

INTERNAL

INFORMATION BULLETIN

July 1976

No. 7 in 1976

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80 cents

Published by

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014

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original bulletin

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WITH THE FORMATION OF THE FIR: PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS TAKES ON A NEW PERSPECTIVE

[Following is a translation of an article titled "Con la formación del FIR: La participación electoral adquiere nueva perspectiva," which appeared in the March 1976 issue of *Bandera Roja*.]

By Alejandro Martínez

While the official party was naming its candidates for senator and deputy to promote the rejuvenation of the legislative chambers—top men of the regime who will be filling out the ranks of those who drain the budget and thus completing the carnival-like masquerade, which the present election campaign has been and will continue to be—the Revolutionary Left Front (FIR) was formed.

The main political organizations present at the National Founding Conference of the FIR were the GCI, Rojo, and the Democratic Civic Association of Juárez. Also present were representatives of a large number of trade unions and peasant organizations, several "student houses" that sent observers, and delegates from the provinces where the FIR has begun to work.

The plan to join together the left organizations in Mexico is not new. What is new, however, is that contrary to all the pessimistic predictions of those who insist that the far left exists and acts only by splitting, this great step—the formation of the FIR—has been taken. Other regional and national organizations are discussing how to participate in it, keeping in mind that what defines it is its rejection of the bourgeois electoral farce and the belief that the platform of the PCM in the present campaign is totally unsatisfactory.

The FIR Rejects Abstentionism

With the founding declaration of the FIR, participation of the left in the elections takes on a new dimension. The mass movement is on the rise and is in growing opposition to the Mexican state. It has acquired profoundly radical features since 1968, and acts independently of the traditional political formations (including the PCM). Now, it will be able to take on new forms—forms and plans that break out of the traditional apolitical bent of the left—which has been inevitable at this time—like the abstentionism of *Punto Crítico* and the Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores [Mexican Workers party].

Today more than ever, to remain in an abstentionist position is to hope to make the state responsible for everything. It means promoting an amorphous depoliti-

zation which cannot be justified by sophisms and ridiculous arguments, such as "not participating is exposing the regime," or "all participation is in principle a way of playing into the hands of the electoral farce."

If in 1970 abstention could be justified by the still-resounding echoes from the bloodletting of 1968, because the left was hard hit and the new groupings hardly more than plans promoted by extremely small groups, today things have changed radically. The weakness of the left groups cannot be an argument.

While it is true that the elections are a complete farce—a truth no Mexican of sound mind will deny—it abandons the problem just where it is necessary to begin to solve it. The fact is that besides knowing that the elections are a farce, we must fight for the workers and peasants not to be "driven to the polls" and forced to vote for the whole swarm of enemies who make up the CTM bureaucracy, among the "young revolutionaries" of the CNOP and the CNC. And how is this to be done?

It is obvious that it will not be enough to tell them that we are Marxists and they should read our magazines or join our party because ours is the good one. Abstentionism signifies no advance in preventing the PRI from continuing to rule in the future. While abstentionism will certainly worry the regime as long as it is in existence, as long as there is bonapartism and renovations every six years, the governing political bureaucracy will find ways and means for perpetrating its traditional assaults on democracy at the expense of the workers.

The only way to go forward is by proposing a tactic that uses the electoral campaign to expose it, to make clear to the workers that we are against bourgeois parliamentary solutions, and that we only use the tribune to hold up their most deeply felt demands and to help them organize and fight for them. We have to make clear that we seek to educate them politically using the revolutionary electoral program, which, of course, includes the necessity for a revolutionary transformation and the struggle against capitalism and for a really democratic and liberating socialism, breaking all illusions in the "peaceful roads."

Support to the Program or to a Candidate?

The FIR agrees that participation in the elections today is a necessary tactic for furthering the struggle of the Mexican proletariat. It has unanimously rejected the electoral platform of the PCM-LS-MOS because it consists

of minimum demands and is a platform to pressure the government rather than an alternative program to the crisis of capitalism and its system of rule. This is totally clear in the support the platform gives to Echeverría's foreign policy (except on the part of the LS).

As some angry editorial writers for *Oposición* say in their sputtering answers to the criticisms we have made in *Bandera Roja*, this platform has the character of a "minimum program," like those made fashionable by the Social Democracy, who did not want to include in their programs maximum demands like the struggle for socialism, expropriation of the capitalists, etc. As a consequence, it is not a platform that necessarily requires the intervention of the proletariat to drive forward struggles in a clear, forceful way against the system.

However, the FIR has not made its final decision to support the Campa candidacy. It considers the most important task at this time to be publicizing the program, coordinating and promoting the workers' struggle in all centers of action, and it considers the question of the candidate secondary for now. This does not mean that it has definitely rejected possible "critical support" to the candidate of the PCM-LS-MOS bloc, but that the question will be discussed and resolved at an upcoming National Conference that will be held March 21. Support or rejection of Campa is not a condition for supporting the FIR and joining its ranks.

The Pressing Tasks

With the formation of a Coordinating Committee of the FIR, the first tasks have been undertaken. They will consist of making known the abridged program and distributing several tens of thousands of copies of it. This program contains the most realistic Marxist, revolutionary alternative to the present crisis and in no way can be interpreted as a minimum platform or program.

Following that, we will take on the job of signing up members to the FIR to form rank-and-file committees or support committees that will have precise tasks. In each work center, area, or neighborhood they will organize small or large rallies against the electoral farce, at the same time that they introduce the FIR.

Other technical tasks will be to get the funds necessary to carry this plan forward.

Time is short. However, the prospects for the FIR are very promising. Those who have come forth to make this effort are part of a historic current that must fight by any means necessary to annihilate the class enemy, the exploiters, and their political allies who make up the ranks of the bonapartist governmental apparatus.

Discuss and publicize the program of the FIR.

Build rank-and-file committees of the FIR.

For the independent mobilization of the workers against the electoral farce.

WHAT MAKES THE PCM ELECTORAL PROGRAM REFORMIST?

[Following is the translation of an article titled "¿Por qué es reformista el programa del PCM en las elecciones?" which appeared in the April 17, 1976, issue of *Bandera Roja*.

By Felipe García Casillas

An important debate is now taking place on the left on the electoral conjuncture and ways of dealing with it. In general, the most important positions tend to polarize along two main lines: first on the character of the program put forth by the PC-MOS-LS and the need for a revolutionary program, and second on the stand to take on Campa's candidacy.

And we state that the principal debates turn around those two points today because the force of events has clearly more than swept aside the positions of those who, in their traditional ostrich attitude in the face of major problems, answer that their "candidate (Marx) is not registered" the better to hide their irresponsible absten-

tionism. Even worse are the Mao-Stalinists who split from the FPI. They are specialists in labeling all currents as "agents of the bourgeoisie" and in defeating alien propaganda. However, when they are obliged to justify their abstentionism, they do a cartwheel and a half trying to explain just how they expect to participate in elections while calling for no vote.

Considering the confusion that some of these positions can introduce, it is worthwhile repeating some of the points we have made in the past. In the first place, the decision to take part in elections by putting forth a program or even nominating candidates is not a question of principle for the revolutionary communist movement that has to be answered in every instance regardless of political context, whether by participating or by boycotting the elections. What is a matter of principle is to reject the line of the peaceful road or the electoral road to socialism or the approach of trimming agitation around a revolutionary program for the purpose of getting a bigger

number of votes. Under certain conditions, then, where we can extend revolutionary influence to new sectors of the masses by taking part in elections we should do so, even if it becomes necessary to bloc with other forces of the left with which we of course have differences on other points.

Forming an electoral front does not imply in and of itself any particular concept. The problem is the program around which the front is built. This means that criticism directed at the PC-MOS-LS should not be exaggerated in a sectarian manner. It is one thing to be dealing with a front with a reformist program and another to be dealing with a popular front, which implies a qualitative change, viz.: not only a program for reforming capitalism but the very *presence* in the front of bourgeois forces or currents that would carry greater weight than the workers or left forces. This is not the case presently with the PC-MOS-LS front.

Governmental Program or Program for Struggle

There is no doubt that the weakest point in the PC-MOS-LS program is the point termed "Independent foreign policy for peace." The chapter under that heading is not only reformist but openly conciliatory with the interests of the bourgeoisie. It is so fragile that one of the participants in the front—the LS—takes its distance from that chapter in the joint program. In fact, the support given to the Charter of Rights and Economic Duties and the entrance into the OPEC are proposals that do not go beyond the Echeverría plan or that of other clever representatives of the bourgeoisies of backward countries like Peru, Ecuador, and Venezuela of trying to cut themselves a bigger slice of the pie by taking advantage of the worldwide economic crisis of capitalism and interimperialist squabbles. Not to mention the "defense of world peace," which coincides with the policy of "peaceful coexistence" of the Soviet bureaucracy and which in practice implies turning one's back on the only road for obtaining peace—world socialist revolution.

But some comrades think that once this chapter is set aside there would be no problems with the remainder of the program, since support to the official policy is not advocated openly. Nevertheless, the nature of the rest of the program is, as those comrades themselves acknowledge, a "minimum" program. In that sense, the position held by some populists is inconsistent in not wanting to vote for Campa and insisting on drawing a line when their program is also a minimum one. So that the only really alternative program put forth to date to that of the PC-MOS-LS is that presented by the FIR.

For that reason, the arguments of the CP recently brandished in *Oposición* are false insofar as the difference between their program and the proposal advanced by GCI/ROJO in the FIR reduces to no more than two "extra" slogans: repeal of obligatory military service and sexual freedom for the youth (which they do not state their position on in any case, although we already know that they stand for a "patriotic army"). What are really the differences between the two programs?

