberto Piñón. Izquierda Socialista publishes its periodical *El Socialista* and it was the driving force and founder of the Front of the Left and the Workers (FIT) in 2011.

2 The IWU-FI (International Workers Unity-Fourth International) was founded in Barcelona, Spanish State, in April 1995. It publishes the magazine *International Correspondence*. See more on the [uit-ci.org](http://uit-ci.org) page.

with the leaders of the now PSTU of Brazil and the PST of Colombia. Later on, they would take different political paths. Unfortunately, they had the support of the historic leader Ernesto Gonzalez, who over the years moved away from the so-called New MAS and approached, without integrating it, the Morenoist current linked to the IWU-FI.

The sector that was grouped in opposition to the BT was called the Morenoist Tendency (MT) which was made up of members of the old leadership such as Miguel Sorans, Silvia Santos “Pestaña”, Mercedes Petit, Eduardo Exposito, Pedro Fuentes, Orlando Mattolini, and Silvia Diaz. The fight to defend Moreno’s legacy also began to take place at the international level. This is how the International Morenoist Tendency (IMT) was formed with leaders of the PST of Peru, the PST of Panama, the MST of Ecuador and comrades from Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Chile, the US and Europe. Its constitution was a very important step to try to change the course of the international and avoid its division. Unfortunately, this could not be achieved but the IMT contributed to a principled regrouping and was the predecessor of the IWU-FI.

Over time, political and party-building differences also emerged between the initial components of the MT and the MIT. Thus, for example, Eduardo Exposito, Silvia Diaz, Pedro Fuentes and Luis Zamora moved away from the current at different times. Nuances and differences were also expressed in the debate on this self-critical assessment that at that time was known as the “Historical Balance Sheet”. This led to delays in the final resolution of the text. But since the 1993 congress, we had conclusions and texts that provided the elements to reorient ourselves in the right direction. As the text of the balance sheet says: “The discussion needed to mature more so the differences and nuances that existed with it could be better expressed.”

In the end, the balance sheet was voted by a large majority in the Central Committee of May 1996 and at the party congress of 1997. On that basis, its fundamental conclusions were approved by an IWU-FI congress.

We consider it to be a very important and educational text for the new generations of militants and cadres of the Morenoist current, as well as for all revolutionary socialists. Because it is a harsh self-criticism that leaves great lessons based on the political mistakes of building a revolutionary party. It also puts white on black on how one should not act in an internal crisis with political or orientation differences. It once again puts on the table the need to respect differences and respect the democratic methods that Leon Trotsky and Nahuel Moreno bequeathed to us in their struggle against the methods of Stalinism.

**Miguel Sorans**

April 2023

All notes are by the editors.

# MAS: A Historical Balance Sheet

## Introduction

The study and discussion of the period from the death of Nahuel Moreno, in January 1987, until April 1992, when the breakup of the MAS and the IWL-FI took place, is of fundamental importance for our party and international current. This is what, among us, is called the *Historical Balance Sheet*. This is the stage that we began without our teacher and driver, Moreno. In those years we experienced very important events in the national and global class struggle, great leaps in the party and the most serious crisis in our history that led us to a serious setback in the building of the party and the international.

This balance sheet is very important for the leaders, cadres and militants who have been active for years, as well as for the new generations that have joined the party in the last period. It is not a discussion about the history of the party. The historical balance sheet is a balance of activities, therefore, it is a balance of its leadership and all the serious errors committed, political and methodological, and it must serve to draw conclusions that help the great task we have set ourselves of forming a new leadership of the new party and to continue building the party and the international with correct policies and methods.

This balance sheet, what the party Congress discusses and votes on, will be one more contribution to the necessary discussion that our international current must hold. All sections, leaders and cadres of the sister parties will help with their contributions to deepen the balance sheet of the period of the International without Moreno.

We can say that we are starting over but we are not starting from scratch, rather we have accumulated 50 years of struggle and tradition in the fight to build a party and the International. And we have the entire theoretical, political and methodological legacy that Nahuel Moreno left us. The history of our party is the history of making Trotskyism great in the workers' movement and of being part of an International. But it is also the story of the blows suffered by the defeats of the workers' movement as well as by the pressures of other enemy currents and class sectors. The party went through periods of development and then was left without cadres; it gained influence in the workers' movement and then was left without a factory committee. It had great papers and then miserable bulletins; it trained and saw leaders and leadership teams go into crisis. It changed its name several times: Palabra Obrera, PRT (*La Verdad*), PST, MAS. It had unifications and divisions. Great leaders were won by Castroism for the guerrillas, like Bengoechea<sup>3</sup> and others. It happened to us twice in the 1960s and we were reduced to very little and the party continued its struggle and rose again. We experienced similar things at the level of the Fourth International. Now with the

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3 **Angel "Vasco" (The Basque) Bengoechea** (1926–1964) was, along with Moreno, one of the top leaders of the Argentine party and editor of their periodical Palabra Obrera. In 1963, he travelled to Cuba looking for help to Hugo Blanco, who was heading the peasants' struggles in Peru, he was won to Castroism and broke away to launch a guerrilla group. He was killed in July 1964 after the explosion in an apartment in Posadas St, Buenos Aires. See in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org) *On Bengoechea's split with Palabra Obrera* (1964) and *Two methods for the Latin American revolution* (1964).



new party and the IWU-FI, we are taking up the fight again. We must draw up this historical balance sheet together, knowing that we are the successors of those who preceded us in this immense struggle and with the optimism that by drawing the lessons and sticking to our class and its struggles we will move forward.

We have a large deficit, both the national and international leadership by not having made progress in the discussion of the historical balance sheet. There were some advances such as the document approved by the CC and presented to the party in October 1992, which could not be voted on in the Congress of June 1993 because the conditions were not ripe to fully address the balance because of the severity of our crisis. The discussion needed to mature more so the differences and nuances that existed with it could be better expressed. As the current *Balance Sheet and Orientation* (1996) says, it did not help “that the discussion was not deepened nor the *Historical Balance Sheet* was voted on, because that discussion would have helped us understand the importance of combating many of the traits that we had defined and which were an expression of the vices and deviations that we inherited from the old leadership” (page 25).

This does not mean that throughout these years we have not concluded what happened to us and that they have not helped us, for example, to correct the course of the party in May–June 1994. With this document, which incorporates many elements of the text of 1992 and the attached resolution of the CC of April 1993, we must deepen the discussion of the balance sheet to specify the causes of the serious crisis that we have suffered.

**The central cause was that without Nahuel Moreno the leadership gave wrong political responses to the great events of the global and national class struggle and the method in the building of the party and its leadership.**

There was a combination of objective and subjective causes in the emergence of the crisis that led to the liquidation of the MAS and the crisis of the IWL–FI, but the subjective causes prevailed: we responded poorly to those great challenges of the global and national reality (the political revolution in the East and the fall of Stalinism; and this is combined with a leap of the uprising in Africa, in the Middle East, in Latin America and, in particular, in our country (Rosariazo,<sup>4</sup> general and union strikes, Maestrazo, Utazo, railway workers, Easter week,<sup>5</sup> etc.) This is why the cause of the crisis is essentially political and secondly of method; these developed since Moreno’s death and this made a leap in how the crisis was addressed based on those political deviations and of party building and they even came to break party tradition, leading to moral attacks on Comrade Eduardo Exposito.

One of the central points to understand the crisis and the burst of the MAS and the IWL is the premature death of Nahuel Moreno. **With his death, a new stage opens for the party and the international current.** His disappearance in January 1987 is similar for the party and the IWL, with all due respect, as the death of Leon Trotsky was for the Fourth International. Moreno’s death produced a great theoretical, political, and methodological void. **The historical crisis of leadership that the leadership of our party was dragging along makes a qualitative leap.**

That leadership, without Moreno, did not pass the acid test of leading without him. It faced colossal changes in the world, national and party class struggles and responded poorly, giving wrong answers, causing political and party-building deviations.

**Thus began a global and unique crisis, in the party and the International,** which after a process that lasted over three years and different periods, caused the explosion of the old leadership

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4 **Rosariazo:** In 1989, amid hyperinflation, on the eve of the elections that Menem won, there were more than a million workers in conflict. At the end of May, a popular semi-insurrection took place in Rosario (Santa Fe). In the midst of the mobilisations there was looting, seven deaths and about 1,300 detainees. It was the highest peak of the struggles that forced Alfonsín to advance the handover of the presidency.

5 The **Maestrazo** was the national strike of over half a million teachers, who demanded a salary increase and a larger educational budget and which lasted 43 days. In November 1989, the **Utazo**, a strike by drivers grouped in the UTA, took place against Menem and the union’s leadership. The 1991-1992 **railway strike** faced the privatisation of the entire railway system imposed by Menem. During **Easter week** of 1987 there was an insurrection by a sector of the army officers, the “carapintadas” (Painted Faces) led by Aldo Rico, who demanded to be disassociated from the cause against the high command of the genocidal military junta of 1976-1982. Alfonsín granted the law of due obedience.

team, the liquidation of the MAS and the crisis and division of the IWL. There was a unique crisis process in the Argentine party that had three periods: a) the period of deviations, fundamentally the adaptation to bourgeois democracy; b) the period of the liquidation of the party towards the propaganda-sceptic sect and the International, from July 1990 onwards, and c) the period of the formation of the International Morenoist Tendency [IMT] and the Morenoist Tendency [MT], when it began to break with the national-Trotskyism, which had predominated in the two previous periods, and with consensus at the level of the old leadership about the role of the cadres and the ranks.

## CHAPTER 1

# The death of Nahuel Moreno produced a great theoretical, political, and methodological void

To explain why we arrived at the crisis that we suffered, we are forced to make a little history of the development of Trotskyism and our current headed by Nahuel Moreno.

Everything we say about the importance of Moreno's death for our party and international current may be little because of what he represented as a teacher and leader. In him were concentrated more than 45 years of struggle, of experience in party building, of theoretical and political elaboration, of internationalism. The IWL and the Argentinean party, in full development and growth, were part of his legacy, after many years of hard struggle against revisionist currents and the propaganda sects within Trotskyism; in a hard fight against Stalinism, Maoism, guerrillaism; Peronism in our country; facing military coups, repression, etc.

Moreno himself defined that we were a "barbarian Trotskyism", to explain in what terrible conditions of isolation we had to build our party: "We formed alone, without the help of a true International. (...) We had to pay the price for the non-existence of an International and Trotsky's death" (*Conversations with Nahuel Moreno*,<sup>6</sup> p. 62).

We, therefore, believe we do not exaggerate when we say that, with due respect, the death of Moreno was for our future and party similar to what the death of León Trotsky meant for the formation of the Fourth International. It produced a leadership vacuum in the IWL and in the Argentine party.

In this context, Moreno's death is one of the main causes of the crisis and successive fragmentations suffered by the current that was part of the IWL. Without Moreno, and faced with a change as great as the fall of Stalinism and the leap of the Argentine party, the leadership that remained at the head of the IWL and the Argentine party gave wrong national-Trotskyist, political and method responses.

### 1.1. The marginality of Trotskyism and its causes

That Trotskyism is marginal is a fact of reality and is one of the causes of the repeated divisions of Trotskyism for decades.

Among the objective causes of the marginality of Trotskyism are that in the new world stage of revolutionary upsurge, from the Second World War, the apparatuses (Stalinism, Maoism, Castroism, nationalist-bourgeois movements) were strengthened and that the proletariat had little weight in the triumphant postwar revolutions (China, Cuba, Vietnam). But the central cause of marginality was the crisis of the international leadership.

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<sup>6</sup> Available for downloading from [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

For this reason, regarding the crisis of Trotskyism, Moreno said that “marginality is only one of the reasons for the divisions in Trotskyism. Another, dramatic one, was the crisis of the leadership of the International” (*Conversations with Nahuel Moreno*, page 26). Trotsky’s death ended up being qualitative for the Fourth International. The relative weakness that the Fourth had during Trotsky’s life, due to the world retreat, became absolute weakness. But the fundamental “weakness” that prevailed in the leadership of the International, since the 1950s, was revisionism; the tendency of the Pablo-Mandel leadership to permanently adapt to bureaucratic or nationalist leaderships. The struggle to build a global revolutionary leadership, as well as a national one, requires a relentless fight for the destruction of the bureaucratic or nationalist leaderships that dominate or influence the masses and their vanguard. The consequences of revisionism, in its different variants (Mandelism, Lambert,<sup>7</sup> Healy<sup>8</sup>), are liquidationist.

“This long march has been marked by divisions and fusions between currents that expressed revisionist or principled positions at each juncture. Nor are we original in this: the process that led to the formation of the Bolshevik leadership and the Third International also ran through a series of separations and regroupings” (Thesis XV of the foundation of the IWL).

## 1.2. Moreno and our current: 30 years of struggle against revisionism and to escape marginality

Moreno always fought to build us as part of the International. We made enormous efforts in that regard. He did so by combating revisionism and scepticism about the possibilities of Trotskyism.

In the 1950s, while the Pablo-Mandel leadership handed over the Bolivian revolution, giving in to the bourgeois government of Paz Estenssoro<sup>9</sup> and Lechin<sup>10</sup> (leader of the COB), our current raised the policy of all power to the COB and its armed militias. In the 1960s, we formed the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO) and supported the revolutionary peasant movement led by the Trotskyist Hugo Blanco, then a member of our Peruvian section. and we differentiated ourselves from the foquist guerrilla, while the leadership of the Fourth International

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7 **Pierre Lambert** (1920–2008). French Trotskyist leader. He headed the PCI (Internationalist Communist Party) since 1954. He formed the International Committee with Healy with sectarian positions against the Cuban revolution. They denied Cuba’s character as a workers’ and socialist state. In 1979, Lambert rejected the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade by the unity government of Sandinismo with the bourgeoisie in Nicaragua (which was supported by Mandel and the US SWP). This led to a unification in 1980 with the international organisation led by Nahuel Moreno (they formed the International Committee–Fourth International, IC-FI). But they split shortly after when Lambert broke with the revolutionary program approved in common (the Theses of the IC-FI) and turned to opportunism, supporting the bourgeois imperialist government of the Socialist Party in France, headed by Mitterrand. Since then, Lambert’s organisation went into a steep decline.