The CP's is fundamentally a reform program, some of them being legal reforms in the strictest sense. That means that the demands, although we could not oppose them as such, are demands that in general can be co-opted by the system. The program is put forth more as a governmental program holding up the capitalist structure,

liberalizing it a bit, but not as a program that is directed against the system of domination in its entirety.

For example, the chapter dealing with political freedoms is marked fundamentally by reform proposals for laws and police regulations. Democratic freedoms in a country like ours are in contradiction with the very existence of the regime; that is why the problem of guarding those freedoms cannot be reduced to establishing laws that will "guarantee" them, as is already the case with the Constitution. Our method is a different one and is expressed in the program. Not that we are against fighting for democratic freedoms, but we do not foster illusions that those freedoms can be won through a few legal reforms.

The chapter entitled "Measures to improve the living conditions of the workers" is its own refutation. The living conditions of the workers cannot improve other than conjuncturally, to the extent that pay increases are offset by new price increases, unless demands are advanced that put into question salaried labor itself, as do the planks in the FIR program dealing with the sliding scale of hours and wages. Certainly a wage escalator appears in the PC-MOS-LS program as a concession, but in such a context that it does not get around the minimum character of the program in its entirety. Would the proposals we are making with respect to the urban problem appear any different to the comrades of *Oposición*? You propose rent freezes and reinstatement of clause XII of article 123; we agitate for expropriation of the landlords without compensation and for calling rent strikes.

Another chapter that also shouts from the rooftops its character as a proposal for "progressive" governments is the one termed "Measures for reorientation of economic policy." Here again we have proposals that do not go beyond those that some bonapartist governments have applied or have tried to apply in order to better cushion the effects of the economic crisis, such as progressive taxes imposed on the capitalists or control of foreign exchange and trade. Even in the most advanced planks of the CP program, such as nationalization of banking and basic industries, there is a central difference between that program and the one we propose; that is, expropriation of those enterprises without compensation and under workers control is not what is ambiguously bandied about in the reformist program, the "access to real accountability to denounce irregularities," but is more than that a question of the workers being able to exercise veto power. Do these differences appear to be sufficient to our friends of *Oposición*?

The foregoing are only some of the differences. There are others, some of them pointed out by the CP itself and with which they apparently are just as much in disagreement, such as sexual freedom for the youth.

In addition to all the above, there is a big omission on the part of the comrades which is crucial for understanding the character of the program—the absence of a slogan of power which would make it clear that there is no illusion on participation in the election. Which would make it clear to the masses, without ambiguities, that the needs of the workers cannot be really resolved by any bourgeois government no matter how democratic it might be. That means the other slogan which it did not occur to comrades of *Oposición* to mention and which is also in our draft program for the FIR: the *workers and farmers government*.

Again: the Conception of Stages

At this point it will be clearer that what lies at the bottom is a difference on the concept of the program. Pablo Sandoval himself, in a great theoretical effort, tries to demonstrate this in *Oposición* to justify his reformist program.

And Sandoval's entire line of argument, including his resorting to such concepts as "transitional demands," takes him through several leaps to fall back again on the old concept of revolution by stages. These somersaults were clearly evident even since the preparatory period for the XVII Congress in debates such as the ones between Pablo Gómez y Chicali in *Oposición* and which lead to the line that even though the revolution in Mexico will be "democratic and socialist" (resolution of the XVI Congress), at this time the central task is the fight for political freedoms alone. The same old saw refurbished and now dragged into the program of the PC-MOS-LS—the first stage of the struggle is for democracy, with the struggle for socialism coming later.

There is no question that the program of a party is one thing and the program that is signed in common with other organizations is something else. The program that we propose for the FIR is not the whole program of the

GCI. For example, what is lacking is nothing more nor less than our entire concept of party building, a concept that is not required for forming a front in order to take part in elections. But the distinction between a party program and the program for a front is no justification for breaking up the struggle for socialism into distinct stages.

Transitional demands are precisely those that, starting from the actual level of consciousness of the workers, upon catching hold in mass struggle, acquire an anticapitalist dynamic. They are not the "demands made on the bourgeois power" or, as stated in the words of Sandoval, slogans which in concrete politics not only bring us closer to revolution but actually carry us to it. To point out the mobilizing value of a slogan is not sufficient argument to demonstrate that the slogan is revolutionary. The problem is not just one of mobilizing the masses, but of the direction in which they are being mobilized.

Let us hope that this leaves the comrades of *Oposición* satisfied: there is indeed a program radically distinct from that of the CP, not only in two "extra" slogans, but fundamentally in its anticapitalist character. For that reason, we can answer the question posed by *Oposición*: "Workers candidate—with a reformist program?" once again by: Yes, with a reformist program!

FIR-CAMPA: A CLASS-CONSCIOUS AND REVOLUTIONARY VOTE

[Following is a translation of an article titled "FIR-Campa: Voto clasista y revolucionario," which appeared in the May 1976 issue of *Bandera Roja*.]

By Felipe García Casillas

The Unification and Founding Conference of the LCI discussed an initial balance sheet of our electoral work. This question evoked the greatest interest and polemics among our members. It could not be otherwise, since the experience is actually the first campaign that was really coordinated on a national level by our young organization.

The first fact noted by our balance sheet of the FIR, was the absence of other political currents inside it. Among those attending the second national meeting of the FIR were representatives of trade unions, such as those representing the workers from Oaxaca Meat Industry, the "July 26" of La Paz, the tenant farmers of Colina del Sol, and rank-and-file committees in other unions, neighborhoods, or student dormitories, but there were no comrades representing any political group. This can probably be explained in part by our delay in starting our election campaign and by the fact that by the time the majority of currents had taken a position and were polarized, as well as by the lack of sufficient material resources to carry out our participation. But this is clearly not enough to explain it. There had to be political reasons as well.

The Polarization Around the Campa Candidacy

In the joint issue of *Bandera Roja* and *Rojo* we pointed out that there are two questions that give rise to the main debates today—the electoral platform and the Campa candidacy. Here we will deal with the latter.

There is no doubt that the reason why some political tendencies have not accepted the platform of the FIR is that the LCI has proposed that such a front call for a vote for Campa. That was the case with the compañeros of the Democratic Civic Alliance of Juárez and it was also the main objection of the leaders of the CDP of Chihuahua despite the agreement we have with them on other questions.

Among the broad vanguard there is a profound sectarianism toward the CP, a product of familiarity with the course the organization has taken. But the poor reputation of the CP should not lead us to drawing an incorrect conclusion on the character of this party. For the LCI, despite the obvious differences we have the PCM, this is not a bourgeois party. The compañeros who say that the PCM and the candidacy of Campa are reformist and who therefore refuse to vote for it cannot avoid making a class characterization of it nonetheless.

That is, we agree that the positions of the CP can be characterized as reformist, but reformism does not exist in the abstract. There is working-class reformism and bour-

geois reformism. Do they consider the candidacy of Campa bourgeois? We do not.

We are in principle against voting for a bourgeois candidate, but we do believe that it is tactically possible to vote for a working-class candidate in spite of his or her reformist program. Therefore we reject such unprincipled positions as those of the PST, the MAUS, the Permanent Assembly of the PCM, or Posadists, who vote for the bourgeois candidate, López Portillo, as we likewise reject the positions of the Mao-Stalinists who split from the FPI, who abstain from voting for the working-class candidate with the accusation that he is an "agent of the bourgeoisie."

Our characterization is not a new one. It is consistent with positions we have taken in the past, as for example when we characterized the "sick ones" as ultralefts in view of the accusations the CP and the centrists made that they were provocateurs or police agents.

However, the fact that political currents as such, as a result of their inconsistency and sectarianism, do not come to the FIR does not cancel out our electoral project. The revolutionary left and the new vanguard that has arisen since 1968 are not expressed only in political groups. There are unions—bureaucratic or independent ones—which as such are not going to participate in the FIR but in which it is possible to organize workers into Rank and File Committees. The same is true for neighborhoods, peasant communities, or schools. It does not matter that the indigenous, professional, or political organizations refuse to participate officially in the FIR; it is necessary to organize nuclei of *compañeros* from those bodies that are today in agreement with the formula FIR-Campa, which can continue as organs of struggle in their sector after the elections. It does not matter either that these *compañeros* do not know all the positions of the LCI or that they disagree with it on other questions; all that is needed is that they be in agreement with this electoral policy. This is how our participation in the electoral arena

seeks to stimulate the organization of new sectors of the masses and their vanguard.

The United Front Between Coalition and FIR

From the time of the second national meeting of the FIR, where it was agreed to call for a vote for Campa, a series of contacts were established with the leaders of the PC-MOS-LS Coalition. The objective of these contacts is to reach accords for joint work in favor of the Campa candidacy.

It is possible that by the time this issue of *Bandera Roja* is published, these accords will have been signed. If that is true, it would represent a magnificent example of the possibility for organizations with important political differences to make a united front.

The example is especially significant because while programmatic differences continue to exist between the Coalition and the FIR, which have been expressed in their respective electoral platforms, both groupings are forming a single front against the bourgeois candidate. In this there is no renunciation of the positions of any of the participants and work is done in common. Therefore what is involved is not a new electoral coalition but a united front between two existing coalitions.

In forming the united front in this way, we will have a chance to present a single left pole against the bourgeoisie and, at the same time, to give an example of what proletarian democracy is, permitting expression and debate on our political differences.

In this context the voting formula that we have proposed will become even more relevant. To vote FIR-Campa today is the alternative that does not divide the forces supporting the working class candidate and at the same time implies a class-against-class vote. It is a vote for the revolutionary, anticapitalist platform of the FIR.

This is the perspective around which we are calling for rank-and-file committees to be organized.

FIR-CAMPA CAMPAIGN PROGRESSES

[Following is a translation of an article titled "Adelante la campaña FIR-Campa," which appeared in the June 1976 issue of *Bandera Roja*.]