8 **Gerry Healy** (1913-1989). Irish. He emigrated to England and there he became a Trotskyist in 1937. Faced with the crisis and split in the Fourth International in the early 1950s, he aligned himself against Pablo and Mandel but adopting an increasingly sectarian and national-Trotskyist course. He kept an international organisation, called the International Committee, together with Pierre Lambert, which did not participate in the reunification of the Fourth International in 1963. In 1971, he distanced himself from Lambert. In the 1970s, his organisation, the WRP (Workers Revolutionary Party) underwent successive splits, although it retained an important apparatus due to its ties to the Libyan and Iraqi regimes, which financed it. In 1985, it erupted amid political arguments and accusations against Healy of sexual abuse of female WRP members. Healy used brutal bureaucratic methods and carried out personal smear campaigns against Trotskyist leaders who disagreed with him.

9 **Victor Paz Estenssoro** (1907–2001) was a Bolivian lawyer and politician. He is the founder of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) together with Hernan Siles Zuazo. He was president of the Republic in 1952–1956 and on three other occasions. His bourgeois government was supported by the Trotskyist sector led by Mandel.

10 **Juan Lechin** (1914–2001) was the most important workers’ leader and bureaucrat of Bolivian unionism. He was head of the Federation of Bolivian Mine Workers (FSTMB) from 1944 to 1987 and the founder of the Bolivian Workers’ Union (COB) in the revolution of 1952, which he headed until 1987. During the presidency of Victor Paz Estenssoro, of the bourgeois party MNR, between 1960 and 1964, he also served as Vice President of Bolivia.

became pro-guerrilla, and recognised the party led by Santucho<sup>11</sup> as an official section while our party was declared a “sympathiser” of the Fourth International. In 1979, the leadership of the Fourth International supported the Sandinista–Violeta Chamorro government and supported the expulsion and repression of the Simón Bolívar Brigade, causing a new split.

“Unlike the other postwar Trotskyist leaders, Moreno was never sceptical in any sense. Perhaps because he was from the Latin American Southern Cone, the only region in the world where the working class continued the fight and remained the axis of the class struggle in the post-war period and until today (...). He always held that capitalism would bring more misery and crisis for the masses of the world, including the workers of the imperialist countries because the postwar boom would be temporary. He always asserted that the working class was going to fight again. That it was going to once again be the leading class of the revolutionary process. That it was going to shatter the counterrevolutionary apparatuses and build its own democratic organisations to fight for power. That Trotskyism could build parties in the working class if it relentlessly confronted the traitorous leaderships in the heat of the struggles. (...) He fought the revisionists relentlessly. This is the best-known part of his career: his fight for the Fourth International to set itself the task of defeating all traitorous leaderships (...). But that fight against the revisionists never led him to retreat into the fatal national-Trotskyist isolation” (*Correo Internacional*, No. 27, May 1987).

### 1.3. The IWL after Moreno’s death

The IWL was his most important work. It was the culmination of years of intervention in the world struggle and the fight against revisionism. and the time that Moreno led it was relatively short. From the founding of the IWL to Moreno’s death there are only five years.

It was founded in January 1982 as a result of a deep crisis in which Trotskyism was sub-merged, first, due to the capitulation of the Unified Secretariat (Mandelism) to Castroism and the Sandinista government in 1979, and then, because of the capitulation of Lambertism to the imperialist government of Mitterrand in 1981.

The group of leaders who met in Bogotá at the beginning of 1982 found themselves with a host of principle, methodological, programmatic, organisational, and moral problems that they had to resolve.

The leadership of the IWL faced the challenge and set out to build itself, achieving great progress in a short time. Since its founding, it boldly came out pointing out that it had “opened up the possibility of building an international with national parties established in the vanguard and with relative mass influence, as a task for the next five years” (*Balance Sheet and Perspectives*, page 2, 1984).

The IWL with Moreno gave itself a priority, making an objective analysis of the forces it had, the work and the building of the party in Argentina: “...only in Argentina is there the exceptional combination of revolutionary upsurge with the existence of an experienced party, inserted in the struggles, which puts us in the **possibility of building a party with mass influence**.”

The central orientation, for all the parties of the International, is **to participate in the national class struggle**, that is, for each party to act alongside its working class, its people, its youth,

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11 **Mario Roberto Santucho** (1936–1976) was a native of Santiago del Estero and led the Indo-American and Popular Revolutionary Front (FRIP), an indigenous group and sympathiser of the Cuban Revolution that acted in the sugar mills of Tucuman. In 1964, Santucho began to interact with Palabra Obrera and become interested in Trotsky’s thesis of permanent revolution, revaluing the role of the working class. In March 1965, the unification of Palabra Obrera and the FRIP took place, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers Party, PRT) was formed and the newspaper *La Verdad* began to be published. A couple of years later Santucho and other PRT leaders began to turn to guerrilla positions, which were encouraged by the Mandelist sector of the reunified Fourth International. In the summer of 1967-1968, the party split. Moreno headed the PRT-*La Verdad* and Santucho headed the PRT-*El Combatiente* which formed the guerrilla group the People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP). He died during a confrontation with a task group of the Argentine Army in Villa Martelli (Buenos Aires province) on 19 July 1976.

its immigrants, its women, and its oppressed, **from the vanguard**, responding to their concrete struggles, against the bosses, governments, and traitorous regimes and leaderships.

The IEC of August 1982 provides all the parties of the International with a concrete orientation: intervene to mobilise the masses, write national documents that are as scientific as possible, regularise finances and contributors; all this, *prioritising the structuring fringes, in the vanguard of fighters*, to overcome marginality and achieve greater political-social influence” (*Balance Sheet*, 1984, IWL, page 6, emphasis in the original). In the five years that followed, the IWL and the Argentine party made important leaps. Our party went from 1,000 members to 5,000 in 1985. There was great progress in the Brazilian party, which grew in membership and union influence. This did not mean that there were no crises and great difficulties. The international leadership was so weak, outside of Moreno, that many times there were crises in the International Secretariat, and in the national leadership (including Argentina) and new teams had to be tested. On one occasion, a comrade, a member of the International Secretariat, had a psychological crisis because of the accumulation of tasks and he returned to his country without even notifying the leadership.

In 1984 there was a major crisis in the leadership of the Argentine party. In that same year, there was a crisis in the Spanish PST, which was quite serious because it took the form of an autonomous building project concerning the International, a variant of national-Trotskyism.

But the important achievements that the IWL had, under Moreno’s leadership, did not cause us to lose objectivity regarding who we were, given the global process and the titanic task of solving the problem of the crisis of revolutionary leadership: **“From the perspective of the construction of the mass International, the IWL (FI) is nothing more than a nucleus”** (ibid, page 15).

## 1.4. The party that Moreno left us

At the death of Nahuel Moreno, the party was on its way to becoming the strongest of the vanguard: we had gained a wide political space, the party was more solid in its structure of cadres and militants, in newspapers, finances, and in its insertion in the workers’ movement; in optimal conditions to fight for new internal commissions and bodies of delegates. We were on our way to becoming the first party of the left and we were without a doubt the first in the struggles. We had achieved that position and to be an objective part of the country’s political reality because of a series of decisive successes, accompanied by solid work of party building.

We took the first leap in 1983. We said that “it has been the most important advance that a left-wing party has had in our country in the last 40 years.” Despite having been defeated in the fight for mass influence in the electoral process, we emerged strengthened as a strong vanguard party and we consider it a great achievement to have fought that battle with all our forces, as well as the fundamental political axis that we raised in it: the call to fight for the non-payment of the foreign debt.

Likewise, it was correct to have immediately oriented ourselves to have as our focus the turn to the struggles and the workers’ movement and to appear as the intransigent enemies of the Alfonsin<sup>12</sup> government.

At the end of 1984, the situation was as follows: “...we are more than 5,000, with a close periphery of 20,000 people (...) the most likely variant is that we will strengthen and develop as a vanguard party but that we have mass influence or are very close to it in the union arena. Let’s quantify it to understand it better. By strengthening and developing as a vanguard party we mean that by the end of next year, we will have between 6,000 and 8,000 militants. An extraordinarily important growth that places us on the verge of being a party with mass influence if we can take advantage of the first opportunity that presents itself to us. Our party is inserted in some 1,500 factories, enterprises and establishments; of them, we have a notable union influence in more than 40 large

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12 **Raul Ricardo Alfonsin** (1927-2009) was one of the main leaders of the traditional bourgeois Radical Civic Union (UCR) party. Between December 1983 and July 1989, he was president of Argentina after the defeat of the genocidal dictatorship in June 1982, when he won the elections in 1983.

factories or over 500 workers each. We placed 30,000 weekly newspapers, and between 15% and 20% were sold in picket lines, that is, their placement and collection is almost entirely structural” (*Balance Sheet of Activities*, January 1985).

We had a party stuck to the struggles, with policies, programs and slogans towards them that took advantage of the opportunities to systematically strike with bold initiatives, with agitation, accompanied by patient work on the structures and neighbourhoods, prioritising the struggles, to build teams, expand the sale of the newspaper and strengthen finances.

As it could not be otherwise, we often make mistakes. However, they were discussed and corrected in the light of daily assessments. As happened with the balance sheet of the 1983 elections or with the crisis in the leadership in 1984, for example.

## 1.5. Since 1987 the crisis of the party’s historical leadership has worsened

The leadership that remains after Moreno’s death is the old leadership that accompanied him in recent years, whose characteristics have been defined on repeated occasions during Moreno’s life. Thus, we can appeal to the documents of 1979, 1981, 1984, etc. In the balance sheet of 1982, it is characterised as a **“leadership not made in the workers’ movement (...) emerging from the student movement but without much training in the class struggle, consistent and bold but with petty-bourgeois vices and tendencies (...) made more for the needs of the party than for those proposed by the workers’ and mass movement (...) with bureaucratic and administrative methods (...) that administers the political successes (...) of low level and little study”**. Moreno constantly fought these vices and despite making progress, he was unable to eradicate them.

To better understand the process of the party’s leadership crisis, it is necessary to take notice of our history. And for this, the best thing is to reproduce again what was stated in the aforementioned balance sheet of 1981: **“Our party originally had an extraordinary leadership in which the figures of Bengoechea, Moreno, Lagar, Fucito, Ruanova, Pereyra, etc. stood out, after that, we have not been able to build a similar team and there has been a leadership void that has acquired its most complete expression in the last five years. That old leadership had characteristics that no team has ever had again. It was a leadership that was made in the process of the class struggle, responding to the demands and needs that it posed to us (...) it combined theorists, politicians, propagandists, and organisers to make a true and complete leadership team (...). It was the leadership that guided the party in the resistance to the Liberating Revolution.<sup>13</sup> (...). This leadership team of our party was destroyed by the combination of two terrible objective pressures: the decline of the workers’ movement between 1959 and 1969, and the rise, from the Cuban revolution (1959), from the Castroist petty-bourgeoisie and its guerrilla focus policy. All of its members with two or three exceptions physically disappear.**

This leadership is joined by a new generation of young leaders, whose greatest exponents are Cesar Robles and Arturo Gómez, who are also very good but who quickly disappear at the hands of repression or due to overwork, creating a leadership void that we have not been able to resolve (...). The leap that the party makes in legality (1973) shows the fundamental problems of the leadership and to a certain extent, we can say that here begins the crisis of leadership that manifests itself acutely and takes shape in the five years of clandestinity. Let us just remember the struggle against sectarianism” (*Balance Sheet Document*, 1981).

In the clandestine stage, which goes from 1976 to 1982, different crises within the party were not led by Moreno, who spent those years in exile. In the first period, there was an aparatist and bureaucratic deviation and later a movementist deviation. The leadership of the first period of clandestinity helped preserve the party from repression but isolated it from the class struggle when

<sup>13</sup> **Liberating Revolution** is the name by which the dictatorship that ruled Argentina is known after the military coup promoted by the pro-Yankee oligarchy and the Catholic church that overthrew President Perón in September 1955.

resistance to the dictatorship began. It was a leadership team that abandoned our conception of taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the class struggle. People lived not in terms of intervention but in terms of the preservation of the party, which later became the preservation of the apparatus. The change of leadership to help the party go outwards led to movementism. The successes achieved were lost because the party organisations were diluted and with them the basic structure of the organisation.

The two clandestine leaderships had profound differences between them. “The first was sectarian, it closed the party. The second diluted it, in an attempt to create a movement. But both had the same organisational ills and were bureaucratic, the two poles of bureaucratism. (...) On the grounds of politics and propaganda, this bureaucratic course led to the abandonment of all attempts to take advantage of clandestinity to educate and politicise the party. The only ‘good’ thing that clandestinity had —the possibility for the entire party to study and progress theoretically and politically for hours a week— we completely wasted. This refusal to politicise the party, typical of any bureaucratic leadership, is due to two reasons: first, a bureaucratic leadership does not discuss, nor is it interested in theory or politics because the only thing it wants is for its campaigns to be fulfilled and for the party and finances to run ‘normally’, that is, routinely. The second reason is one of self-preservation: a theoretically trained and politicised party criticises everything, while a party with a low theoretical and political level tends to accept things that come ‘from above’ without further questioning. and a bureaucratic leadership hates criticism and loves praise” (*1984 Activities Report*, page 13).

The leadership of the IWL, and especially Moreno, contributed “decisively so that these crises and deviations were corrected and overcome. Since 1982, with the stage opened after Malvinas [Falklands] and the fall of the dictatorship, Moreno with the IWL faces the building of the party with the perspective of achieving mass influence. During this period, it will continue to combat the defects of that leadership team but, as we said, without managing to eliminate them: “The return to the country in September 1982 of the leadership abroad opens a new stage. A difficult and contradictory coupling of both directions begins, which until now has not managed to become a fusion, a thorough connection between them. They are two opposite ways, two methods of doing politics, of guiding and directing the party. Inevitably they had to collide, and they did.” (*ibid.*, page 14.)

The *Activities Report* of 1984 warned of the danger of a serious crisis in the party: “...the party has made colossal advances, but these advances have been achieved with two obstacles: the internal regime, which is not fundamentally democratic centralist, and the leadership crisis. These two obstacles are serious and critical: if we do not overcome them, they can slow down and even reverse the progress we have made and produce a serious crisis in the party. And that the way out of this situation, the definitive burial of the bureaucratic methods and the overcoming of the leadership crisis, involves the politicisation of the party.” (*ibid.*, page 14.)