By Felipe García

As the month of July nears, electoral activity is stepping up. In this regard, it is a shame that we still can't make public the joint working agreement reached between the FIR and the Coalition we reported on in the last issue of *BR*. Also, the draft of a joint statement drawn up by representatives of the three organizations in the Coalition and a member of the LCI has been edited. Inexplicably, since the draft was submitted to the leaderships of each organization for consideration, the meeting for final approval keeps being postponed.

But despite a formal agreement between leaderships, the

joint work has proceeded anyway. When Campa was in Colima, there was a jointly-called meeting that even included a FIR speaker. The same thing happened here in the Federal District at the meeting in the Vallejo zone. We have been able to work well together with the LS in particular, especially in the areas in the Federal District where there are Trotskyist candidates. The most recent joint activity was a meeting in Ciudad Netzahualcóyotl, where there was also a FIR speaker—a rally which won the release of some *compañeras* who were imprisoned in the local jail.

But the best test of the possibility of participation in a united front was the case of Ciudad Juárez. The CP and LCI have jointly launched candidates for federal deputies in the third and fourth districts there. The candidate in the third district is comrade Raúl Villegas, who is known as a member of the LCI in that city. Last year, Comrade Villegas was

arbitrarily seized by the police for his political activities. And for that reason, interviews with him appeared in several local newspapers and on one television station.

In spite of our being conscious that the present electoral campaign of the left is very modest with respect to its breadth among the masses, the government, nonetheless hasn't stopped looking on it with concern—especially in some regions. Such is the case in the southeast, for example. In Yucatán, CP members have been frequently harassed by

police for their activity. In Campeche they had the nerve to close down the highway for eight hours to prevent the arrival of Valentín Campa!

Propaganda, agitation, and the organization of contacts sympathetic to our positions and who are ready to work, have to be stepped up even more. In addition to militants covering the zones they are assigned to, the central meetings which are listed here—at least those in the Federal District—should be the obligation of all the compañeros to cover.

IS THE MEXICAN CP NO LONGER A STALINIST ORGANIZATION?

[The following article appeared in the February 1-15 issue of *El Socialista*, fortnightly newspaper of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction of the Liga Socialista (Socialist League), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Mexico. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Previous issues of *El Socialista* (Nos. 35 and 36 of the first and second fortnights of January) have informed our readers of the process that has taken place in the Liga Socialista, which culminated with our decision to make public our fight to rescue the traditions of our party.

Since both organizations claim to be the Liga Socialista and since the Tendencia Militante [Militant Tendency] has published an issue of *El Socialista* with the same name and format, in this article we will identify them as Liga Socialista (TM) and their newspaper as *El Socialista* (TM) so as to avoid confusion. In turn, we will identify ourselves as Liga Socialista (FBL) and our newspaper as *El Socialista* (FBL).

On January 12, 1976, the Partido Comunista Mexicano (PCM), the Movimiento de Organización Socialista (MOS),¹ and the Liga Socialista (TM) signed a manifesto that stated they had formed a front to promote the candidacy of Valentín Campa, leader and presidential candidate of the PCM, on the basis of a common platform. This platform was published in No. 35 of *El Socialista* (TM).²

1. Mexican Communist party, the pro-Moscow Stalinist party in Mexico. Movement for Socialist Organization, a group that split from the opportunist formation Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers party), which is considering supporting the official candidate. The MOS has become a satellite of the PCM.

2. Printed elsewhere in this issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

By signing such a programmatic agreement with the Mexican Communist party, a Stalinist party whose program and course for more than fifty-five years have shown its reformist character and its inclination toward class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, the Liga Socialista (TM) shouldered the task of providing the PCM with left cover for its attempt to vindicate itself before sectors of the vanguard.

Still more serious, the Liga Socialista (TM), in its eagerness to play this shameful role, has signed and endorsed a reformist minimum program that in structure and content is nothing more than a slightly modified version of the PCM program.

These acts are sufficiently important in and of themselves to deserve examination. But they also help clarify which of the two organizations that call themselves Liga Socialista really represents the tradition and continuity of that organization and of revolutionary Marxism in Mexico. They also help clarify the Liga Socialista (TM)'s course and explain the positions and actions it took during its fight to usurp the Liga Socialista and smash the obstacle represented by the FBL.

Tail-Ending the PCM

In past issues of *El Socialista* (FBL) we have already explained why we think that in general it is incorrect to form electoral fronts with other political parties. Although we consider it valid and necessary to seek and promote *unity in action* of all working-class forces, an electoral front to propagandize a program is something radically different. In the former case, what is involved is the formation of fronts for struggle and mobilization around concrete points and issues.

When participating in elections, we socialists do not act with the illusion that this is the method to obtain changes in our

country or the road through which the workers will take power.

What we propose to take advantage of is the fact that the bourgeoisie and its government are opening a period in which supposedly the question is posed of who should govern the country, in what way, and with what measures.

Nonetheless, without creating any illusions, we socialists can take advantage of this period to pose our solutions, publicize our program, and make as broadly known as possible the most important struggles the workers and their allies are carrying out against the bourgeoisie.

In doing this, we can in no way afford to create confusion about what we represent, what we propose to solve the problems of the nation, and what differentiates us from other parties.

We certainly do think it is valid at such times to support a candidate of a workers party against the candidate of the bourgeoisie, converting the elections into one more class battleground.

That is why at this time we support the candidacy of Valentín Campa against that of López Portillo,³ and why we call for a vote for him as a way of registering a class vote. At the same time we will explain how incorrect and dangerous his program and line are.

What we cannot do is negotiate our program or mix our banner with that of other, nonrevolutionary parties in an electoral front. We believe there is only one solution to each of the country's problems, and that is the one we indicate in the different points of our program.

For socialist participation in the

3. José López Portillo, the 1976 candidate of the ruling party in Mexico, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI—Institutional Revolutionary party).

elections—the terrain of the class enemy—to be fruitful, the socialist program, and what the organization that holds it up represents, must be expressed openly, clearly, and sharply. We must also counterpose this program to the reformist program of Valentín Campa and his party, and to that of other organizations, as well as to that of the bourgeois government.

We also explained previously the PCM's policy toward the elections. We pointed out how it at first attempted to initiate a process that would lead to the formation of an electoral front that would group the workers organizations together with the supposed "progressive forces" and "partisans of democracy" of the bourgeoisie and the government.

Upon seeing their attempts at implementing this policy frustrated for *this* election period, the PCM *adjusted* it to try to attract what forces it could indeed win over to its politics. Thus, it made several calls for unity and signed several agreements with various organizations.

It was in this sense that we explained why we considered we had made a political error on August 26, 1975, when we signed a joint electoral platform with the PCM, a platform that was abstract, general, and ambiguous.⁴ Furthermore, without respecting the agreement, the PCM later launched *its* campaign, with *its* politics and *its* program, inviting us to participate on the basis of it.

By signing the agreement and platform of January 12, the *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) not only have agreed to play the PCM's game and help it vindicate itself in the eyes of sectors before which it is deeply discredited, but have also decided to endorse and accept its program and politics, and even to become its defenders.

Is the PCM Revolutionary?

In the manifesto and platform of January 12, the *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) tell us that the three organizations—the PCM, the MOS, and LS (TM)—"propose to encourage united action by the masses, particularly by the working class, for immediate demands and in defense of their economic and political interests. *At the same time*, they propose the following: to advance the *unity of the forces that support democracy and socialism*, with the aim of increasing their political weight and mass influence; to strengthen the struggle of the Mexican people against imperialism . . . in short, to contribute to the organization and development of an *autonomous political force capable of challenging the bourgeoisie for power*, defeating it, and building Mexican society on a new basis, without capital-

ist wage slavery . . ." (Our emphasis.)

What is meant by this famous "unity of the forces that support democracy and socialism," this "autonomous political force" that is supposed to be capable of wrenching power from the bourgeoisie, which they propose to promote *outside* of the unity in action of the masses?

Does it refer to the PCM's conception of the collaboration of workers organizations with "progressive" bourgeois forces in a "popular front"? Is this what the *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) propose to promote? Or does it refer instead to the political unity of the workers in an organization with a revolutionary program? If the latter is true, the *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) would be telling us that the PCM does not propose to promote class collaboration, that it has stopped being a Stalinist party, and that it proposes to follow a revolutionary policy.

Whatever conclusion the *compañeros* come to, they are telling us that they are willing to help the PCM and other "forces that support democracy and socialism" in "increasing their political weight and mass influence . . ."

We, on the other hand, will fight with all our forces against this. We do so precisely because we believe the PCM is a Stalinist party that seeks to win over the working class to a disastrous policy that sooner or later culminates in collaboration with bourgeois forces and finally in the defeat of the workers.

The most recent example that shows we are not mistaken is the fact that despite what they have said, they followed a traitorous policy, contrary to the interests of the workers, in the strike at Fundidora de Monterrey.

But the *compañeros*—very frank, clear, and sharp so as to avoid confusion—make plain what they think. They have made the surprising discovery that the PCM leaders do not propose to implement a class-collaborationist plan and slow down the advance of the *independent, revolutionary* workers movement. What is proposed is nothing less than "challenging the bourgeoisie for power, defeating it, and building Mexican society on a new basis, without capitalist wage slavery . . ."

Since when, *compañeros*? Or do you believe that the way to defeat the bourgeoisie is by supporting it and joining it in "popular fronts" like the Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (PRM—Mexican Revolutionary party, currently the PRI) was in the days of Cárdenas.⁵ Did the policy of the

PCM during the 1968 student movement help to advance in that direction? Were the railroad workers wrong to withdraw their confidence in the Stalinists after the disastrous policy they followed in that sector's struggles in 1958-59?⁶

Were the *compañeros* of Fundidora de Monterrey wrong in feeling a deep aversion toward the leaders of the PCM in Monterrey during and after the strike?⁷

Perhaps the more than fifty-five-year course of the PCM does not count. Perhaps they were small errors in the long struggle to achieve socialism and "to strengthen the struggle of the Mexican people against imperialism."

To leave absolutely no room for doubt, the *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) tell us: "The organizations that have united together to act in this electoral process do not hide their *socialist objectives*, nor their *revolutionary method* to achieve them." (Our emphasis.)

And further on, they say, ". . . these revolutionary organizations. . . are taking part in the electoral campaign with the aim of helping to raise the consciousness of the masses. . . . With full clarity of objectives, without illusions of any sort, and *placing confidence solely in the power of the masses* and their own organization, the Partido Comunista Mexicano, the Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and the Liga Socialista . . ." (Our emphasis.)

So, the PCM is a revolutionary organization with socialist goals (about which it has complete clarity)? It uses a revolutionary method and seeks to raise the level of consciousness of the masses, whose strength is the only thing it trusts in?

Is the PCM revolutionary? Has it stopped being a Stalinist organization?

We must thank the *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) for having provided us in so short a time (ten days! from January 2 to January 12) with such a clear illustration of where one ends up using the method they defended during their fight to usurp the

6. The "disastrous policy" of the Stalinists in these struggles refers to the fact that Valentín Campa and his group signed a separate collective-bargaining agreement with the firm and ended the strike in one branch of the railroad system. Meanwhile, the rest of the strikers—led by Demetrio Vallejo—found themselves confronting the regime alone in pursuit of a wage increase and recognition of their democratically elected leadership. The Stalinists' action divided the movement, facilitating repression of it.

7. The latest strike at the Fundidora de Fierro y Acero de Monterrey in December 1975 was the result of a revolt by the workers against layoffs and violations of the collective-bargaining agreement carried out by the company, which had the support of the local trade-union leadership, controlled by the Stalinists.

4. This platform appeared in No. 30 (September 15-30, 1975) of *El Socialista*, under the title "Programa Electoral Conjunto PCM-LS."

5. Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, president of Mexico from 1934 to 1940. During his term broad reforms, such as the nationalization of oil and the so-called agrarian reform, were carried out. It was in 1935 that the Mexican Stalinists began to put forward their line of forming a popular front with the ruling party.

Liga Socialista, culminating in the so-called Second Congress.⁸

Now it turns out that for not having been "immersed in the class struggle" we did not notice that the PCM is an organization with revolutionary goals and methods.

Reformist Minimum Program vs. Transitional Program

The compañeros of the Liga Socialista (TM) have concluded not only that the PCM is revolutionary but also that its program and method are the route to reach the socialist revolution.

In examining the joint PCM-MOS-LS(TM) platform, its strange and surprising similarity—in structure and presentation, as well as in content—to the program of the PCM stands out immediately. In spite of the fact—as it states—that it contains some demands realizable only with the taking of power by the workers, as a whole it is a reformist minimum program.

Conscious of this fact, the author of the manifesto supported and upheld by the three organizations tells us:

"... the Partido Comunista Mexicano, the Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and the Liga Socialista propose to citizens who support democracy and public well-being a platform of struggle that includes the positions, objectives, and immediate demands that correspond to the present situation in the country." (Our emphasis.)

And he explains to us:

"They propose limited objectives of struggle . . . objectives that take into account the degree of seriousness of the problems requiring solution, the level of class consciousness and organization of the masses, and the necessity that the masses undergo their own experiences, enabling them to understand fully the need for a revolution to bring about deepgoing, radical changes in Mexican society."

We are also aware of the level of consciousness and organization of the workers at present and of what is required for this to develop to the point that the masses acquire consciousness of the need for a revolution—a long process, a fundamental part of which is the experiences of the masses themselves in the struggle.

But this process also requires a revolutionary leadership, no matter how small it may be at the outset. At the same time that it struggles at the side of the masses around their immediate problems, such a leadership continues to propose and explain steps that actually deal with the problems they are afflicted with and are mobilizing around.

8. An article by Joseph Hansen, entitled "The Split in the Liga Socialista" (*Intercontinental Press*, February 9, p. 195), reports the matters in dispute during the factional fight that culminated at the "Second Congress."

Such an organization proposes transitional demands, demands that help raise the consciousness of the masses from the current level to a level of socialist consciousness.

For example, faced with the problem of unemployment, we not only fight with the workers who have been laid off and who are mobilizing to win back their jobs. We also pose the need to fight for the government to create a program of services and public works so as to provide jobs, for a reduction of the workweek to forty hours with fifty-six hours pay, and for the establishment of a sliding scale of hours.

This last demand means reducing the workday with no cut whatever in wages, so that all unemployed persons are provided with a job.

In this way the workers, while continuing to fight for their minimum demands, learn through their experience that the reinstatement of some workers or a wage gain does not resolve once and for all the problem of unemployment or poverty. They also come to understand little by little the need to fight for a step that really resolves those problems. At the same time, they come to understand the need to fight for a government that *does* implement such measures.

That is, through their struggles the workers are not only acquiring confidence in themselves and learning the need for mass mobilization and united struggle and organization. They are also raising their level of political consciousness.

But this too requires that in posing solutions at the propaganda level—as in the case of the elections—a revolutionary leadership must put forward a series of demands that includes both those that respond in an immediate fashion to the needs and consciousness of the masses and those that would genuinely solve the problems once and for all. That is, it must propose a program that combines minimum, democratic, and transitional demands. It must hold aloft a transitional program.

That requires as well an explanation of why only a workers government, a workers and farmers government, can implement all those demands, thus resolving the problems facing the masses. In other words, it is necessary to constantly explain—and to include as the crowning programmatic demand—the call for a *workers and farmers government*.

The compañeros of the Liga Socialista (TM) have abandoned these basic concepts of revolutionary Marxism. They have agreed to sign not only a reformist program of immediate minimum demands, but also a manifesto that admits this and attempts to justify it.

Isn't there a contrast between the solutions proposed in that program and the ones we have always called and agitated for

in *El Socialista*, in our political resolution and publications, in our proposals for the workers movement, and in our intervention in conflicts and mobilizations?

And what happened to the extremely important demand for *trade-union independence and democracy*, which more than 150,000 persons mobilized for in Mexico City November 15, 1975, and which thousands of electricians and tens of thousands of workers are fighting for?

How then are we going to complement the process of raising workers' level of consciousness, a process whose fundamental axis is the experience of the masses themselves in struggles around such general questions?

How are we going to do this without trying to educate—at the same time that we fight with the workers for their demands around a particular issue—on the steps we believe will genuinely and definitively resolve that problem? How, without focusing in a timely way on such measures—along with some of the minimum demands offered in their platform—through our newspaper, our electoral propaganda, and our activity?

How are we going to do it without presenting a transitional program that flows from the necessities posed by the objective situation and is formulated in such a way as to be easily understood by the masses, while pointing toward the formation of a workers and farmers government and the establishment of better forms of economic, social, and political organization?

Oh! We forgot. This is only their "platform of struggle . . . that correspond[s] to the present situation in the country," their minimum program for the current stage. Surely they have their maximum program for the future when we pass into the second stage of the revolution.

How are these two programs linked? How do we use the program to help raise the level of consciousness of the masses? How, without a revolutionary program, a transitional program? Nonsense! Those are just Trotskyist inventions!

Of course, references to socialism and to the fact that some of the demands could be achieved only by a workers government could not be missing from their manifesto. You always find that in reformist programs to cover up their true character.

The compañeros of the Liga Socialista (TM) might possibly argue that their program does contain some "transitional demands," like the sliding scale of wages and the nationalization of industry under workers control.

In the first place, the fact that a demand sounds like what was written in the Transitional Program does not make it into a demand of that type.

Galván,⁹ for example, also calls for a sliding scale of wages, but one implemented by a tripartite commission representing the trade unions (read, bureaucrats), the government, and the bosses.

The only way this step can be effective is if the commissions are democratically elected by the workers who frequently and periodically determine, on the basis of their own studies of the prices in the places where they do their shopping, how much wages should be raised. This must be stipulated in the clause in the collective-bargaining agreement that determines the implementation of a sliding scale of wages.

Nonetheless, the fact that the workers have "access to their real records so that they can report irregularities thereby revealed and demand rectification of them . . ." including "such questions as workers' share of the profits, payment of taxes . . ." and the real possibilities of raising wages, in no way constitutes workers control.

In fact, such a concept is in marked contrast to the Marxist view of workers control, which is that the workers have the right to determine not only their working conditions, but also the social and political goals of production. That is, whether production is going to be oriented toward increasing the bosses' profits or toward satisfying the needs of the workers and peasants.

We also raise the demand of *workers' access to the books* of the companies, but we do not confuse it with workers control. Moreover, we maintain it is important to stress in our propaganda the need to fight for the latter.

Furthermore, even if the program contained a couple of transitional demands, this would not give it a revolutionary character. On the contrary, by being presented in the setting of the perspectives put forth by a reformist program, these demands lose their value. They serve only to win a sector that is struggling to a reformist policy, and not as a bridge to bring it toward a socialist consciousness.

To be sure, they can also serve to make the "Trotskyist" heart of confused activists beat strongly, and to lead them to sign and endorse a reformist program.

We really are compelled to acknowledge that the method of the *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) produces rapid results. In only ten days of "total immersion in the class struggle" not only have they discovered that the PCM is revolutionary, but it even turns out that the Stalinist method

of the minimum and maximum program is as well.

Perhaps Trotsky, who up until his death exerted himself to teach us the method of the transitional program and the need to be true to the revolutionary program, also shared our "methodological deviation." After all, "he was noted not only for his great capability, but also for his propensity to concentrate too much on the administrative aspect of things." Oh! Those damned desk-bound leaders!