The politicisation of the entire party and its leadership had to start from monitoring the life of the International, as well as from being attached to the national class struggle to arm the party to intervene, the leaders following the most important processes personally and assisting regularly attend grassroots meetings, so as not to lose contact with the reality of the party itself.

**Moreno’s death caused a qualitative leap in all these methodological and political problems, aggravating the historical crisis that existed in the leadership of the party. A global void is produced that also encompasses international leadership.**



## CHAPTER 2

# Without Moreno, the leadership gave wrong political responses to the great facts of the world and national class struggle

The severity of the crisis we are suffering cannot be understood if we do not provide an objective and political framework: the framework of the global and national class struggle and our policies in the face of these changes.

After Moreno's death, the leap of the world revolution brought us face to face with new facts of the class struggle: a new stage opened, different from the one that began in 1943 with Stalingrad. These new facts are the revolutionary processes in China, Germany, USSR, Romania and other Eastern countries against the Stalinist regimes, including the fall of the Berlin Wall, which led to the fall of the most important workers' counterrevolutionary apparatus in the world: Stalinism.

The triumph of the political revolution in the East, in its first phase, was combined with the semi-insurrections against bourgeois-democratic regimes such as the Caracazo,<sup>14</sup> the Rosariazo and great revolutionary struggles in South Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, etc.

The wrong responses to these immense events —theoretical, programmatic and political— are the basis for the development of the crisis and the subsequent outbreak and breakup of the MAS and the IWL.

**The wrong responses also had to do with the leap that the party was making in those years without Moreno, helped by the changes in the national reality with processes as important as Easter (1987), the Maestrazo (1988), the general strikes and the fall (1989-1990) of the Austral<sup>15</sup> and Primavera<sup>16</sup> plans and the hyperinflation crisis that led to a revolutionary crisis (fall of Alfonsín, crisis of the UCR) with the Rosariazo, the Utazo and the first strikes against Menem<sup>17</sup>**

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14 **Caracazo** was a semi-insurrection that took place between 27 February 1989 and 8 March of the same year, whose peak was in Caracas, capital of Venezuela, when President Carlos Andres Perez, as soon as he took office, launched a brutal increase in gasoline and of the cost of urban transportation, among other anti-popular adjustments. The government had to roll back the increases.

15 The **Austral Plan** was an economic plan in Argentina in 1985 designed by the Minister of Economy Juan Vital Sourrouille during the presidency of Raul Alfonsín.

16 The **Plan Primavera** (Spring Plan) was an economic plan to try to stabilise the Argentine economy. It was launched in August 1988, during the government of Raúl Alfonsín, conceived with the purpose of stopping the worsening of the economic recession that had been dragging on for years and reaching the presidential elections. The economic program promoted the opening of the economy and the privatisation of state companies.

17 **Carlos Saul Menem** (1930-2021) was an Argentine lawyer and politician who served as president of Argentina from 1989 to 1999. He was a Peronist and imposed the privatisation of public companies, which were of great importance in the country. Among them YPF, the railways, telephony, water, energy, gas, etc., and the dollar-peso convertibility (1 to 1), leading to a large increase in unemployment. He had various judicial processes, for corruption, illegal sale of weapons, and others. He was imprisoned and died free, being a senator, protected by those senate privileges. Javier

(1990), the beginning of the break with the Partido Justicialista, etc. We faced great leaps in the party expressed in growth, we formed large columns, we filled stadiums, we had the first Trotskyist deputies and councillors in the country, etc.

The conditions began to exist to fight to concretely achieve a party with mass influence. Since the 1980s we have been trying to make this leap, as was the experience with Nahuel Moreno during 1982–1983 of opening hundreds of premises to organise thousands of new comrades who approached us, although later the objective process did not allow it to be achieved. It was the first test in this new challenge on this new level of party building, on this new and complex arena that is the struggle for mass influence. Experience that Moreno himself did not live. When the opportunity presented itself, the leadership without Moreno responded poorly.

**In the period 1987–1990, we fell into a deviation of adaptation to bourgeois democracy and in the building of the party we fell into movementism. In the period 1990–1992, a sceptical, sectarian and defeatist course was imposed that consciously went against the Morenoist project, to turn the party into a propaganda sect.** For this, the BT and the majority of the IEC relied on the mistakes of the previous period and on the non-fight of the sector of the old leadership that today makes up our party. In this period, Morenoism was influenced by the world campaign of imperialism that “socialism failed” and the sceptical world petty bourgeois current of ex-Stalinists, ex-guerrillas, etc.

The two periods had a thread of continuity in the national leadership: national-Trotskyism.

## 2.1. National-Trotskyism was a constant since Moreno’s death

National-Trotskyism was a central deviation, which after Moreno’s death ran through all subsequent periods. For the Trotskyists, the first and fundamental thing is the building —around a program— of the international organisation and its leadership. Trotskyism is synonymous with international organisation and leadership, which are superior and different categories to any national organisation and leadership, no matter how large and capable it may be.

Moreno called those organisations national-Trotskyist, such as Healyism, which placed the problem of international organisation and leadership as agreements between national leaderships, and even as synonymous with national leadership. The maximum expression was Lambert and Healy, who formed small international groups as “branches” of the OCI and the WRP; absolutely dominated by those parties. What is characteristic of these currents are the bureaucratic methods, essential to ensure the defence of the all-powerful and “infallible” national leadership.

Moreno had systematically struggled to build a truly international leadership team, warning against the dangers of the section with the most weight and tradition imposing itself on the whole, leading to a conception of a “mother party”. He even incorporated this aspect into the statutes of the IWL to prevent the strongest sections from acquiring a decisive weight. In any case, this battle against the national Trotskyist tendencies was permanent: this was the case in 1983 against the leadership of the Spanish section or during 1986 in Argentina, when due to the lack of follow-up of world politics, the activity of the International, of the work with the magazine, etc., one of the axes of the activity was to internationalise the party.

**National Trotskyism, after Moreno’s death, had political and organisational expressions. The centre of the deviation was political: the Argentine leadership never discussed the international situation in depth.**

In the period 1987–1990, it refused, for example, to discuss the Caracazo of 1989, which was the precursor to the Rosaríazo. In 1988, it also did not give importance to the international discussion in its Congress, ignoring the first symptoms of the political revolution in the East. We were left behind in global analyses and policies. The Caracazo, Tiananmen Square, and the Rosaríazo took

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Milei, far-right and anarcho-liberal capitalist, who assumed the presidency in December 2023, defeating Peronism, claims him as his great predecessor and placed his bust in the Casa Rosada..

us by surprise, so the Argentine party and the IWL were left increasingly behind the events and giving wrong answers.

**National-Trotskyism also had expressions in the takeover of the international leadership by the leadership of the Argentine party. This was manifested in all central aspects both in the period 1987–1990 and 1990–1992.**

The Argentine leadership came to consider itself superior to the leadership of the IWL and even went so far as to consider itself superior to that of the Third International. That is why it stopped appealing to collective discussion of all issues with the other leaders of the IWL and their parties.

At the World Congress of 1989, the Rosariazo process and the actions of the Argentine party were not raised for discussion. The *Theses of 1990*<sup>18</sup> were the extension of the concepts that began to develop in Argentina. National-Trotskyism was revealed, in this case, because the theses were developed centrally by the National Directorate of the Argentine party based on a party school run in the summer of 1990.

Then they were withdrawn because of a discussion between the Argentine leadership and the IEC, without calling a World Congress or Conference, although some leaders such as Hill Hunter or Joaquín from the Dominican Republic proposed it.

The years 1990–1991 were years of great events in the class struggle of the world. At the end of 1989, the Berlin Wall fell and the triumph of the political revolution in the East began. We went from easy Octobers to a sceptical view of reality and new wrong answers. German unification was essentially interpreted as a great defeat. The *Theses of 1990* passed to the Antitheses that criticised the deviations but did not provide a positive solution, which political and organisational orientation replaced the previous one. This was a great methodological and political aberration. The first antecedent of the telephone balance sheet<sup>19</sup> and the consensus method in the old leadership.

Once again, the party leadership refuses to discuss reality and politics. The entire old leadership agreed with another serious mistake: leaving the party with a document of the current national situation and not with a document with the political conclusions of the deviations and the *Theses of 1990* applied to the Argentine party and rearming politically in a positive way out as was our tradition. and thus, opening the political and methodological discussion with the cadres and the ranks.

National-Trotskyism continued to be expressed in all its crudeness when the majority sector of the MAS (BT) leadership relied on the International to split the party. It was only with the formation of the IMT that steps began to be taken to combat national-Trotskyism.

## 2.2. The period 1987–1990: Adaptation to bourgeois democracy

Regarding this period, it seems correct to reaffirm points 5 and 6 of the attached resolution of 18 May 1993: “5. It is necessary to reaffirm the definition of the first period to avoid confusion (...). The period 1987–1990 is centrally the period of deviations in the struggle for mass influence. They were deviations that occurred in the eagerness to give continuity to the strategy and program that we had developed under Moreno’s direction. It is the opposite of the subsequent period,

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18 **Theses of 1990** was a political document, elaborated after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which were unanimously approved in a World Congress of the IWL, including its previous approval in the Central Committee of the MAS, also unanimously. They were mistaken, objectivist and one-sided theses, which in the face of the beginning of the fall of Stalinism opened up the hypothesis that new “October” socialist revolutions would quickly take place, ignoring or minimising the persistence of the apparatuses and the crisis of world revolutionary leadership.

19 **Telephone balance sheet**: This is the balance sheet, unanimously approved in the CC, of the strike of telephone workers in Argentina in August 1990 against the privatisation imposed by Menem of the state company (Entel). The strike, in which the MAS played an important role, was defeated. A balance sheet was written acknowledging errors in the party’s tactics but from a totally negative and defeatist approach, without providing a solution with proposals for overcoming them. This was a serious methodological error that caused general confusion and fuelled scepticism. The “telephone balance sheet” was a striking example of what should not be done to build a revolutionary party.

starting in July 1990, which is the conscious liquidation of this Morenoist strategy of the struggle for leadership.

“Because of the obligation to be analytical and in such a long period that covers so many important events of the class struggle and political life, one can lose sight of what was the central deviation of the period: the adaptation to bourgeois democracy. The party grew, and it had great tactical successes in that period, but the central point is that it had an opportunistic policy and of adaptation to the regime. This is why we are inclined to consider this period as negative.

“6. In the above context, it is necessary to develop the discussion about the characteristics and character of the party in the period 1987-1990. It is beyond dispute among us the immense fact that the party had made a great leap in its insertion and influence, to the point of beginning to achieve mass influence. We had great tactical successes, such as the Plaza del No.<sup>20</sup> But we cannot take stock of whether we had begun to have mass influence detached from the politics and orientation that we raised. This political approach is essential to avoid repeating mistakes and to gain experiences that allow us to continue fighting successfully for mass influence. Mass influence in itself does not resolve whether we were good or bad in a certain period of our history. This is why the central definition of the party made by the *Draft Balance Sheet of Activities* is that we had a great party but immersed in an opportunistic political deviation towards the bourgeois democratic regime.

“This political deviation meant that, because of its weight, the party did not help to educate important sectors of the masses in a class solution, for having raised for an entire period the slogan of a Constituent Assembly in opposition to a class alternative and the general strike. With our wrong political orientation, we contributed to pushing back important alternative workers’ organs such as the Railway Coordinating Committee and others to which we carried as a central policy that they spoke out for the Constituent Assembly. We lost many opportunities to act with a correct policy, as happened in the Maestrazo (1988), in the Rosarizazo (1989), the wave of state workers protests in March 1990, the Plaza del No, the one in May 1990, the telephone strike, the Utazo, the railway mobilisation. (...) But, despite the deviations, the party did not go so far as to lose its character as a revolutionary party. The deviations were just that: deviations. We did not cross any class boundaries. We did not reach the social democratisation of the party. To the extent that it was a serious deviation, of adaptation to bourgeois democracy, it could have evolved in that sense and moved towards the liquidation of the Morenoist party. But this didn’t happen. The national leadership as a whole recognised the wrong course on which it had embarked the party.”

## The propagandistic and electoralist conception

Since the Congress of 1988, the policies and orientations had been distancing us from the class struggle and a correct fight for the leadership, giving rise to a propagandistic and electoralist conception, which would become increasingly unilateral and erroneous.

It is necessary to highlight that this Congress took place amid the process of the teachers’ strike (the Maestrazo) and this strike was not the centre of the political discussion, nor was it in the heat of this experience that we tried to arm ourselves for the fight for the leadership. On the contrary, a policy and orientation were discussed that disarmed us, as it did not check with the concrete experience that we were carrying out in the teachers’ strike. Not having discussed the Maestrazo was the expression of political and regime problems. The national document underestimated the bureaucracy and when it talked about competitors, it either made it as a “hypothesis”, that is, it minimised them. It did not take the experience of teachers where we had yielded to the leaderships

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<sup>20</sup> **Plaza del No:** The MAS, as part of Izquierda Unida, called a rally in the Plaza de Mayo on May Day, 1990 with the slogan “No to Menem”. A massive mobilisation was achieved. It was in response to the call of a popular television journalist, Bernardo Neustadt, and important media businessmen and political leaders, who called for a demonstration on 6 April in support of President Carlos Menem, held in Plaza de Mayo and which would be known then as “Plaza del Si”.

of Garcetti<sup>21</sup> and Arizcuren.<sup>22</sup> In the Maestrazo, the National Directorate did not know how to characterise our enemies in the fight for leadership. As a result, we ended up giving in or adapting to the apparatus. Against Garcetti we had a sectarian and opportunist policy at the same time since, by often ignoring or underestimating him as an enemy, we left him the space to assert himself as the leadership of the strike. This did not allow us to see that Garcetti was not just an apparatus but that the majority of teachers were beginning to gather behind him. The result of this was our misplacement in the Plaza de Mayo mobilisation that ended in two rallies and where Garcetti was strengthened.

This same apparatist policy led us to believe that by accumulating forces from the apparatus of the Confederation of Education Workers of the Argentine Republic (CTERA) of Arizcuren, we could build an alternative national pole to the Marysanchist<sup>23</sup> bureaucracy. This is how we confused a circumstantial ally in the defence of CTERA's statutes with an ally in the fight against Alfonsín. It was a capitulation to Arizcuren precisely when he was part of the Radical apparatus in the government. This is why we did not make an angry denunciation of his flight to Switzerland during the struggle.