Everything Is Possible With Peace

Perhaps one of the most serious aspects of the break of the *compañeros* with the program and principles of revolutionary Marxism is the foreign policy they propose. Although under other points the program offers only minimum and partial demands, in this section it puts forth positions that break completely with the basic principles of Marxism.

Point V of the platform, entitled "A Foreign Policy of Independence and Peace," proposes, among other things, economic and political collaboration with several Latin American bourgeois governments, such as those in Peru, Panama, and Ecuador. It also calls for a struggle for the "immediate incorporation of Mexico in the group of nonaligned countries." (Non-aligned!)

The "Platform" accepts and defends the formation of an international class-collaborationist "popular front" between the workers states and the "progressive" bourgeois governments. It proposes to fight in "active defense of world peace" and for "peaceful coexistence among the various states." Between the bourgeois states and the workers states!

What happened to the basic principles of class struggle?

Throughout history we socialists have presented ourselves as the genuine and most consistent fighters for peace. But we point out that there can be no peace between classes while a minority class exploits and lives off the fruit of the labor of the majority, which is submerged in poverty.

Under these conditions, to accept peace between classes means to condemn the laboring majority to poverty and exploitation.

We also point out that we are opposed to workers of different countries annihilating each other to defend the interests of their bourgeoisies in imperialist wars of plunder.

We point out that the cause of wars and conflicts, whether within a country or between countries, is the existence of this unjust system of exploitation of one class by another, of oppression of weak countries by imperialist countries, and of wars of plunder over the division of the spoils among the imperialist countries.

It is for this reason that we say that the only way to achieve a real and lasting peace is through struggle, the fiercest war, against this system.

In this struggle we cannot call for "peaceful coexistence" or "economic and political collaboration" with exploitative governments, regardless of how serious their quarrels are with other, stronger capitalist governments. At certain times, when a dependent bourgeois government takes some *concrete step* that is progressive against some imperialist country, we can support the *step* and fight for it to be carried to its logical consequences.

But we can never collaborate, *politically* support, or create the slightest illusions about its reasons for carrying out such steps. We can never contribute to its attempts to give a progressive, anti-imperialist, or revolutionary cover to its passing quarrels with stronger countries, when it takes advantage of their conjunctural weaknesses to obtain a bigger share of the spoils that are the fruit of the exploitation of the workers.

Of course, the *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) had to try to make their capitulation less obvious. Thus, they add that "the Liga Socialista differs with *some* points in this section." (Our emphasis.)

Some! Which points? Why do they disagree with them? Why then are the points, whatever they were, that they disagreed with included in the platform? Why did they sign a platform that contained points they do not agree with? What did they get in return for endorsing Stalinist positions?

The least they could demand in exchange for the Trotskyist program is that their position on the points expressed also be included. But let's be reasonable. *At least* they could have included clarification on which points they disagreed with and why.

But not even in a separate article in their newspaper do the *compañeros* explain the reasons for their behavior, and why it was necessary or advantageous to give in on those points. Nor do they explain their differences. Should we assume that they are minimal and secondary?

The *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) have gone so far in their capitulation to Stalinism that when they "declare their defense of the Soviet Union and other socialist states against any imperialist attack"—a position with which we are totally in agreement—they don't bother to clarify at the same time that the Liga Socialista (TM) favors the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy that is encrusted on the conquests of the workers revolution and prevents the flowering of socialist democracy.

But for the *compañeros* this is not necessary, because for them the USSR and the other workers states are no longer deformed or degenerated workers states.

9. Rafael Galván Maldonado, leader of the Tendencia Democrática (Democratic Tendency) in the Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores Electricistas de la República Mexicana (United Electrical Workers Union of the Mexican Republic). See the article entitled "150,000 March in Mexico City for Trade-Union Democracy" in *Intercontinental Press*, December 15, 1975, p. 1759.

They are "socialist states" where such a bureaucracy does not exist. They now accept *in fact* the Stalinist thesis of "socialism in one country."

It seems that they have abandoned the perspectives for the advance of the world revolution in one of its three sectors—the *political revolution* in the deformed workers states, carried out by the proletariat of those countries and its allies, the oppressed nationalities within them.

But that is enough. With what we have shown, there is sufficient reason to ask the *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) the following questions:

What is your aim in endorsing this program and Stalinist organization? What are you getting in return for agreeing to sign this program? What was your aim in making this concession? Some propaganda in *Oposición*?¹⁰ To win the respect of the Stalinists and their friends?

To be noticed and viewed favorably by Juan José Arreola¹¹ and Stalinist circles? The friendship of Raquel Tibol?¹² To receive publicity as a reasonable, progressive organization struggling for peace and "the public well-being" from the circles that are for peace, a humane existence, and democracy?

Is that what you are pursuing? "Spectacular actions" to make yourselves known, regardless of the sort of prestige you get?

Or is this really your answer to the question posed at this time of who should rule and with what program? Perhaps the *compañeros* actually think that the government Mexico needs is one shared between the bourgeoisie and the "revolutionary" PCM, MOS, and Liga Socialista (TM), and that the institution of their minimum program would resolve the most pressing national problems.

In that case, *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM), if you have reached fundamental programmatic agreement with the PCM and if you agree with their "revolutionary methods," why propose a front only for the elections?

If you don't single out programmatic differences on problems as fundamental as the ones touched on, and have no methodological differences, why don't you fuse? Why go only halfway? Come now, *compañeros*, don't be sectarian.

We think that what we have revealed provides the elements to judge who really

represents the tradition and continuity of the Liga Socialista and of revolutionary Marxism in Mexico. Because, in effect, this is shown in practice, and the *compañeros* of the Militant Tendency of the Liga Socialista (TM) have taken only ten days to give us the material with which to judge from their practice.

What is the goal of the *compañeros*? To get a little publicity? To carry out a maneuver?

Now we understand what they meant during the so-called Second Congress when they defended the necessity to "intervene in the class struggle" independently of how and leaving to one side the question of program.

They have done this in the elections, and the PCM has taken responsibility for providing them with a program. Now we understand clearly that *the FBL, the traditions of the Liga Socialista, and its program were an obstacle for the implementation of a policy of "astute maneuvers,"* in which principles and program are only a nuisance.

What are they looking for? Shortcuts in the construction of the party through spectacular actions and maneuvers? Their policy has already led them, in less than two weeks, to break with the program and method of revolutionary Marxism, and to violate class principles in supporting a class-collaborationist foreign policy. It has set them on a course that, if they do not break with it, will lead them to become satellites of Stalinism.

Now we also understand why the *compañeros* needed to impose vertical structures on the organization, to wipe out internal democracy, and to make discussion impossible. Now it is clear why they needed anti-Leninist organizational methods. To carry out such a break from Trotskyist, revolutionary Marxist principles required that the ranks of the organization not have the slightest possibility to question it.

Up until January 2, the possibility of this PCM-MOS-LS(TM) agreement was not even suspected, let alone *openly* considered, in what was then the unified organization. When did discussions about it begin? Could the ranks discuss and evaluate whether they accepted such a policy? Were they able to evaluate if what they were getting in return for the capitulation to Stalinism was worth it? Could they discuss whether they agreed on supporting the government of Laos or the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)?

The *compañeros* also have to explain why they carried out *secret negotiations* with the PCM. To start with, *when did they begin?* How many discussions were there prior to the agreement and what was their character? How was the joint platform arrived at? What were the differences, proposals, amendments? Why are they willing to hide

such differences from public knowledge of the workers? Why was it justifiable to sign a program with which they say they have "some" differences on foreign policy?

Their error in principle is made worse by not explaining either how they reached this agreement or what their fundamental differences are (that is, if there still are some) with the PCM and MOS. What differentiates them from these two "revolutionary organizations"? Why did the negotiations have to be secret?

The *compañeros* of the Liga Socialista (TM) have embarked on an extremely dangerous course. Their policy of "intervention in the class struggle" on the basis of "astute maneuvers," leaving aside the question of program, has already led them to accept the PCM's program for the popular front, the program the CP is using to try to convince "progressive" forces to participate in its class-collaborationist plan.

They are doing this when the campaign of the PCM and the front is not legal; when it will not win over millions, let alone thousands, of workers; and when it does not have the slightest chance of succeeding or yielding some parliamentary seats, offering the possibility of agitation for socialist ideas.

What will happen when the PCM manages to attract "progressive" bourgeois forces on the basis of this program, when the popular front wins over millions, and when there is the possibility that its election campaign will succeed, as happened, for example, in Chile?

If the Liga Socialista (TM) accepts the program of the popular front now, in return for a few bits of publicity, what would they do in such a situation? Sacrificing program in order to carry out "astute little maneuvers" in the electoral arena—the class enemy's territory!—has set them on a course that leads to abandoning the territory of revolutionary Marxism.

On the other hand, the PCM has not abandoned its class-collaborationist plan of building a united organization of the forces "that support democracy and socialism." It has merely discovered that it is not yet in a position to implement it.

It must show the bourgeoisie that it is an "important force" with the capacity to mobilize broad sectors behind it, and that it can count on a chorus of "useful idiots" made up of left sects and groups. Likewise, it must show that it is capable of using proposals and agreements to maneuver with other important political organizations of the working class, thus helping to lead them away from a correct policy on any important issue.

For the present it has already been provided with the caboose for its election campaign and for publicizing its program. The leaders of the PCM know how to be patient. After more than fifty-five years of

10. Official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist party.

11. Leader of the Sindicato de Trabajadores y Empleados de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma (Union of Personnel of the National Autonomous University), who is linked to the Stalinists.

12. Well-known art critic linked to the Communist party.

experience they have learned the art of betrayal, as well as the science of winning over to its politics those who are willing to be fooled.

Vote for Campa Without Supporting His Program

Previously and in other articles we have stated and explained our position on the elections and the PCM campaign. We call on the workers and the workers organizations to vote for Valentín Campa against the bourgeois candidate, José López Portillo, to demonstrate our class independence. At the same time we in no way endorse the program that he and his party defend, which we believe incorrect and dangerous. Moreover, we are willing to debate his electoral platform with him publicly.

In these elections, at the same time that we call for a class vote we will also try to publicize and explain our program, and to

publicize and seek support for the mobilizations that occur during the period. We will put forward our solutions and make clear the need for a workers and farmers government to implement them.

Moreover, we believe it is necessary to call for the formation of a united front of all workers organizations to encourage *mobilizations and actions* around the immediate obstacle of the Federal Election Law.

Something that stands out in the manifesto of the PCM, MOS, and Liga Socialista (TM) is that they do not call for the carrying out of any concrete action. They do not call for a mobilization around one or more concrete demands. They do not even challenge the undemocratic Federal Election Law by denouncing the fact that legally they do not have the right to carry out their campaign. Nor do they call on all workers and democratic organizations to fight to defend their right to carry it out.

A united front around concrete needs and events, a front for action and mobilization around a burning issue, does much more to educate and promote the unity of the working class than does any declaration of good intentions.

In the current situation a very real, concrete possibility is the establishment of a front for the political rights of the workers, against the undemocratic Federal Election Law, and in support of legal recognition for all political parties. We urge all workers organizations to unite with us in forming such a front. We call on the "astute" compañeros of the Liga Socialista (TM) to stop the "little maneuvers" that only lead them to move away from revolutionary Marxism, and to join us in carrying out this urgent task of the workers and revolutionary movement. □

ON ELECTORAL COALITIONS: THE 'UNITY OF THE LEFT' AND THE FIR

[Following is a translation of an article titled "Sobre las Coaliciones Electorales: La 'Unidad de la Izquierda' y el FIR," which appeared in the March 15, 1976, issue of *Clave*.]

By Pedro José

A great deal has been said about the need for the Mexican left to unite and wage a joint struggle during the upcoming elections.

It would be of value to go over some of the limits to unity—which at times has been so contested and at others so demanded—over which different currents hold differing positions.

Throughout our brief history we have been the first to encourage unity among the forces that claim to be part of the workers movement.

We have frequently opposed sectarian actions that impede this unity. We are convinced that it is not so easy to do away with a whole series of primitive practices inherent to the Mexican left, which have led to many errors.

But it is necessary to differentiate between the romantic position of "unity of the left" in the abstract and the position we consider correct—unity on the basis of concrete points, without subordinating the program of the individual organizations.

It is important to keep this in mind during our polemics not only with the coalition of the Partido Comunista Mexicano [PCM—Mexican Communist party], Movimiento de Organización Socialista [MOS—Movement of Socialist

Organization], and the Liga Socialista-Tendencia Militante [LS-TM—Socialist League-Militant Tendency], but also with the recently formed FIR [Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Left Front], which has been promoted by the comrades of the GCI [Grupo Comunista Internacionalista—Internationalist Communist Group].

In the first case, a serious error has been made by the LS(TM). It has signed an electoral program with a traditionally reformist organization that has led the Mexican workers movement to an infinite number of defeats (consider the Cárdenas regime, the CP's support to the right-winger Miguel Alemán, its intervention in the 1968 student movement and in the strike of Fundidora de Monterrey, etc.)

This has not been limited to the national level, as in the case of the PCM. Since its birth as an international current, Stalinism has led the world proletariat to defeat after defeat (Spain in 1936, France in 1936, Chile in 1973, etc.).

The PCM's behavior stems from the simple fact that it protects the interests of the encrusted Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR, which has usurped the power of the masses of workers who carried out the revolution of 1917.

The LS(TM) not only made the error of signing an electoral program with the reformists. It also endorsed the entire program of the PCM (they were not even allowed to include any of their own demands) and its methods. We have previously explained in our newspaper why we consider this program to be completely inadequate.

If people think and maintain that we are seeking a historic demarcation, they are right. We cannot confuse our banners with other currents in something of such extreme importance as who should govern this country and what methods the workers must use to take power.

It may be that the LS(TM) and the MOS have reached the conclusion that the PCM's program is adequate for running the country. If this is the case, we would consider that they have reached more than a tactical agreement. A strategic agreement would have been reached. If such is the case, we would suggest that they unify. No obstacle could be in their way.

As for the FIR, we believe that the GCI has good intentions, but we disagree with their position.

Among other things, we believe that it reflects confusion about what a united front is. This concept refers to joint activity around a concrete issue and not around a governmental program, which involves programmatic political concepts at national and international levels.

Moreover, as we have said before, the only aim of socialist electoral activity is to explain what type of government and what program—what series of steps—would solve the most pressing problems of Mexico.

This rules out forming a front with other left organizations. For forming such a front would mean programmatic agreement to such an extent that there would be no justification for the existence of separate organizations.

If the aim of the GCI comrades in promoting the FIR is to use a series of centrist and liberal groups to publicize the GCI program—as the PCM did with the LS(TM) and the MOS—they have a surprise coming.

To try to transform the "new mass vanguard" into an "adequate instrument" to promote the revolutionary program is something more than utopian.

The revolutionary program is not only a list of formulations. It is also a series of concepts that cannot be divorced from the party that puts them forward and carries them out in practice.

If we can reach agreement with the centrists on these concepts and on the type of party needed to carry them out, it is obvious that they have stopped being centrists (or that we have become centrists ourselves), and that we should invite them to join our ranks. In such a case, our aim would not be to form an electoral front but to assimilate some groups of centrists.

It should be noted that the way to assimilate centrists is by educating them and integrating them into the party, not by making concessions to them and trying to offer them special favors.

On the other hand, if no agreement is reached on programmatic concepts, it is clear that when they put forward our program they will interpret it and explain it in their own way. The result will be to nullify our programmatic positions and what our organization represents.

We stress again that unity of the left can only be based on concrete issues to mobilize the masses, without mixing in the programmatic concepts of the individual organizations.

We propose the formation of a front against the undemocratic Ley Federal Electoral (Federal Election Law), which restricts freedom of organization and expression, and affects all of us.

In the electoral arena we will participate by supporting the *candidacy* of Campa against López Portillo—the candidate of the bourgeoisie—and by explaining *our* program. We believe we could do this jointly with the GCI, with whom we are trying to implement a unification, if they were to drop their position on the FIR.

WHY MEXICAN WORKERS NEED THEIR OWN PARTY

[The following article appeared in the May 15-31 issue of *Clave*, a revolutionary-socialist fortnightly published in Mexico. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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The First National Conference of Worker, Peasant, and Poor People's Opposition has been called by the Democratic Tendency of the Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores Electricistas de la República Mexicana.¹ A central aspect of its proceedings will be a discussion of a draft of "Programmatic Points." This "draft" was drawn up by a commission formed in the so-called coordinating committee based in Mexico City.

This first conference is valuable in that it represents an attempt to bring together currents supporting democracy for the oppressed.

The saying "In unity there is strength" is very apt. The trade-union bureaucrats, the bosses, and the corrupt politicians who represent them in the government are well organized. This is not the case with the antibureaucratic, anticapitalist opposition.

Some of the most general aspects of the struggles of this opposition are contained in the draft of "Programmatic Points," such as the right of workers to place in command of their union or section the leadership they feel represents their interests. Another is the struggle to improve living and working conditions, which is blocked at every step by the bureaucrats and the leaders who have sold out.

But there are several fundamental questions the draft does not touch on that should not be treated lightly. These are life-and-death questions for the conference, as well as for the opposition currents and for militant trade unions.

First, there is the fight for the political independence of the workers. This is the central question that runs the risk of being ignored.

What Political Independence Means

Let us begin with the example of the electoral fraud in the rail workers union in early 1974.

The Movimiento Sindical Ferrocarrilero,² which represented the opposition to the Mariano Gómez Villanueva clique, had overwhelming support, so much that in some sections—like the one in Matías Romero, Oaxaca—the bureaucrats did not have enough signatures to put up a slate.

1. SUTERM (United Electrical Workers Union of the Mexican Republic).

2. MSF (Railway Union Movement).

Without the open support of the federal government, which included sending troops to silence the militant railroad workers, the bureaucrats would not have had a chance to "win."

This question is not confined solely to the trade unions. Responsibility for the swindles, lack of democracy, the daily assassinations and violence committed against workers, peasants, and students falls fundamentally on the PRI³ government.

There are still those who believe that in these struggles there are three camps: the enemy, represented by the bosses and the bureaucrats; the masses of workers and their allies, who are fighting for their rights; and an "arbitrator" standing above the two others, represented by the government.

But this is not the way things happen. The gains the masses have made have been won by their resistance and organization; they are not the result of the benevolence of the bourgeoisie's representatives in the government. From them we have gotten only repression and more repression.

If the workers had their own government, a government of the workers and peasants that would defend their rights and interests all the way, massacres like those October 2, 1968,⁴ or June 10, 1971,⁵ would not occur. Nor would the killings of peasants that occur regularly in this country.

The murders and violence committed against the workers and their allies have been inspired directly or indirectly by the PRI government.

Many persons will tell us that the fight for a government of the legitimate representatives of the workers and peasants is a long-term fight. Even if we grant that, we can say that trade-union democracy and better living and working conditions must be fought for here and now. The problem that cannot be avoided is that the trade-union struggle and the political struggle go hand in hand.

Isn't it inconsistent to fight on the trade-union level for a leadership that represents the workers and then to vote on the

3. Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary party).

4. Hundreds of students were gunned down by federal troops while attending a peaceful rally in Mexico City in support of a student strike at the Autonomous National University of Mexico.