By centring the dispute over leadership around the superstructural agreement with Arizcuren, we left without a response to the thousands of delegates and activists who were fighting. We should have prioritised districts where we were in better conditions to fight the leadership to carry out to the end our policy of developing the new organs, taking advantage of the emergence of thousands of activists throughout the country, so that they could advance in their process of alternative leadership following their objective course.

At the Congress of May 1988, we defined that the revolutionary situation could lead to a revolutionary crisis (it finally occurred in May 1989) due to the growth of the struggles and that the party had to prepare, along that path, to dispute the leadership and advance towards mass influence. But contradictorily, in the same Congress, Luis Zamora's candidacy for president and the call for an electoral front, as a central campaign were launched, a year before the elections.

This will be the beginning of the electoral deviation. We left Congress with that axis. This would increase when the Front (United Left)<sup>24</sup> was established and we spent months with the campaign for the internal elections that were carried out in mid-December.

The correct tactics of an electoral front of the left within the framework of a wrong policy and orientation separated us even further from the class struggle.

For example, the open internal elections, which were a fact of national political life (they were the first to be held in the country), were a wrong policy for several reasons. Firstly, because it was accepted to do it with a bourgeois-democratic criterion: with the whole electoral roll (the government provided schools and ballot boxes) with which anyone could vote, whether they were a worker, a grocer, a student, or a bourgeois; a Peronist or Radical member (sic). It was a method foreign to the working class, with which anyone was allowed to vote and the Communist Party used the weight of their apparatus (buying people, providing cars) to distort the election. and that's how they won the internal election. It was correct to impose internal elections on Stalinism but propose workers' and popular assemblies with a prior registry, or similar variants. On the other hand, this electoralist method encouraged us to continue distancing ourselves from the class struggle and the fight to insert the Front into the struggles.

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21 **Marcos Garcetti**: Peronist union bureaucrat, Deputy Secretary of CTERA, from Sute Mendoza.

22 **Wenceslao Arizcuren**: Union bureaucrat from Unter (Río Negro), general secretary of CTERA; left Radical, road companion of the CP. After its Fourth Congress, CTERA split into two antagonistic sectors regarding the union construction project, with their respective secretaries: the CTERA Arizcuren and the CTERA Garcetti.

23 **Mary Sanchez**: Peronist union bureaucrat, from Suteba, leader of CTERA. While she was a national deputy, she led the teachers' strike that installed the "White Tent" in Plaza de Mayo between April 1997 and December 1999.

24 We formed the **United Left** (IU) front with the Communist Party, around a program of class independence that included the slogan of the workers' and people's government. In the 1989 electoral campaign, Izquierda Unida presented the Nestor Vicente-Luis Zamora ticket, nominated through internal primary elections that the CP won.

The electoralist deviation was also reflected in the politics and orientation for the electoral campaign since it was a propaganda campaign and far from the struggles. And even though it was within the framework of our principles, it had strong reformist elements.

We had slogans against the bourgeois parties (Menem and Angeloz are the same), about the exit measures that we proposed: non-payment of the foreign debt, that the rich pay for the crisis, against the bureaucracy, for the Constituent Assembly, etc., but none about how to develop specifically the ongoing struggles; At no time did we raise as a slogan of agitation what the masses had raised with their struggles: the general strike to overthrow the Plan Primavera. We did not put the electoral campaign at the service of those struggles to promote them; on the contrary, we were going to tell the workers that the way out was to “let socialism govern”.

The fundamental axis, the centre of our politics, was to fight for the political-electoral rupture of the workers but, by doing so apart from and not based on the class struggle, it resulted in an electoralist deviation.

Already in the face of the events in La Tablada,<sup>25</sup> in January 1989, elements of adaptation to the regime had been expressed. The party’s policy focused on the repudiation of the guerrilla action — which was correct — but it was not accompanied by a forceful campaign to denounce the repression, massacre and torture suffered by the guerrillas by the repressive forces and the bourgeois state. This great mistake was already corrected in the old party and since then we have adopted a principled stance and systematically campaigned for the freedom of the prisoners of La Tablada.

As we say at the beginning of the chapter, adaptation to bourgeois democracy is a deviation that did not cross any class border. That is why there is no doubt that the party maintained its revolutionary character. And that is why we had correct actions on many issues of class or political struggle.

In this context, we must balance the work of our parliamentarians who took office in December 1989 and formalised their mandates at the end of 1993. In other words, they had to act amid the crisis that we were facing and during the first two years of the new party.

We can say that the balance was positive since they put the benches at the service of the struggles of the workers’ movement and complied with using parliament as a platform for political agitation against the government and its policy of surrender to the plans of imperialism and against the other bosses’ parties.

One of Luis Zamora’s most outstanding actions was his repudiation of the visit of Bush, president of the United States. Both Luis Zamora and Silvia Diaz appeared before the workers and popular movement as the parliamentary deputies who were always in the struggles, contributing to strike funds, facing repression (Fate case) or taking their proposals to Parliament. And also denouncing the surrender and propagandising a worker and socialist solution through alternative projects (foreign debt, against privatisations, on the Malvinas (Falklands), for retirees, against private retirement, against pardons for genocide perpetrators, etc.). Although it is logical that as leaders and public spokespersons of the party, they have reflected the wrong political positions of the crisis stage.

## The Rosario and the adaptation to the regime

In February 1989, the economy was out of control after the burst of the Plan Primavera, causing a wave of workers’ and popular struggles that were defined in an increasingly harsh and violent confrontation between the workers and the Alfonsín government. Twelve days before the elections there were a million workers in conflict. In this framework, the Rosario took place, which was a

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<sup>25</sup> Events in La Tablada: On 23 January 1989, a guerrilla group from the All for the Fatherland Movement attempted to take the 3rd Mechanised Infantry Regiment, located in La Tablada, in the district of La Matanza, province of Buenos Aires. Thirty-two guerrillas, nine soldiers and two police officers were killed, while four other attackers were disappeared by the Army. It was led by Enrique Gorriaran Merlo, who had been part of the ERP and in 1980 participated in the execution of the Nicaraguan dictator Somoza in Paraguay.

popular semi-insurrection, the highest point of that rise that ended up toppling Alfonsín before fulfilling his mandate.

Unfortunately, the party was not politically prepared to respond correctly. All the orientation was focused, because of the elections, on the work on the “electoral roll”. The slogan of a general strike and the development of organisations of self-determination of the class in struggle had been abandoned for a long time; that is: we were totally out of place. The addendum to circular 269, reflecting the discussion of the CC of 9 May, and even characterising a void of government, expressly states that **“the general strike cannot be the central slogan for the agitation because there is no leadership to carry it forward.”**

Notwithstanding this, there were attempts to change, already facing the facts, with the flyer “To be able to eat”, where we incorporated the general strike, the resignation of Alfonsín, the Constituent Assembly and the workers’ government. But it must be specified that it was facing the facts and only in the attempt because the focus was not on promoting mobilisation against the government but on measures to get out of the crisis, and there was a formulation of the solution to the crisis since it proposed Alfonsín’s resignation and a Constituent Assembly and secondarily a workers’ government. We believe that the correct policy would have been something more or less like this: the workers with their struggles are toppling the government, a general strike to remove it and continue organising and mobilising until we impose our government, to apply a workers’ and popular economic plan and emergency measures and at the same time denounce Menem. Secondarily, we also had to raise the need for a Constituent Assembly on the democratic ground.

Drawing these lessons about the Rosariazo has helped our international current to develop an essentially correct policy in the face of the fall of Collor<sup>26</sup> in Brazil, unlike Convergencia Socialista (Socialist Convergence) that repeated — three years later — the same surrender to bourgeois democracy as the leadership of the MAS did in 1989.

Regarding the massive looting of supermarkets or similar actions by the masses, we are in favour of giving them our unconditional support. But our focus must be the national agitation around the need for a general strike, trying to prevent the looting from exhausting itself.

That is why we also consider the policy towards the popular soup kitchens to be wrong since it was an abstentionist policy in Greater Buenos Aires with a focus on the legal protection of the party. We agree that we should support but with the axis of organising ourselves around the soup kitchens to promote mobilisation against the government and calling for a general strike among union organisations.

### 2.3. After the Rosariazo, deviations deepen

The years 1989–1990 are key years in which the workers’ and popular movement, after having overthrown the Alfonsín government through revolutionary action, faced “its” Peronist government. These are years of colossal struggles, strikes and mobilisations against Menem, who cannot control hyperinflation amid a worsening economic, social, and political crisis. On the other hand, they are the years in which colossal revolutions demolished the Berlin Wall and Stalinism, shaking the world.

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<sup>26</sup> **Fernando Affonso Collor de Mello** (1949-) is a Brazilian politician. He was 32nd. constitutional president of the Republic of Brazil between 15 March 1990 and 29 December 1992, the first after the restoration of Brazilian democracy, he was also the youngest politician to assume the presidency in the history of Brazil. His mandate was marked by the application of the *pacote*, the most severe restructuring plan in the country’s history: privatisation of companies, deregulation of salary negotiations, temporary confiscation of savings and bank deposits, cuts in social programs, etc. Unemployment rose, wages fell, and the country found itself in an economic recession. These economic imbalances and the accusations of corruption that came to light in 1992 fuelled a wave of workers’ struggles, but the leadership of the CUT, the other confederations, the PT and Lula channelled this rise towards the parliament and the presentation of an impeachment in parliament that removed him from the presidency, giving way to his vice president Itamar Franco taking over.

After the Rosariazo (late May 1989) changes took place in the leadership of the party and the International. A Party Conference was held in June and the Second World Congress in July 1989. But none of these changes and events will serve to correct the errors of electoralism, the adaptation to bourgeois democracy, the abandonment of the slogan of general strike, etc. On the contrary, these deviations will continue and worsen between June 1989 and May 1990. Neither in the Party Conference nor in the World Congress is there an assessment of the party's performance in the Rosariazo.

The political crisis and deviations were a common process between the IWL and the MAS. In both, there was an apparent ultra-leftist turn in the characterisations and objectives but maintaining opportunist policies. For example, it was said that at any moment power could be taken and achieve an "October", while in Argentina it was being written that we could not raise the slogan of a general strike because "we were not the leadership" and we continued to make Constituent Assembly the axis, in one of the most critical moments of the class struggle in the country.

These facile characterisations and opportunist policies were manifested in the IWL of that time when we "predicted" that imperialism couldn't act militarily in Panama because of its weakness, and then exactly the opposite happened. Regarding Poland, it was defined that the newly elected Solidarity government was a "reformist workers' government", the hypothesis that Moreno considered at some point for Bolivia, for example, if the COB in 1952 was forced by the revolution to take power. In Poland, it was a restorationist government that agreed with the Stalinist bureaucracy, imperialism, and the Church. This case was one of many new problems we faced and poorly responded to.

## The abandonment of the General Strike and the party of the NO

Starting from a correct definition that it was necessary for the party to appear as the most intransigent opponent of the Menem government, we abandoned workers' and popular struggles as the centre of our policy, orientation and action.

We abandoned the red thread of the class struggle and, in the heat of it, the struggle for the new leadership and the development of new organs, at the level as they were expressed at each moment. Disappearing from our analyses is the meticulous monitoring of the struggles, the process of the new leadership and the politics and role of the party and its building. Everything was simplified into two or three general and erroneous definitions: chronic revolutionary crisis, the masses who come by themselves, and it is from the party that we bring together in groups, marches and rallies. The focus of our activity was political campaigns, the central concern was the use of the superstructural space that we were gaining, denunciations and tactical successes.

We transformed the essential success of being the intransigent opposition to the government into a strategy, stripping it of all class content, sliding dangerously into the terrain of the "two paths", intending to be the "leaders" of the opposition, of being the party of the No.

**We abandoned the strategic framework that Moreno left us regarding the slogans of the stage. Moreno said in *1982: The Revolution Begins*<sup>27</sup> that while under a dictatorship the centre is the negative slogans: "Down with the dictatorship!", in the new stage, the central slogans are no longer negative but positive and are organised around "For a government of the working class and supported by the working people!" brought down to earth according to the degree of development of the organs of the workers' and mass movement.**

We erred in the strategic axis of the stage, we adapted our program and organisation to be the champions of the "Down with Menem" and thus, we turned the **slogan of Constituent Assembly** into a **destituent** one, using it exclusively as anti-government and not as a lever to expose the arch-reactionary regime and call to struggle against it, while we propagandise and agitate our proposal for the positive.

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<sup>27</sup> Available to download in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).



The clearest example of this is the policy that we raised in response to the mobilisation of the state workers on 21 March 1990. It was clear that Ubaldini's<sup>28</sup> limited call had the purpose of decompressing and preventing the mobilisation from continuing to develop and taking on an independent course. We had weight among the railway workers and we came from the coordinating committee process and the mobilisation against the closure of the branches. It posed a tough fight against Ubaldini for centralisation and continuity in a plan of struggle, on the path of the general strike. While in this concentration, vanguard sectors corralled Ubaldini with the demand for a plan of struggle, the party attended with an important column whose slogan and the central banner was "Constituent Assembly!" The focus was, according to our orientation, the political struggle against the government and its fall, but through the agitation of the need for a Constituent Assembly, and not the call to develop mobilisation on the path of the general strike, thus confronting the demobilising policy of the union bureaucracy. Evidently, the result was that we did Ubaldini a great favour, yielding to his bureaucratic politics and disarming the activism and the rank and file of the state workers in the face of the fight that was posed.

From the correct definition that the struggles were political, we derived the wrong orientation of making propaganda, general campaigns and proposals, detached from the concrete class struggle, which is a caricature of having a unified national policy.

The Plaza del No on May Day 1990 was, on the one hand, another immense tactical success of the party. We were able to take advantage of a political situation where hatred and anger against Menem were growing in broad sectors of the class and popular sectors and we went out to boldly respond to the Plaza del Si of Neustadt<sup>29</sup> and Menem. On the other hand, we did not stop bringing a wrong policy to the mobilisation, inserted in the deviation of having turned the "No to Menem" into a strategic axis, this is why we wanted to be the party of the NO, of the opposition side, in general, and we were considering promoting union groups of unity of the No.

We combined the colossal achievement of having convened, with our wrong policy, together with the Communist Party, the first mass rally which filled Plaza de Mayo against a Peronist government. We proposed as a task to the 100,000 people present... to hold 100,000 rallies in the country's squares! We did not call to support the ongoing struggles, to denounce and confront the traitorous bureaucracy and the need to develop and unify the struggles from the perspective of the general strike to defeat Menem's pro-imperialist plan.

If electoralism meant the beginning of our adaptation to the regime, then this adaptation deepened. On the one hand, through our No policy, as we pointed out before, with the abandonment of the slogan of the general strike amid great struggles and mobilisations together with campaignism, propagandism, and apparatism that meant a clear policy of distancing of the working class and its struggles and not having as its centre the struggle to be the alternative leadership.

## 2.4. Movementism

From the Conference of June 1989 to the Congress of 1990, the deviations in the building of the party took on a movementist character.

The orientation of building the Leninist party was changed to another one whereby the party organs were diluted and with them the basic structure of the party. The limits of the party were not clear, who was a militant, who was a sympathiser, and who was a friendly periphery. The teams of militants were confused with the groups or collaterals of the party. The party was defined by its area of influence.

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28 **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,

29 **Bernardo Neustadt** (1925–2008) was an Argentine journalist who for 30 years hosted *Tiempo Nuevo* (New Time), along with Mariano Grondona, the first political opinion journalism program on television in Argentina. He was always linked to the main local and foreign economic groups, which sponsored his programs. In 1990 he called to the Plaza del Si in support of Carlos Menem.

They acted with a centrist conception of the party, with a lax criterion, of a broad movement, hence “movementism”.

In the PST national document of 1980, it was stated that: **“Building a party with mass influence should not make the Argentine Trotskyists lose sight of the fact that their party must preserve its well-centralised party structure, around hierarchical organs and a cadre structure that is the skeleton and nervous system of the party. This regime is not in contradiction with the incorporation of hundreds and thousands of workers into the party. On the contrary, it is a regime for it”** (p. 76).

In the document “Let’s consolidate a party with mass influence” from mid-1989, it was stated that we were in a position to organise a party of “hundreds of thousands, to the thousands of the soup kitchen; to the 400 who marched for work...” (page 10). It said that “there are no rules and there can be no rules for its development and operation.” (p. 11.) As an example, there was the case of a struggle for workers’ transport in Merlo (see pages 10 and 11 of the *Draft Balance Sheet of Activities of 1992*).

**In 1989–1990, the same deviation that we suffered in 1980 was recreated: “This conception implicitly stated that the party is built based on successes. All the emphasis was placed, on the facts, on this point. The other aspect that makes up the task of party building was forgotten: political successes are based on a solid structure: the party; if this structure does not exist, the successes are lost”** (1981 Document, page 22).

Having an opportunist policy and a movementist conception of the party were the two deviations that affected the possibility of achieving a party that began to have mass influence with a Bolshevik criterion.

## **2.5. The period 1990–1992: The anti-Morenoist project of the BT begins a process of liquidation of the party**

“A living party can approach a relatively correct policy only by successive approximations; that is, by [successive] deviations to the right and to the left. The same is true for every party member, individually. (...) The vigour of the party and the skill of its leadership are tested by their capacity to assimilate the partial deviations in time and not permit them to lead to a complete break with Marxism” (“How to conduct a political discussion”, 15 December 1937, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1937–38)*, p. 105, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1976).

From 1990 onwards, the poor treatment of the crisis by the entire old leadership and the course of rupture with Morenoism embodied in the BT prevented a political rearmament and party building that would allow the resumption of all the accumulated work. In this way, the crisis became a defeat for Morenoism with the liquidation of the MAS for what it was: a party that had begun to take steps in mass influence was the main party on the left and a great pole of attraction for sectors of workers and Emma the youth.

There was poor treatment of the crisis because the focus was not on the search for political or methodological rearmament. Politics were not placed in the command position, neither in the MAS nor in the IWL. This was a common characteristic of the entire old leadership, including the old leaders who today are part of the new party. Depoliticisation continued. Also continued the national-Trotskyism of the previous period since the discussion of the previous deviations and the revision of the *Theses of 1990*, voted in a World Congress, were resolved in a discussion between the CC and the CEI.

From 1990 onwards, the deviations, and the problems of method, that had begun to develop after Moreno’s death, deepened. Without a doubt, the crisis began to manifest itself with all sharpness starting in July 1990 with the Telephone Balance Sheet. The crisis takes a leap and the liquidationist current advances.

**There is a qualitative leap since these are not new deviations but rather a project of rupture with Morenoism, with its politics, its method and the party morality and tradition.**

Politically, a sceptical, sectarian, abstentionist and defeatist course was imposed.

Both the crisis and the political disarmament continued to be common between the IWL and the Argentine party. This is why wrong responses would continue to be given to the facts of world reality (German unification) and national reality (Justicialist Party crisis, strikes, provincial uprisings, etc.).

The years 1990–1991 were also years of great events in the global class struggle: in August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and then imperialist troops arrived in the Middle East; on 3 October German unification took place; on 25 November, Walesa triumphs in the Polish elections; the European masses and sectors of the USA begin an uprising with the massive marches against the Gulf War and the political revolution continues to develop in the East, triumphing in the USSR.

The lack of political rearmament led to wrong responses to this reality. There was a shift from “Octobers around the corner” to a sceptical and defeatist vision of reality and, therefore, to new wrong answers. German unification was essentially interpreted as defeat. In the first assessment of the Gulf War, they gave in to Saddam Hussein by characterising that the blame for the defeat lay with the Arab masses and not with Saddam’s leadership and the other counterrevolutionary leaderships. The “new international order” propagandised by imperialism began to be accepted as true.

On the other hand, in the country, the struggles against the Menem government did not stop growing. This was the objective basis for the party to recover by participating with a correct policy. But the lack of rearmament, of a balance sheet based on it (not the telephone balance sheet), the growing internalism and factionalism meant that political opportunities and class struggle were lost one by one. The party continued to retreat, amid total confusion.

## **A sect of propaganda and defeatism**

The BT was formed to impose a different type of party than the one we were building with Moreno. Instead of the combat party that intervenes in the workers’ struggles to fight for leadership, to have the purpose of gaining mass influence, to fight for power, deeply internationalist and with a healthy Leninist regime, they began to impose a sectarian and national-Trotskyist organisation, with a “homogeneous” regime of liquidation of opponents, our principles and our tradition; propagandist and marginal, without political passion and oblivious to the struggles.

To impose this project opposed to 40 years of Morenoism, they had to liquidate what was still left, and for that they prepared, even going so far as to break up.

The sector that formed the BT claimed that the fundamental task became the propaganda of our maximum program for the socialist revolution, which had to be combined with a “place by place” union policy. At the heart of this controversy, what it was proposing was whether we should follow Moreno’s rule that the party is built as a party of action that takes advantage of the opportunities that the class struggle opens up for us, thus postulating itself as leadership, or if what was appropriate was to organise an orderly retreat, where the axis passed through internationalisation, proletarianisation and bolshevisation.”

**The orientation of the BT towards a propaganda sect translated into an abstentionist and defeatist policy for the workers’ and popular struggles.**

The newspaper became a spokesperson for the ills and sufferings of the working class, of a general nature, without giving any solution or a call for struggle. Under catastrophic titles (“I want to die”, for example), all kinds of generalities were brought to the working class about its evils, the “advance of barbarism”, without proposing any concrete political task, much less linked to the struggles that were taking place throughout this period.

The growing abstentionism in the Somisa and Fate strikes leapt the important railway strike of 1992, becoming open defeatism when the MAS had great weight in the leadership and more specifically cadres who adhered to the BT.

The leadership of the IWL minimised, at the time, the defeatism of the BT with the despicable argument: since it had not violated any principle nor was it allied with the bourgeoisie, then it was a “secondary mistake”.

Defeatism is liquidating because it puts us on the opposite side of the needs of the working class and its struggles. Moreno explained it in the following way:

“We are not historians; we are not sociologists or anything like that. We are revolutionary politicians who use science, history, and the study of economics. This is fundamental. If we are revolutionary politicians there is an onus of subjectivity in everything (...). When you are about to enter a battle, for example, that boxer, if he talks about statistics, is a traitor to the fight. When you are entering the struggle, the subjective problem leads to betrayal, of course. Marxism has its moments. Imagine that we are about to go on strike and we stand up and say in an assembly: ‘this is a strike in an industry with a lot of machinery development, all automated, and no strike has been won in 10 years, therefore we go on strike, to a strike that is lost.’ This is crazy. Trotsky called this treason. He has written some of his greatest pages on this. If you are about to enter the battle, you go making every effort to make it come out as planned, to win, not to lose. Otherwise, we are not revolutionary politicians” (Moreno: Closing of the Activities Report of the Founding Congress of the LIT, January 1982).

## 2.6. We yielded to the social pressures that acted on the party

The Marxist method to analyse the causes of political deviations or errors that persist over time or are consolidated is also to search for an existing objective explanation, of class. It is by applying this method that we always explain the social roots of European social democracy, for example, in the strata of the labour aristocracy.

With Moreno, we used the same method to explain the recurring crises of the Fourth International in the hands of revisionism. During the 1950s, Pabloism-Mandelism yielded to pressure from the European labour aristocracy and petty bourgeoisie who were rabidly pro-Stalinist. Later, Mandelism took a pro-guerrilla course, yielding to the pressure of the pro-Castro world petty bourgeoisie of the 1960s–1970s.

Since the dreadful telephone balance sheet, much was spoken in the party of “the social causes” of our crisis. BT denied the political causes and social pressures of the reality of class struggle. For them, the social and central cause of the crisis was the apparatus, the paid cadres and a “very strong petty-bourgeoisie” (IDB 18, page 11) that acted on the party. For them, the great pressure was from the “Doñas Totas”<sup>30</sup> of the neighbourhoods, from the greengrocers or the self-employed. Nothing could be further from reality and from what the party was. This is why the central thing was the “measures” of all the leadership going back to work and “returning to the industrial workers’ movement”.

**We yielded, as Moreno had warned us, to the pressures of the enemy classes, fundamentally to the bourgeois-democratic regime and the democratic reaction. We yielded to the flirtation of the Argentine bosses through the mainstream media, such as Mariano Grondona<sup>31</sup> who even came to praise us, and to the electoralist, legalist and democratic conscience of**

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30 **Doña Tota**: With this name, the journalist Neustadt was referring to a supposed woman who was a housewife and a resident of the neighbourhood.

31 **Mariano Grondona** (b. 1932) is an Argentine lawyer, writer and political commentator. He has been a journalist for several decades, collaborating in print media and television. For years he made, together with Bernardo Neustadt, the television program *Tiempo Nuevo* (New Time). Grondona’s opinions are right-wing, with a strong Catholic, pro-American element, and support for successive coups d’état, including the genocidal dictatorship of 1976.

**sectors of the middle class and, fundamentally, the backward, electoralist, legalist, and unionist conscience of the workers' movement.**

The 1980 document warned against this danger:

“The party finds itself facing the greatest possibility in its entire history but also dialectically, the greatest dangers. These dangers are new because they derive from the unprecedented possibility of transforming ourselves into a party with mass influence. **In this process the party will come into contact not with a minimal vanguard as before... now it will dialogue with broad sectors that tend towards Trotskyism in a confusing and contradictory way. These sectors are going to transfer their prejudices, their confusion, and their centrism to the heart of the party. Whenever a party enters the path of becoming of masses, the pressures on it multiply.** The bourgeoisie, the regime, will take full advantage of these pressures to strengthen their own: tame the party so that it enters, “critically”, of course, within their plans... **Argentine Trotskyism must accept this challenge.** The contribution we intend to make with this paper is a strategic policy that allows the party to arm itself for the class struggle. The application of this policy is the first weapon to counteract the pressures that it may undergo. The other fundamental weapon is the party regime, that is, democratic centralism...” (our emphasis).

We yielded to these pressures, we did not heed these warnings and we also responded in the wrong way on this level. We suffered the deviations due to the electoralist and reformist pressure of the working class, even of the industrial proletariat, of the factory workers who told us “You are always against everything”; “Why don't you soften the speech a bit, so you get more votes, etc.”

From the 1990s onwards, new social pressures would act on the party and the International as of the fall of Stalinism and the campaign of imperialism that “socialism had failed”. Combined with the crisis opened by the deviations, it will act on Morenoism the global phenomenon of the sceptical currents of the petty bourgeoisie and sectors of the left-wing, ex-Stalinist, ex-guerrilla, ex-Sandinista, etc. The BT becomes the transmission belt, in the ranks of the IWL, of the petty-bourgeois current that exists throughout the world and that asserts that the working class has been lost as a social subject because of its numerical decrease; that imperialism has been strengthened and in fact imposed on the working class and that, therefore, Marxism and Leninism must be revised. The BT began by revising Moreno (and Lenin) in the conception of the party and lately, they have come (through Andres Romero's work) to revise, without any serious foundation, the bases of Trotskyism on the historical definition made by Leon Trotsky about the former USSR as a “degenerated workers' state”.<sup>32</sup>

The BT scepticism was also favoured by the subsequent defeats suffered by workers in the country with privatisations and the imposition of the Cavallo<sup>33</sup> Plan, which fuelled scepticism and defeatism. As well as the delay that the old leadership, which is part of the new party, had in coming out to fight against the BT and scepticism.

On a smaller scale, scepticism had had a precedent in the party leadership during the clandestinity stage. It was one of the most serious expressions of the leadership crisis at the time. It was defined as the “most serious crisis... because it threatened the very existence of the party”. This crisis did not break out because of the intervention of Moreno and the international leadership.

It pays to remind the new comrades how this crisis was analysed and characterised in the *1981 Balance Sheet*: “... The comrades denied another fundamental element of our method of party building: taking advantage of opportunities. By emphasising the party structure, the internal regime and the daily functioning, they denied that the party is also built by taking advantage of the opportunities that the class struggle offers us and with these two elements they fell into a position

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32 The BT adopted the non-Marxist definition of “bureaucratic states”, without class definition, for the USSR and other countries where the bourgeoisie had been expropriated.