5. Rightist commandos opened fire on a demonstration of 8,000 persons in Mexico City, who were demonstrating for the release of political prisoners.

governmental level for a representative of the interests of the big bankers?

The fight for political independence of the workers is not a fight for the future. It is a struggle that must be waged right now if we do not want presidential favors or offers of committees and public posts to corrupt the newly emerging leaders.

Although the draft "Programmatic Points" contains a whole series of social, political, and economic demands, this central point is missing.

Such demands cannot be won without explaining and educating on the answer to the following question: Who should rule, the corrupt politicians or the representatives of the workers and their allies?

The answer to this question becomes even more immediate, since the compañeros organizing the First Conference explain in the magazine *Solidaridad* that the meeting is to have a political character. The central political question, the one that stands above all others, is who will rule, who will administer the state.

How to Begin to Solve This Question

The solution to this question begins with a simple point—clarity with regard to the political parties.

Can one speak of a policy of struggle in Mexico without calling for a break with the PRI? We do not think so. The gravest weakness that plagues the workers and peasants movement is *collaboration* with the enemy, both on the trade-union level (where it is known as bureaucratism) and on the political level, with the PRI or the PAN.⁶

In order to take the first resolute steps of independent political action, the workers must begin to build their own political party, a party of the workers based on the labor movement and on the struggles of the great masses of the oppressed.

The main editorial in the April issue of *Solidaridad* said on page 6: "The democratic tendency in the electrical workers union serves as the center of working-class and popular opposition, filling the vacuum left by the absence of a workers party, which no one has discovered how to build."

That vacuum has to be filled, and there is no better time to do it than during the election period.

The Obstacles

It is obvious that there are innumerable obstacles to the formation of such a political party. But these are not precisely the same as the difficulties that stand in the way of achieving trade-union democracy—the degree of organization of the bourgeoisie, bureaucrats, and corrupt rulers, which includes the ability to call on armed institutions.

However, these obstacles were insufficient to curb the power of the telephone

6. Partido de Acción Nacional (National Action party).

workers movement in the last strike. Our problem is not to explain the enemy's strength to the workers; they already know that. It is to make clear that the Mexican labor movement would have the power to eradicate all the problems that plague it if it were organized on the trade-union and political levels.

A question could arise here about the obstacle presented by the undemocratic trade-union statutes that make affiliation to the PRI obligatory for all workers who are members of unions controlled by the party. This is one of the instruments the bosses and bureaucrats use to victimize militant workers.

The majority of organized workers do not have the right to choose what party they want to belong to. In return for the right to earn their living with their labor—unlike the thieving parasites in the government—the workers are forced by the bureaucrats, the company, and the government to give up their right to think as they wish.

But to demand the right of the workers to join the party of their choice does not constitute a crime, no matter how you look at it.

This point—winning the right of the workers to think as they please, without any ideological restrictions whatever—is correctly emphasized in the draft present-

ed to the First Conference.

How can the struggle for a party of the toiling masses be carried out in action? In the same way that many workers initiated their own struggles despite the fact that organizing trade-union currents and tendencies is formally barred by the undemocratic, bureaucratic statutes. When possible, they do it openly; when that is not possible—owing to the relationship of forces—they do it in other ways. This is nothing new for the labor movement.

The first step toward forming a labor party of the toiling masses would be for the First Conference to put up a candidate for president of the republic.

We think that the candidacy of Compañero Rafael Galván⁷ would inspire immense support among the dissatisfied Mexican population, despite the fact that there is little time to campaign.

The committees, groups, or formations supporting this candidacy, along with the First Conference, would lay the initial basis for a workers party.

This is a giant step and for that reason not easy. It involves nothing less than the emergence of a current with massive support challenging the power of big capital and the bureaucrats on the terrain of working-class political independence.

We think that as the combined forces of the imperialists, the bosses, their government, and bureaucratic trade-union leaders exert more pressure, such a step becomes increasingly urgent. Without it, the draft "Programmatic Points" falls short—attacking the effects without attacking

the causes of the oppression suffered by the workers.

The political shortcomings of the "Points" draft affect its view of workers struggles. These struggles and their achievements can be smashed to bits if there is no overall vision of the meaning of the workers struggle.

In the fight for the very points listed in the draft, two further central questions will arise—although, like the need for political independence, they are not mentioned in the "Points."

When the workers demand their rights, the first question to arise will be, Who should control industry; who decides on raising wages, increasing or decreasing production, and laying off and hiring personnel?

The second question is the right of the workers to defend themselves against aggression. Workers and peasants are a majority of the population and they have the right to defend themselves against attacks by bureaucratic or bourgeois minorities. As the struggle of SUTERM has shown, these attacks are real, do occur, and will increase if they are not denounced and stopped in time. The only answer to them is the mobilization of the masses.

The Mexican workers need leadership. They are seeking it, and the First Conference can provide it if it puts forward a consistent program.

Let's not go halfway; the Mexican workers need their own political party. □

7. Central leader of the Democratic Tendency of SUTERM.

IN 'LA UNIDAD': GERSHENSON'S VIEW OF THE CONFERENCE

[Following are translations of two articles that appeared in the June 5, 1976, issue of *Clave*. They were titled: "En 'La Unidad': Gershenson Opina sobre la Conferencia," and "Respuesta a Gershenson: Es Necesario Romper con el PRI."]

The following is an article that appeared in the May 24 issue of *La Unidad*. Antonio Gershenson, the author, is one of the main leaders of the current that publishes this newspaper, and of the atomic-energy workers section of the United Electrical Workers Union of the Mexican Republic (SUTERM).

We believe the article is of interest to the readers of *Clave* since it expresses the opinion of an important current in the Democratic Tendency of the SUTERM, on what that current considers to be the advances and experiences of the First National Conference of Worker, Peasant, and Poor People's Opposition (CNIOP).

* * *

By Antonio Gershenson

The First National Conference of Worker, Peasant, and Poor People's Opposition was a great advance. This can be evaluated on the level of program, organization, and action from the information in this issue.

It was also, however, a great experience for the mass organizations that participated in the event. Trade-union, peasant, student, and tenant-farmer groups had a great collective experience which will permit even greater advances, much greater and deeper than those achieved at the First Conference.

Various small groups tried to capture the Conference, politically destroy its presiding committee and the main participating organizations, and control the situation. This was done with the declared political objective of *pushing the Conference into a confrontation* with the state, deprecating the advances the meeting was called for.

Different methods were used, including the distribution of newspapers and leaflets with attacks on the Democratic Tendency of the SUTERM, with calls for a break with all organizations having anything to do with the PRI (several peasant delegations by belonging to the CNC automatically belong to the PRI), and with head-on attacks on the national revolutionary proposals, etc. In addition, a nighttime meeting was called to organize the confronta-

tion; students snuck into the trade-union, peasant, and tenant-farmer assemblies; numerous individuals were infiltrated by persons who left the auditorium with several passes belonging to people who were still inside and who distributed the passes to the infiltrators.

All this lay the basis for carrying out a provocation. With procedural pretexts, all of which could have been taken up by a motion in any case, the infiltrators and their accomplices raised a scandal to impede the discussion and attempt to sabotage the Conference. Seeing this, however, the delegates from almost all the mass organizations reacted in a united way. Not leaving an opening for the provocation to continue, the Conference continued to the programmatic discussion and concluded its work successfully.

This provocation did not succeed; but it was able to begin partly because of the attitude of some of those attending the Conference who were more concerned with a distribution of posts favorable to them than with the success of the Conference. Fortunately, seeing the provocation in progress, the majority of them put this initial concern aside and concentrated on preventing the Conference from being sabotaged when it was almost over. Moreover, by proposing later that the Conference go to the airport for an ill-considered confrontation, these delegates only played into the hands of those who wanted to sabotage the Conference, although they did not pull off the confrontation.

We said that it all represents a great collective experience for the participating mass movements, because the provocation came precisely from elements and tiny groups that represented nothing. Now it is clear for the mass union, peasant, tenant-farmer, and student movements that it is not possible to open the door to just anyone. It is clear that it is necessary to have a sorting-out process. It is clear that not just any membership card can be accepted.

In this situation, future advances will be much, much greater than those achieved up to now. The weight of the masses was felt by the shouters and the tiny groups. But the mass groupings also learned what can be expected from such "allies."

If despite everything, the weight of the truly representative organizations imposed unanimity for the resolutions as we have reported, in conditions which make provocations impossible, then what won't we be able to expect?

REPLY TO GERSHENSON:

IT IS NECESSARY TO BREAK WITH THE PRI

At the recent National Conference of Worker, Peasant, and Poor People's Opposition, an important debate arose around the need for political action independent of the

schemes and maneuvers of the PRI and its government. This is a vital question for the workers movement and its allies.

In the article by Gershenson that we are publishing in this issue of *Clave*, the author prefers to avoid discussion of this problem. He devotes seven of the nine paragraphs in his article to uttering accusations and epithets against some of the delegations attending the Conference.

The article *does not* discuss the advances and experiences that can be obtained for the struggle against the employers and the union gangsters, contrary to what his title—"The National Conference: Advances and Experiences"—might suggest. For Gershenson the main advances and experiences of the Conference are to be found in the area of the struggle against forces that have been part of the struggles for democratic rights, groups he brands as "provocateurs."

In other words, the article is a good example of how a serious discussion can be evaded. For Gershenson, it does not matter what the delegations that supposedly held a "nighttime meeting" to provoke a confrontation during the conference really said. He doesn't bother to give us a single example of the alleged "newspapers and leaflets with attacks on the Democratic Tendency of the SUTERM."

What interests him in this article is to use the label of "provocateurs" in order to then say that it is necessary to restrict the rights of some of the delegations to discuss and present their points of view.

To do this he resorts to an old trick: shift the debate and put absurd arguments into the mouth of the opponent. For example, he says that "the declared political objective" of these provocateurs was "*pushing the Conference into a confrontation with the state*" (Gershenson's emphasis).