33 **Domingo Felipe Cavallo** (b. 1946) is an Argentine economist and politician, right-wing, liberal and privateist, and member of the Mediterranean Foundation. He served as Minister of Economy under the government of Carlos Menem between 1991 and 1996; and then under the government of Raul Alfonsín between March and December 2001, when he was ousted by the popular mobilisation of Argentinazo.

of absolute scepticism towards the party, to the Bolshevik Faction and the Parity Committee. (...) This is not a moral problem, it is a fundamentally political problem: according to Lenin, trust between the members of a Bolshevik organisation is one of the fundamental bases of democratic centralism, that is, the security that there must be in all the members that each one puts his life at risk for the party, that he gives his life to it, that he will apply to the death each of the decisions we make. Without this trust, we cannot ask for discipline in the face of leadership, and unity of the organs, that is, there cannot be democratic centralism.

**“The positions of the comrades were not individual positions, they represented an entire sector of the leadership, the majority (...) and it was based on scepticism and distrust and with the lowest cliquish methods threatened to take over the leadership of the party. (...) This is why we say that it was the most serious crisis of the party (...) because, unlike the two previous crises, this one came from outside the party method and threatened the very existence of the party.”**

The points of contact of that crisis of 1981 are evident, after the separatist and movementist deviations, and the one that occurred 10 years later without Moreno and with a qualitatively weaker international leadership are evident.

## CHAPTER 3

# The problems of method become more acute since Moreno's death until breaking the party tradition and leading to moral accusations

Problems of method always existed in the leadership of the party during Moreno's lifetime. All the documents from the last 20 years show that Moreno always fought these vices and weaknesses and that they were always discussed within the party in the face of the different crises that we suffered throughout our history. It was always a leadership with "bureaucratic and administrative methods ... that administers political successes... of low level and not very studios".

Also in this aspect, Moreno's death left a huge void and the methodological problems were evident from the outset.

### 3.1. The definition of a historical crisis of the party leadership was abandoned

Abandoning the central definitions of politics or the party and its leadership without explaining why is a serious failure of the method. This is what we first did as soon as Moreno died, in the Congress of 1988, with the basic definition that the party had a historical leadership crisis during Moreno's lifetime. The balance sheet at the time abandoned this definition or put it on the back burner. It did not define that this historical crisis took a leap with his death. No importance was given to what Moreno's death represented for the leadership, the party, and the International and it did not open the discussion with all the cadres and the rank and file on how to address this crisis together. This is when we started to sink when we thought we were at our best.

Moreno acts in the opposite way: **"We got to know the great Trotskyist leaders. Those of the SWP, whom we admired so much, never mentioned their mistakes. Their history was that of geniuses full of successes. Mandel acted in a similar way. The leaders of the Trotskyist movement considered themselves colossi who never made mistakes. However, the Trotskyism led by them was pitiful. We resolved, then, to reverse the problem: we would try to prepare the mentality of those who come, teaching them our mistakes, our colossal limitations. That's why we changed the way we do history, to force them to think for themselves. The parties and the leaderships made their history to show they were always right. We did it by showing the enormous number of mistakes we made. That is why the courses on the PST are divided by errors and not by successes: 1st stage, petty-bourgeois centrist (1948); 2nd stage, propaganda, unionist and sectarian in the electoral field. And so on. All are negative definitions because we believe that we have progressed through overcoming and denial. (...) We want, by all means, to instil in them a self-critical, Marxist spirit and not a religious faith towards**

**a modest leadership that is provincial in its formation and barbaric in its culture. This is why we believe in internal democracy and we see it as a tremendous necessity”** (*Moreno report on Activities in the Founding of the IWL*, January 1982).

We did not act as Moreno taught us, with modesty, acknowledging the errors, and the extreme weakness of the leadership, always seeking to appeal to the formation of new leaders based on the best cadres and appealing to the rank and file in the face of political or organisational doubts. The opposite was done, the old leadership was closed to the cadres and the rank and file. It did not put the focus on forming new leaders, but quite the opposite, going to the extreme, in the Congress of 1990, of considering the historical crisis overcome, Moreno’s death, and comparing itself with the leadership of the Third International.

At the 1988 Congress, we also began to sink into the treatment of differences and crises within the party, when we dealt with the faction that would later become the current PTS.

This faction was a decidedly a disruptive sector and the first defeatist and sceptical current, predecessor of BT. The axis of this action was against a party of action and the struggle for mass influence. They said in their defeatist conception that “the world counterrevolutionary front would never allow a gradual advance of any section of our International, without, in alliance with its local partners, unleashing a violent political and physical struggle against our party” (“Letter from Leon Perez”). And in the internal discussion, they exemplified this by saying that they would sweep us away with NATO missiles from their base in the Malvinas [Falklands]. They proposed that all the parties of the International revolve around propaganda campaigns and not focus on participating in the processes of the specific class struggle and, from there, combine it with the international campaigns resolved by the International. They used the method of slander and provocation permanently and finally, refusing to go to the party Congress, they went to the daily *Clarín* to say “that they were warning about the possibility that the MAS authorities in a recent meeting with the Minister of the Interior (...) have tried to make us appear as ultras of some kind...” (*Clarín*, 18 May 1988). In other words, the first public action of the PTS was to go to the bourgeois press to accuse us of being informers.

We believe that beyond the fact that they were a disruptive sector, we had bureaucratic behaviour in the face of the emergence of a faction that raised international and national political differences. We did not fight for the cadres and the rank and file, exhausting all the instances, the same that we later demanded from the BT and the majority of the IEC. We did not propose, for example, to carry out separate experiences, as a last resort. It remains to be seen whether we did not begin to incubate there the anti-Morenoist criterion of the “homogeneous party” that the BT later raised.

### 3.2. The breakdown of democratic centralism and Bonapartism

From 1989 onwards, the other face of the movementist deviation was the deviation in the party regime, of democratic centralism. When we speak of democratic centralism, we speak first of all of the functioning and respect for the party organs.

In the 1981 document, we said in this regard:

**“Everything in the party, absolutely everything, is done through the organs. (...) Every discussion has to be organic, done in the organ whether of leadership or the ranks; every task has to be voted on by an organ. (...) The organs are the backbone of the party. (...) Organs are not a sum of individualities, they are the complement of the weaknesses of each of their members with the strengths of the others. When we do not function as a team, individualities tend to take precedence and they begin to act outside the team, this is what in the Congress (referring to that of 1980, Editor) we call the ‘Bonapartist regime’ ...”** (pages 23 and 24).

From 1989 onwards, the National Directorate began to act outside democratic centralism with a Bonapartist regime. The organs stopped being the centre of decision-making and began to



play a merely formal role. A superstructure was created that acted above everything and decided outside the organs. With each passing day, it got deeper. The Secretary General of the party and the IWL were the same, once again expressing that it was a unique crisis. The secretariat of the International was known as the “transoceanic” one because there were other members in Europe and they travelled from one place to the other. Committees were formed in the leadership on almost all tasks. Everything happened through there and not through the EC and the CC.

But this was not done behind the back of the National Directorate, as some members of the old leadership later wanted to portray in order to cover up their responsibilities by looking for scapegoats (the “clique”, etc.). This functioning was voted on in the CC and was even included in the document of the 1990 Congress as a great, almost historic leap: “The disappearance of our historical leader left the leadership, made up of comrades of even experience, without an axis. The team was able to begin to improve itself when – in the midst of global, national and party change – it sought and found a new axis to function. (...) The other improvement came through the division of tasks and work in commissions...” (...) “The method of the commissions... becomes indispensable for leading the party with mass influence” (pages 13 and 15 of “The MAS on the Move”).

The 1990 Congress was the synthesis of political and methodological deviations. It was a Congress not to debate our policy and balance sheet, with a pre-congress that promoted the internal discussion but the Congress opened already in the pre-congress. The previous debates and the election of delegates were carried out with those comrades who “came with their No”. The political discussion did not exist and there was only the IDB with a single rough draft.

The youth of the party even produced a poster, with the support of the leadership, that called “to come with your NO” to the party Congress. It was planned for the leaders of the apparatuses such as the Communist Party, the PT of Brazil, etc. to participate in the debates.

The Congress was not to debate policy and direction since it was hardly prepared but to “capitalise” on the supposed political successes. This is what the entire CC had planned, unanimously.

### **3.3. In the treatment of the crisis, a qualitative leap was made by breaking with party tradition**

This wrong treatment was carried out by the entire old leadership. The basis of the wrong treatment is that there was no political and methodological readjustment and that it led to a moral attack on one of the party’s top leaders. Moreno was extremely careful to deal with crises at the leadership level, as well as of all party organs. This was our tradition. He always looked for the truth, took care of the leaders and the cadres, was objective with each one, and fundamentally saw the problem of the teams, saw the situation as a whole and not just individually. He sought to rescue the value of each comrade and put it at the service of the team; which could change to improve the national or international leadership.

Let us recall what he wrote in his letter of 7 April 1977, to the Party Conference:

**“We emphasise the weakness of the comrades and mainly on the overall, structural, political-organisational problem and not on the subjective aspect of the comrades. We judge a team and not individual comrades. We believe that judging individual comrades for serious failures in a structure or team is making a mistake that can set disastrous precedents for the future. We never act like that. Every time we criticise an orientation or a team, we criticise the orientation or the team, not the comrades. As personalities or individuals, logically there is a relationship between the individual comrades and the teams that we criticise but the determining fact is the structure, the team, the whole and not the individual comrades. Those same individuals in another structure and orientation can be, are, of enormous, fundamental value. When we removed Arturo, our beloved Arturo, as general secretary due to very serious errors in orientation and application, no one questioned the formidable conditions of**

**the comrade as a tactical politician. The same thing happened in all the crises I have known: one team was removed to put another in and the problem ended.”**

Moreno’s teachings were not taken into account in the crisis. The Telephone Balance Sheet was the denial of our method and tradition. It advances the “Antitheses” by deepening the method of critical documents without solutions. It was a destructive bomb for the party. It is an anti-Morenoist and unprincipled assessment; it looks for scapegoats (the “clique of the three”<sup>34</sup>) and not the recognition of the errors of the entire leadership that had voted for the application of opportunist and movementist deviations; the “easy Octobers”, etc., etc. This is how the text of the Telephone Balance Sheet defined the supposed “clique”: “...the centre of the deviations was the existence of a small nucleus of comrades, who concentrated the vast majority of the tasks in their hands, bypassing the organs. We call this a Bonapartist and bureaucratic clique because it eliminated collective development in the National Directorate and the party, imposed crude bureaucratic methods that emptied the democratic centralist regime of all content.” Thus began the destruction of the party since it sowed distrust and undermined the foundations of the Bolshevik regime, which is revolutionary trust.

Sometime later, in a CC, it is recognised that it is a bureaucratic, non-Marxist and negative balance; and that the “Bonapartist and bureaucratic clique” was wrong. But it is done formally and the BT will continue to claim it from below. They advance in a factional work, together with a sector of the IEC, against the party and the rest of the leadership. The attacks and campaigns against leaders would begin. This ended up being a constant of the BT that thus showed its liquidating and disruptive nature from the beginning. It would continue with its campaign in its *June 1991 Platform*, whose axis is against the eight “deviants” and “social democrats”. Later, the BT would make a qualitative leap, breaking with the principles and launching moral attacks on comrade Eduardo Exposito, introducing typical methods of Stalinism.

### 3.4. Political rearming was not sought

**Rearming was not the focus as soon as the deviations appeared clearly. It was not the focus for the sector that would later constitute the BT, which focused everything on “social causes” and on the “measures” that the old CC — starting with the top leaders — had to go to work; nor was it the focus for the sector of the old leadership that today makes up our party.**

In our old leaders predominated the wrong method of seeking consensus and of not correctly facing the crisis and the sector that would later form the BT.

This characteristic of not being focused on seeking political clarification — to give the party a way out, of not stopping everything to try to achieve it — was a constant of our old leadership from July 1990 to August 1991, the date on which the Morenist Tendency was formed under great pressure from regional leaders and cadres.

It was a tragic year for the party. The absence of a political solution and a clear alternative pole, “balancism”, plus the active and factional role of what would later become the BT, was destroying the party. Dozens of cadres and militants will withdraw, demoralised by the crisis, mistrust and lack of prospects.

**Bureaucratism, non-consultation with the cadres, apparatism, and insensitivity to the rank and file continued to prevail.** The CC was closed to the cadres, the telephone balance sheet was lowered to the plenary sessions, busting the regional directorates. Nor did our sector of the old leadership react correctly. **While the BT sector openly divided with cadres and sectors of the rank and file, engaging in self-critical populism; the other sector let it run; it let the cadres be destroyed and did not appeal to them to see what was happening and what could be done.**

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34 “Clique of the three” or also “bureaucratic clique”: The BT wrongly held Eduardo Exposito, Eduardo Barragan and Mercedes Petit responsible for the errors of the entire leadership.

To make matters worse, in March 1991, our old leaders voted, together with the future BT, for the “social measures” that the leaders must go to work and also to “de-factionise”. Thus, the old leaders contributed to increasing the crisis and to busting cadres, mainly in the regional directorates (Cordoba, Capital, Pacheco, University, etc.), bureaucratically instead of defending and encouraging them to develop all their concerns and political and methodological positions. Thus, dozens of very valuable cadres “melted down” or entered into crisis, including members of the CC who were in the regional directorates. Thus, the liquidationist sector continued to be favoured. This was another big step towards losing the party and handing it over to the future BT.

Nor is the famous report by Eduardo Almeyda (Brazilian) and Pedro Fuentes (Argentine) (i.e., of the IEC) carried out to the end, the report which was correct, in general terms, since it explicitly went against the telephone balance sheet by defining it as bureaucratic and not principled. **It defined that the crisis is common to the International and that it is essentially political and not social, although there are elements of apparatism, bureaucratism, etc.** The sector of the old leadership that later formed the MT would not follow up on this report to take it to the rank and file of the party and start a battle with it.

**The consensus method of our old leadership means that the preparation of the balance sheet is not taken seriously either.** More specifically, no importance was given to it, leaving the way clear to the secret semi-faction that already existed in the CC.

The null importance given to the balance sheet is part of the attitude of our old leadership of not seeking a true political and methodological rearming, after the serious deviations that occurred in the party. With the false argument that “they would get out with politics”, which was only partly true (it had to do with politics and not with “balancing”), they ended up doing nothing for the balance sheet when it was part of the rearming **since there could not be a correct policy if there was no correct balance sheet.** Precisely, the majority of the CC ended up preparing a justifying balance sheet for its propaganda sect project.

Furthermore, the mistake was made of promoting a Party Conference to define an electoral tactic, which was a minority in the CC, and not to address the political and balance sheet problems that were raised at the national and international levels.

In summary: the old leadership, which today is part of our party, did not put up the political and methodological fight and had a decisive weight for the triumph of BT, defeatism and scepticism in the party.

### 3.5. The moral issue: A question of principles

In this regard, point 9 of the attached resolution of the CC of April 1993 must be reaffirmed.

The issue of moral attacks on Eduardo Exposito, by the TB and the majority of the CEI, has great importance in the process of liquidation and breakup of the party.

Since July 1990, the BT and the majority of the IEC launched a slander campaign focused on attacks on Eduardo Exposito, the historical leader of the party and the International; which culminated in the sanction in April 1992. Previously, Comrade Lito had been sanctioned.

These sanctions were the consequence of a campaign of moral attacks, which introduced into our ranks Stalinist methods, rumours, unfounded accusations, etc. Thus, the BT and the majority of the IEC attacked the foundations of our party, which are morality and tradition. Without these foundations, the party is destroyed. That is what the BT and the majority of the IEC did with their slander.

It is a question of principle not to slander or make moral attacks, much less to mix them with political discussions. The BT broke with the tradition of Morenoism that always confronted these

aberrations in the ranks of Trotskyism. It is enough to remember Napuri's<sup>35</sup> defence campaign against Lambert's slander.

**By letting this aberration go, the old leaders who today are part of our party did not make a principled defence of a historic leader nor did they fight to prevent the destruction of thousands of cadres and militants who went home because of the mistrust that had been created.**

Following Lenin and Trotsky, Moreno taught us that the basis of the party regime is trust and the unconditional defence of revolutionary morality. And he also taught us to defend and preserve leaders, and even more so if they make mistakes.

When we fought from the Bolshevik Fraction (BF) against the Mandelist majority of the Unified Secretariat, in 1978, pointing out the moral crisis that the International was going through, we wrote: **“Among those who are active, sacrifice themselves, work every day for the party, this common activity creates a strong revolutionary morality. Revolutionary morality is prior and fundamental to democratic centralism because there must be absolute trust among the militants, trust that comes from common activity.**

**“Lenin pointed out that the most important organising principle of a revolutionary party is ‘something much more important than democratism, [it is] the full and fraternal mutual trust among revolutionaries.’ Without this ‘full and fraternal mutual trust among revolutionaries’ we will not forge parties with the necessary mettle to face the increasingly harsh tests that the class struggle will impose on us.”**

In the joint meetings of the IEC of the IWL, the EC and the CC of the MAS in July 1990, the problem of the party regime was wrongly framed in the existence of a bureaucratic and Bonapartist “clique”, made up of three comrades.

This was false because no such clique existed. The false definition was established that those three leaders, and not the respective organs, had the wrong orientations and policies. The reality and defence of our method and tradition were the opposite: they were the most responsible for the methodological and political problems that were pointed out because they had been at the forefront of the directorate that applied them. **But all three were unobjectionable from the point of view of their dedication and revolutionary morality.** Breaking with our method, the party was told, with the Telephone Balance Sheet, the opposite.

In a plenary session in Rosario, a qualitative leap was made when a member of the leadership launched a moral slander against comrade Eduardo Exposito. **The methodological aberration, typical of the methods of Stalinism, that took place in the Rosario plenary session opened the way to a campaign of moral slander that sought to destroy a historical leader of the party and continued to undermine confidence in the entire party, which was one of the bases for the liquidation of the party.**

### **3.6. During the crisis the old team had a policy of a united front and consensus with the BT**

In the old leaders who today are part of the party, the politics of consensus prevailed and not the fight for clear and delimited positions in defence of the party, of Morenoism, of its politics and tradition. The result was that there was no leadership to fight the battle that the cadres and the rank

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<sup>35</sup> **Ricardo Napuri** (b. 1924) is a Peruvian Trotskyist leader who was a senator and constituent deputy, leader of the Peruvian POM-R and the OCRFI, the Lambertist current. He participated in the founding of the FI-IC in December 1980 when the OCRFI was unified with the international current of Morenoism. When differences arose in 1981, that would lead to the division of both forces, Napuri leaned towards the positions of Morenoism and disagreed with Lambert. Lambert began to implement an infamous public campaign of moral slander against Napuri. See more in *Our Experience with Lambertism* (1986), chapter IV, available at [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org). In the crisis of the 1990s Napuri, based in Buenos Aires, accompanied the positions of the BT and later of the New MAS.

and file were waging in a dispersed manner in each region. In this way, the old leadership contributed to the defeat we suffered with the liquidation of the MAS.

**The causes must be sought in the characteristics of the old leadership and its errors that Moreno always fought. Being a leadership that had not been forged in the class struggle but rather administrative, propagandist, empirical (quackery of politics), not studious or producer of strategic documents.**

**In the crisis, the apparatism and bureaucratism of the old leadership were also revealed. There was no appeal to the rank and file, the militants, and the cadres, who resisted the sectarian course in every way they found within their reach but without finding “generals” for this battle.**

The entire old team had those characteristics. One sector took the path of scepticism and defeatism, abandoning the Morenoist tradition and the other sector did not know how to combat it. The “quackery” that Moreno always criticised us was reflected, at this stage without him, in that we continued applying “tactics” in the crisis and we were not able to stop elaborating on alternative documents and a definition of what the phenomenon that was incubating in the other sector of the directorate, which would constitute the BT. Propagandism and dilettantism were shown in the fact that they “said” that the solution to the crisis came through politics and not through social measures, but we did not provide a political or methodological alternative.

### **3.7. Regional leaders and cadres faced the telephone balance sheet and moral attacks**

Unlike the old leadership, it was the regional leaders, the cadres and the rank and file, of what later became the MT, who did confront in the regions the Telephone Balance Sheet, the Balance of bulletins 18 and 19, and the liquidationist method of making dead-end balances. It was the cadres who fought the consensus of the old leadership.

It was the cadres who repudiated the method, also liquidationist, of attacking the “clique” of three comrades, as well as the moral attacks on Comrade Eduardo Exposito. Also in the regions, the cadres and the rank and file rejected the BT policy that the crisis had a social cause at the leadership level and was resolved with administrative measures such as sending the old party leaders to work.

Despite the old leadership, the Morenoist reservations were manifested in the cadres and sectors of the party’s rank and file who came out to fight as best they could in the worst conditions, since they were going against the entire National Directorate and IEC and amid the worst crisis we have ever known in our current.

Their fight, like that of leaders and cadres of other IWL parties, was decisive in preventing the liquidation course of the BT from leaving no stone upon stone for Morenoism. Today, many of these regional leaders and cadres are the basis of the new leadership of the party and therefore a great contribution to its formation.

**With the formation of the MT, the consensus and the united front began to be broken. The credit went to the cadres and the rank and file who pushed for it. But it was too late to recover the party, the liquidation process was very advanced. The MT was a defensive grouping to regroup what was left of Morenoism in the party. It was an essential and very positive step since it was the basis of what the party is today.**

### **3.8. Apparatism and bureaucratism**

The other side of the problems in the party regime that we had since 1987 was the apparatism and bureaucratism. This also had continuity since Moreno’s death, with new elements.

The party always has and needs an apparatus, the problem is whether the apparatus is at the service of the needs of the class struggle, the intervention and growth of the party or not. Apparatism is a deviation precisely because it means development and use not according to those objectives.

The growth of the apparatus was linked, as it could not be otherwise, to political deviations. The party apparatus developed around electoral politics: the primaries of Izquierda Unida; of the presidential campaign; it placed itself at the service of propaganda politics; of superstructural responses in the intervention in TV programs. Later, it was expressed in the 400 members paid by the party, since we wanted to have one per team (one for every five or 10 militants!). They were paid in the service of capitalising on the crisis of Peronism not through struggles and fair politics but with propagandist politics and electoral adaptation.

This was reflected in the finances and in the criteria that were had for the apparatus, the members paid by the party and the finances. It was not at the service of what the party was and its finances but of the funds that came from the regime, subsidies for votes, parliamentary allowances, subsidies, etc. The 400 members paid by the party could not be supported by their teams, for example.

After the 1990 crisis, there was a lot of talk about apparatism but the BT did not make any fundamental changes to the apparatus and defended it tooth and nail. Its only objective was to “send CC members and regional cadres to work” while keeping the apparatus intact and not fighting against living off parliament.

**Apparatism and mistaken electoral policies distanced the leadership from the class struggle, making it more insensitive to it as well as to the party itself.**

This was aggravated by a very depoliticised leadership, little studious of reality, which created habits such as improvisation, being not very serious in the characterisations and not being consistent with the voted orientations, etc.

With the new party we continue to suffer a lot from these issues, mainly the issue of finances since we continue to live in the entire first stage of parliament and we do not take any measures to begin to change this reality.

Only last year did we begin to take measures to reverse the situation and achieve healthy finances: reducing to the maximum our already small apparatus; with *Solidaridad Socialista* subscriptions; with the circumstantial reduction of income to members paid by the party; with the plan that those paid by the regions gradually cover their income, reducing the expenses of the apparatus by changing the central headquarters, etc.

### 3.9. BT was disruptive from the beginning

The basis of the breaking-off tendencies of the BT was its conception of a “homogeneous party” to defeat the “revisionists” and liquidate us as a current. In this way, they gradually liquidated democratic centralism, destroying the organs and preparing the breakup, by functioning as a party within the party. Thus, they violated our statutes and the tradition of Bolshevism.

“Lomov very cleverly referred to my speech in which I demanded that the Central Committee should be capable of pursuing a uniform line. This does not mean that all those in the Central Committee should be of one and the same opinion. To hold that view would be to go towards a split...” (Lenin, “Speech on the question of elections to the Central Committee, March 8 1918 (evening), *Collected Works*, Vol 27, p. 149, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 2011).

Lenin clearly defined that seeking homogeneity is synonymous with splitting, with rupture. The setting up of the majority of the leadership as a tendency, to combat a minority, meant another step in the liquidation of the party regime. Because tendencies are a right for minorities who organise to confront positions with the majority of the leadership that must direct the entire party, including tendencies and factions. The BT constituted a bloc without principles against the current that defended Morenoism.

An irrefutable demonstration of the complete perversion of the party regime is demonstrated by the fact that the sector that defended the positions of the “Colombian tendency” acted as a tendency within the BT. On the other hand, the majority of the IEC, led by leaders of the Brazilian party, promoted the formation of the Internationalist Workers Group (GOI), which was also part of that same unprincipled bloc against the MT. The facts demonstrated the existence of this bloc: after the breakup, the Colombian tendency broke with the MAS and the IWL and, today, the Brazilian leadership and the MAS act as permanent opposing tendencies in the IWL.

Consistent with its goal of liquidating the regime, the BT imposed its conception of the “homogeneous” party, according to which the leadership does not integrate other positions, preventing any synthesis and promoting the fracture of the party, which is always the sum of competing positions. This is how the BT created an EC in which there was only one member of the MT, a homogeneous editorial staff of the newspaper and a union Commission in which all its members were from the BT. The CC was transformed into an organism that did not discuss anything. It was also expressed in that they took total and absolute control over the finances. During this entire period, never was a member of the MT consulted about the finances. In the same way, control of the party’s legality was taken. The legal authorities in several provinces were surreptitiously changed. Particularly in Mendoza where BT was a minority. After the Somisa strike, BT refused to discuss the balance sheet in the CC. Actually, the balance was never made in the leadership bodies but was extensively discussed in the plenary session of the BT and was finally published for the entire party and signed by two members of the Secretariat. Something similar happened with the Fate strike.

**This conception of a “homogeneous” party was put at the service of another party project opposed to Morenoism: at the service of a propaganda sect.**

## CHAPTER 4

# The emergence of the MT: A positive step in defence of Morenoism

The emergence of the MT opens a new stage: the consensus of the old leadership is broken and the fight begins for political and methodological rearmament, for the recovery of Morenoism.

But it was too late to recover the party and the International.

BT had already triumphed. This is why the MT had a defensive character, rescuing the Morenoist heritage in the face of the growing imposition of another party project: that of a propaganda sect.

The framework of this battle is that of a party that continued to retreat and in which scepticism had already penetrated deeply, in vast sectors. Under the direction of the BT, and with the approval of the IEC, the destruction process continues. This was reflected in the great struggles of the workers' movement such as Somisa, Fate, and the railway strike, where they imposed an increasingly abstentionist and defeatist orientation.

We began the fight to defend the Morenoist strategy and method while the liquidation of the party deepened.

**The role of the cadres and the rank and file was fundamental in the formation of the MT and the change of attitude of the old leadership. The regional cadres are the ones who push with everything, before the Congress, for the tendency to be established. They are the ones who pressure the old leadership to join what they were already advancing on their own: the organisation of a Morenoist pole. This unity of the cadres and the old leadership will give something new, which is the beginning of the formation of a new leadership, first of the tendency and now of the party. A key task for the task of rebuilding the party.**

### 4.1. With the IMT, the break with national Trotskyism began

The setting up of the IMT (International Morenoist Tendency) is a very important leap forward in the battle to change the course of the international. With it, the national Trotskyism of the old leadership begins to break, and it is the first internationalist attempt to find a political solution to the crisis of the IWL. The initiative to launch an international tendency, appealing to the leaders and cadres of the International, and the elaboration of a world document, were an advance in the search for political and methodological rearmament. **It is one of the most positive things that was done after so many mistakes. It is the merit of the new: of the unity of the old leadership with the regional leaders and cadres.**

They go out to tour the parties of the International, they travel to different countries in Latin America and Europe; they go to the Congress of *Convergencia Socialista* (Socialist Convergence) of Brazil (today PSTU). Finally, the IMT was formed in convergence with other sectors of the IWL



that had also advanced on their own in the need to group to fight for Morenoism (the PST of Peru, the PST of Panama, the MST of Ecuador, comrades from the USA, Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Europe).

The result of this convergence is the IMT Platform, which will be a leap forward in the elaboration of the world situation and a program to act in the new stage of the class struggle.

## 4.2. The weaknesses and mistakes of this period

In the context that it was a decisive step to form the MT and promote the IMT, some weaknesses and mistakes caused us more difficulties in the internal fight and that would later be reflected in the first period of formation of the new party, after the breakup.

First of all, there continued to be vacillations in the fight within the party and the International. It was strongly reflected in the international conference of December 1991, where the disruptive nature of the BT was not denounced before the party and the International, nor were the different bureaucratic and factional attitudes of the BT-GOI bloc, such as, for example, that they sanctioned Comrade Adolfo Santos, of the MT and the CC, for going to the Fate strike. There was also great hesitation to forcefully bring, to the party and the International, the proposal of carrying out separate experiences, carrying out an open campaign in the rank and file. The mistake was also made of saying that the World Congress had been positive for the crisis of the Argentine party and not noticing that it opened the way for the party to break out.

**There were also weaknesses in the intervention in the class struggle and, although progress was made in national political elaboration, it was not done in response to the balance sheet of political and method deviations.**

Fighting the abstentionist course of the BT-GOI in the face of the class struggle, fundamentally in the specific cases of Somisa, Fate, and the railway workers, we had a correct policy. But we made mistakes, pressured by the internal struggle, in how we turned to those processes to thoroughly show what our alternative proposal to abstentionism was. The internal fight made it difficult for us, because the factional struggle prevailed, this being the essential thing, it is evident that we also carried problems from the previous period of not acting thoroughly attached to the class struggle and with a correct policy.

The tendential battle depoliticised us and moved us further and further away from the class struggle. Also, the polarisation in the controversy against a current that was advancing towards the conception of a propaganda sect led us to exaggerations in many aspects that we later found difficult to correct, already in the new party.

“This virtue of the permanent discussion turns into the opposite when a party lives permanently discussing from groups organised in factions and tendencies, and even more if these survive through time. (...) The party ceases to act in a unitary way towards the mass movement to turn inward, it freezes, it creates a parliamentary environment of permanent debate and inevitably it stops acting unitarily and becomes principally engaged in discussion, i.e., it stops acting mainly in the mass movement” (N. Moreno, *The Transitional Program Today*,<sup>36</sup> Thesis XXXVIII, p. 89, El Socialista).

It was a combination of the crisis, the deviations that we had been making since Moreno's death, the failures of method and the long factional struggle that gave a framework to our errors as MT and later in the first period of the new party.

Progress is being made in the preparation of a national document but there is still no progress on the balance sheet of everything that happened. The failure to take stock shows that there continued to be a constant with the previous period: there is no effort to go all the way in the search for general rearmament, delving into the mistakes made and the explanation of what the deviations were, to see how those mistakes were not repeated. This weakened us in the internal struggle and

<sup>36</sup> Available to download in [www.nahuelmoreno.org](http://www.nahuelmoreno.org).

within the tendency itself and independent sectors, closer to our politics. Because of these mistakes and delays, political and methodological distrust in us increased. And it would also be reflected in the political and party-building difficulties that we would have after the breakup.

#### **4.3 The MT proposed a correct principled policy to maintain unity and not lead to the break out of the party: that we should have experiences**

When we concluded that the politics and liquidation methods of the majority reached a critical point, we began to raise a way out within our tradition, as an international current: to make separate experiences within the common framework of the IWL. This had been done in 1970 in Peru, in 1986 — during Moreno’s lifetime — in Colombia with Kemel and his current within the PST. In the 1960s, Moreno had proposed something similar to Bengoechea, who headed a pro-Castro faction: “Because if you decide to break, we decided to give you all the possibilities and means for you to fully implement your experience. I am not prepared under any circumstances to argue or quarrel personally or polemically with you. And because we consider you a great revolutionary, we should give you the possibility to implement your revolutionary concepts. The Secretariat fully agreed with me: you mean too much for all of us to embark on a factional struggle or controversy with the comrade we love the most...” (“Personal letter of Moreno to Bengoechea”, quoted in *Biographical Outline*, p. 28).<sup>37</sup>

The campaign of the majority of the IEC and the BT, painting our proposal as unprincipled, was another denial of our tradition that prepared the ground for the outbreak and our expulsion.

The IEC, to cover the liquidationist work of the BT, instead of supporting our proposal, hid from the entire International the very serious crisis of the Argentine party and carried out a factional campaign against us, showing us as “rupturists”. Our proposal of separate experiences was disfigured to show it as a betrayal of the International. This was decisive for the World Congress to lean against our proposal.

We consider that our proposal was principled and that it sought unity, even if it was with separate experiences, within the framework of the International. This is why we carried out our policy within the framework of the need for the IWL not to be broken. We always considered that we should fight in defence of Morenoism, hoping that the rank and file and the international cadres would mature, even if we remained in the minority for a period. Precisely the IEC, headed by the Brazilian leadership, the BT and the leadership of the Spanish PST (TUR), expelled us because they did not want to take on the debate and confrontation of the deep political differences, not only with the IMT, that existed in the IWL.

#### **4.4. The World Congress opened the doors for the outbreak of the party**

In January 1992, the CC of the Brazilian party and other leaders of the International recognised that the majority of the IWL leadership had been acting with a bloc policy, of consensus without political delimitation, applying wrong and factional methods. against the MT, and this deepened the crisis that the Argentine party already had. On this occasion, some members of the Brazilian CC considered separate experiences as a possible principled solution to the crisis.

Unfortunately, later the Brazilian leadership did not advance but continued to act in an unprincipled bloc with the BT, the TUR, and the Colombian tendency against the MT and the IMT. For this reason, afterwards, the World Congress turned its back on political discussions and the truth of the crisis of the Argentine party. At the World Congress the majority refused to discuss the political revolution, the former USSR, Europe, Latin America, Venezuela, etc.; to impose factional

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<sup>37</sup> *Biographical Outline* is available to download from <https://nahuelmoreno.org/en/biographical-outline/>. The complete letter can be found in “Letter to Angel Bengoechea”, 24 January 1964, *On Bengoechea’s split with Palabra Obrera*, <https://nahuelmoreno.org/en/on-bengocheas-split-with-palabra-obrera/>.

voting on an international document on which everyone had differences. The Brazilian leadership, the tendencies (BT, TUR, and Colombians) and the majority of the IEC agreed to follow the unprincipled bloc against the IMT and took factional resolutions closing all political discussion and dissolving the tendencies. Later, the facts would show that the dissolution of the tendencies was a manoeuvre against the IMT since after its expulsion new ruptures occurred, such as those of the TUR and the Colombian tendency, and since then the Brazilian leadership and that of the MAS act as permanent tendencies within the IWL. And it's been four years.

Thus, the path was opened for the outbreak of the Argentine party since they promoted the constitution of a Parity Commission, not to carry out the mandate of the World Congress to the end ("promote the activity of the party outwards, intervening in the class struggle), but to moderate the outbursts of BT and better prepare for the breakup. Which culminated when they endorsed the BT in breaking the agreements and resolutions for the May Day rally.

The breakup of the party at the end of April 1992 was the culmination of a process of liquidation of the party that lasted over a year and a half.

We have to answer the question that some comrades may ask themselves about whether the breakup could have been avoided. It is evident that within the framework of the triumph of the propaganda sect project and the "homogeneous" party led by the BT and with the support of the majority of the IEC, and in particular of the leadership of the Brazilian party, it was impossible for our current to avoid it.

The subsequent events in Colombia and Brazil, with the expulsion of cadres and militants from their respective parties and the IWL, showed that the methods used in the MAS were reproduced, corrected and increased, against the comrades of the ex-MT.

## 4.5. After the breakup, a new stage opened

The breakup was a harsh defeat and a serious setback for the party and our international current. A revolutionary party that was a pole of attraction for a radical fringe of workers and fighters was destroyed, a party that had begun to take steps towards mass influence. The liquidation of the MAS left a void and had a great impact on the mass movement and the vanguard.

With the formation of the new party and the IWU–FI (going through a period of promoting the IRC)<sup>38</sup> a new stage opens in which we resume the struggle to rebuild the party and the international with the theoretical, political and methodological baggage that Moreno bequeathed us. In the heat of this process, we began to form a new leadership in the party and internationally.

Four years after the breakup, we can say that, despite the great difficulties and mistakes made, the balance is positive. The new party has been getting stronger and we are part of the leap that meant the unification and building of the IWU with other currents of Trotskyism, which has incorporated Matvienko,<sup>39</sup> who advanced in the work with the SMOT, with the Mexican OPEZ and who has been able to intervene in the great French strike.

But since the breakup, we had many difficulties and made mistakes that can be explained by the serious political and methodological crisis that we have suffered since Moreno's death and by the years of factional struggle within the MAS. **Firstly, we did not correctly define the meaning of the breakup — which had been a defeat — and the weight of the liquidation of the MAS and the IWL. Secondly, we continue to pay the consequences of not having taken stock of the period 1987-1992.** For all this, as we say in the document *Balance Sheet and Orientation* (1996): "When we broke up, we did not have enough capacity to rearm ourselves by sticking to the class struggle and processes that were taking place. This caused a deepening of the crisis and it became acute in mid-1994. Added to all this were several very important political and methodological problems

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38 **International Revolutionary Current (IRC)** was the international regrouping that gave continuity to the International Morenist Tendency (TMI) and that in 1995 was the founder of the IWU-FI.

39 **Anatoly Matvienko** was a leader of the independent SMOT union in Belarus.

that we carried over from the time of the MAS' deviations. We continued to interpret reality and the party's situation with a great deal of superficiality and unilateralism that led us to develop incorrect characterisations and a building orientation far removed from the possibilities of the new party" (page 4). But this situation began to be overcome two years ago; we managed to stop the regression and begin to grow among the workers and youth vanguard, the most dynamic being the advance in youth.

The progress achieved will allow us to face with greater strength the challenges that reality will pose to us. And also, deal much better with the problems and deficits that we still have, and that we have to overcome if we want to continue moving forward.

Regarding the controversy and the projects that clashed in the tendential struggle in the MAS, the facts confirmed our national and international forecasts: about the meaning of the new stage, of the political revolution and its consequences; that the uprising was going to make new leaps as was later seen in Mexico and throughout Latin America; in Europe (the French strike, the strikes of the former USSR, etc.); etc.; and that also in Argentina had an expression in the strike of 9 November 1992, in the mobilisation of the educational community and, fundamentally, with the *Santiagoñazo*<sup>40</sup> and all the "azos" that followed. It was also confirmed what the evolution of the MAS and the IWL would be.

The new party became stronger, and growing, which confirms the correct fight we gave, in the MAS and in the IWL, to continue building a party for action, and combat, that takes advantage of political opportunities and the class struggle in the perspective of continuing the struggle for the Trotskyist party with mass influence.

The MAS continued to retreat, with new ruptures and the loss of a large number of militants and cadres.

Being reduced to a group, sectarian and of propaganda, that does not participate in the class struggle and that is dedicated to revising Trotskyism and Morenoism, to the point that they already declare: "We are proposing the construction of a new program" (...) "the adaptation of the revolutionary program to the current reality also requires a renewal of the political instrument" (...) "This instrument is none other than the party..." (...) "fight for the reconstruction of the workers' movement on new bases" (*Solidaridad Socialista* 520, 25 April 1996). They continue to crumble our foundations without proposing any alternative.

The majority of the IEC of the IWL said that the crisis of the International was due to the existence of a tendency (the IMT), which held "social democratic" conceptions. The facts also showed that the reality was different. After the breakup, the crisis took new leaps, with new fractures and serious political capitulations of the IWL, fundamentally of the two most important sections, the Brazilian one and the MAS. They broke the Colombian tendency and the TUR (led by the leaders of the Spanish section). This caused divisions in the Argentine, Brazilian, Paraguayan and Spanish parties. The breaking up was not overcome despite these ruptures and today the IWL functions as a federation of undeclared tendencies or factions, headed by the Brazilian section (PSTU) and by the leadership of the MAS.

One of the great tasks that has been posed since the breakup was to form a new leadership team for the party and the International. We began during the tendential battle with the MT and the IMT and we continue it now from the new party and the IWU.

As we said in the *Balance Sheet and Orientation* document (1996): "We are building a new team because the previous one was liquidated. The task of forming a new leadership is not simple nor can it be resolved quickly. It will be a process of several years, of trials and failures, and it will be the result of the progress made by the party, the working class and the International. If we want to

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<sup>40</sup> **Santiagoñazo:** In December 1993, in the city of Santiago del Estero there were two days of violent mobilisations against corruption, non-payment of salaries and other demands. There was looting and the headquarters of the governorate was occupied and burned, and other provincial power buildings and houses of corrupt officials were attacked. There were several deaths and numerous injuries. The governor fell and President Menem dictated the federal intervention of the province.

build it on solid foundations, we will have to do so by combating the defects that the old leadership team had, which — in another context and circumstances — this new team has inherited since it was not formed as a result of the experience of the class struggle but as a byproduct of the factional battle unleashed in our current” (page 25).

No doubt overcoming the historical crisis of the leadership of our party will take us years and it will be closely linked to new tests, which we will have to pass, in major events of the class struggle.

On the other hand, this assessment is complemented by the balance sheet of the last four years and by the debate on the orientation for the next period. We believe that we have made some progress and that, with mistakes and difficulties, we have moved forward. We must delve deeper into the balance sheet and the proposed orientation to see whether we are on the right path to continue moving forward. And for this, we must take stock, both of the successes and the mistakes. This is how we have moved forward throughout our history. When we did not do so, after Moreno’s death, our current entered into a serious crisis.

From the lessons of the *Historical Balance Sheet* arises the need to always appeal to reassurances in the process of forming the new leadership. The fundamentals are: being attached to the International; to the intervention and monitoring of the class struggle; to the rank and file of the party and to make permanent assessments of the performance of the party and its leadership. The discussion of the *Historical Balance Sheet*, and its deepening within the party and the sister parties of the IWU, must serve to draw lessons from the serious errors committed to continue forming a new leadership of the party and to continue fighting to build the party and the International with correct policies and methods.

### Central Committee, 5 May 1996

This balance was voted on in the CC as follows: 18 votes in favour; 4 against, and 2 abstentions. In the same CC, an alternative proposal presented orally by comrade Luis Zamora was put to the vote, which had 1 vote in favour; 22 against, and 1 abstention.