What is he talking about? Did anyone propose a *physical* confrontation with the forces of the capitalist state? There is something very odd about such a "declared political objective"—none of the delegations proposed such a thing at the conference.

If, in the quoted sentence, Gershenson is really talking about the *political* struggle against the capitalist and gangster forces, he is forgetting the content of the report of SUTERM's Democratic Tendency itself, which can be found in Number 160 of *Solidaridad* (a copy costs only three pesos, and the report mentioned follows page 16).

The report of the Democratic Tendency says: "The program of the Conference should have a socialist perspective. But, it must be said that the only guarantee of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat is its organization as a class; that is, forging its own political party. This is indispensable."

Perhaps Gershenson developed differences with this report and therefore tells us that some people introduced ideas that detracted from the purposes of the conference. Now he has called for a crusade against all kinds of "provocateurs," including those who used similar statements in the Democratic Tendency report.

For our part, we agree that it is absolutely necessary for the workers to rely only on their own political party.

This political party must be different and independent from bourgeois political forces. Otherwise it would be a *caricature* of a workers party. Isn't that true?

No one proposed that the cane-cutters who attended the conference should leave the meeting because every member of the National Peasant Federation (CNC) is a member of the PRI (as Gershenson insinuated). That is not the question that is being debated, although Gershenson thinks that in the struggle against "provocateurs" it is useful to invent the positions of one's opponent.

The majority of unionized workers and organized peasants are forced to belong to the PRI, and this is used by labor gangsters and bosses to victimize dissidents. If an opposition group in any union affiliated to the PRI declares that it is against this party, the gangsters can formally expel it from the union. Obviously, this represents an antidemocratic obstacle to forming a workers party independent of the PRI.

But does this mean that in the struggle for trade-union democracy we are going to *obey* the PRI leadership and the government?

Who did the bourgeois government support in the electrical workers strike, with a big display of cops that surrounded the demonstration of the Democratic Tendency last March 20?

The workers need to be organized independently of the PRI in order to consistently make progress toward their own goals. This does not mean that they should leave the unions affiliated to this party; it means they should remain inside them to fight the undemocratic statutory provisions that force them to belong to the PRI.

If the relationship of forces permits it, one can call openly for the union or central labor council that one belongs to to remove the mandatory affiliation to the PRI from its statutes, and even call for it to come out in favor of the formation of a workers party.

If the relationship of forces does not permit that, then this will have to be done in the same way that many opposition groups are forced to operate, due to the gangster repression.

But we cannot escape the obvious: In the struggle for trade-union democracy and independence it is necessary to form a political force independent of the bourgeois party and government.

The workers need their own party and it must be independent of the PRI. The National Front for Mass Action (FNAP), which resulted from the conference, should take the initiative in this direction.

The struggle will not be won by compromises with Luis Echeverría or José López Portillo, who indeed are *declared* enemies of the forces which attended the conference and who need the trade-union gangsters in order to continue controlling the country.

We don't think that Gershenson believes there is some advantage for the workers in belonging to the PRI; we hope that in future articles he will be able to express himself more soberly and objectively. Accusations of "provocateurs" are harmful to discussion inside the labor movement, especially since he deduces from his argumentation that free discussion within the FNAP must be restricted.

A VOTE FOR CAMPA, BUT NOT FOR HIS PROGRAM

[Following is a translation of an article, titled "Un Voto a Campa, pero no a su Programa," which appeared in the June 19, 1976 issue of *Clave*.]

Election time in Mexico is coming to a close. The official presidential candidate, José López Portillo, is the only one on the ballot. Consequently, he will win the election although he may get the votes of only a minority of the electorate.

The only candidate of the left is Valentín Campa, nominated by a coalition of the Partido Comunista Mexicano [PCM—Mexican Communist party], the Tendencia Militante of the Liga Socialista [TM-LS—Militant Tendency of the Socialist League], and the Movimiento de Organización Socialista [MOS—Movement for Socialist Organization]. Votes for Campa will not be counted, inasmuch as his campaign is considered illegal and subject to sanctions by the Federal Electoral Act.

The traditional opposition party, the Partido de Acción Nacional [PAN—National Action party] was paralyzed by internal divisions and did not put up a candidate. One frustrated aspirant for the PAN nomination, Pablo Emilio Madero, has decided to run as an individual, without being on the ballot. But because PAN and its supporters have the image of being a caricature of an opposition, and because their internal divisions took all impetus out of the campaign, Madero's candidacy has had no impact at all.

Campa has received more publicity from the press than Madero, for example, who has been virtually ignored.

In the absence of a candidate representing the independent workers movement, we support the candidacy of Campa as against that of the capitalist candidate, José López Portillo. We do this in order to pose the need for political action independent of the capitalist party, and in spite of the fact that we do not support either the program or the politics proposed by the PCM-dominated coalition.

Undemocratic Elections

Fundamentally, the undemocratic character of these elections must be recognized. They have absolutely nothing to do with the rights of citizens to vote for their own rulers.

The old ambition of the ruling class in Mexico—to achieve control of the population through a single party run from the top and legitimized through elections—appears to have succeeded overwhelmingly from the formal point of view.

The Federal Electoral Act was created to guarantee this objective. It may seem strange to many, but the laws approved by the Juan Carlos regime in Spain permit more liberties than the Mexican Electoral Act with respect to the right of association.

The most important enemies of democracy are neither outside the government nor the PRI, nor do they constitute only a sinister minority inside these groups.

These elections, and all the apparatus which runs them, are not a simple imperfection in the system supported by the PRI. They constitute an essential piece in the strategy of the capitalists and their government aimed at controlling a population that is more and more discontented.

It is not a coincidence that the draft for the Federal Election Act was presented to the Congress of the Union by Luis Echeverría himself.

Independent Political Action

Calling for a vote for candidates of capitalist parties and the collaboration with the enemy that accompanies this policy have proven to be extremely harmful to the Mexican workers movement.

Those who promote this policy, like the Partido Popular Socialista [PPS—Popular Socialist party], always argue that it is more "realistic" to support a Miguel Alemán or a José López Portillo because the official candidates, in the end, will always win. These collaborationists think that if we offer our support, hopefully they will remember us when they reach Los Pinos.

The scheme appears very attractive when electoral propaganda is played at full blast, promising reforms, improvements for the Indians, "workerism," "agrarianism," etc. But once he takes office, the candidate follows the line of the pinnacles of political power in Mexico, that is, the politics of big business, nationally and internationally.

Workers, peasants and their allies among the students, tenant farmers, and women need their own political action with their own demands and their own program, in pursuit of a government to defend their interests. They do not need the capitalist politicians who, in the essential questions like trade-union democracy and agrarian reform, represent interests contrary to those of the oppressed.

On the basis of his campaign against the capitalist candidate, we call for a vote for Valentín Campa.

An Ambiguous Program

But, at the same time, it is important to point out that we believe that the politics and objectives defended by Campa and the coalition behind his campaign are mistaken.

This political line and objectives are contained in the common program of the PCM-MOS-LS(TM) coalition. In an interview in the May 4 issue of *Revista de Revistas* with Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, general secretary of the PCM, we found a more complete explanation.

The interview shows that the PCM's position has changed only with respect to tactics since the epoch in which they called for a vote for Miguel Alemán, the official candidate in the 1946 elections.

Martínez Verdugo's central error—the same error the PCM fell into in 1946—is to consider that there are two options within the present government—a "good" one and

a "bad" one. Or, as he puts it: "One is a democratic solution; the other is a hardened authoritarianism. And there are forces seeking the latter solution."

The PRI government, not the dark "forces" of Martínez Verdugo, is the most important enemy of democratic rights in Mexico. The "hardened authoritarianism" was instituted decades ago. Therefore, the PCM's scheme is absurd; it only justifies a policy that looks to aid the "good" side of the capitalist government.

To combat the "bad" side (the danger of "hardened authoritarianism" and to achieve what he calls "a democratic leadership of the state" (help the "good" side), the PCM proposes a policy of what they call "broad alliances."

This is the policy the PCM used to form the coalition with the MOS and the TM of the LS, and Martínez Verdugo laments at the end of his interview that other forces, such as the PPS and the Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores [PMT—Mexican Workers party], have not taken advantage of the elections.

Martínez Verdugo thinks that the so-called "democratic" forces should also be integrated in a policy of "broad alliances": "Among these, for example, we include the forces that are rejuvenating the church. For any meaningful change in the country, they must be taken very much into account and be included in any strategy for the formation of a new bloc of forces, which is what the left should aspire to."

He also mentions the "patriotic democratic" forces within the army, progressive sectors of business, and

"some tendencies in the PRI that can be considered to be an official left and that are now becoming reactivated."

One of the components of the PCM coalition—the Militant Tendency of the Socialist League—has argued that the aims of the coalition are revolutionary and that the coalition is for a workers government. For example, on page 10, No. 40 of their newspaper, *El Socialista*, we find the following passage, describing part of a speech by TM leader Ricardo Hernández: "Does anyone reach the conclusion that we are for reforming the system when they read our program?" he asked. Hundreds of voices answered 'No!'—followed by the chant: 'Struggle, struggle is the road—for a workers and farmers government.'"

Perhaps TM has as its goal a workers government. But in the aforementioned interview Martínez Verdugo makes it clear that the PCM has very different goals, which are those proposed in the coalition's program.

"In our opinion, what the left should propose now is a struggle for a democratic leadership of the state, for a democratic leadership in national affairs. . . ." Of course, they make it clear that the left should not be under the government's leadership, as does the PPS, and that it should be organized in an autonomous manner. But the goals of the "broad alliances" are neither the struggle for a workers government nor independent political action.

As we see it, Martínez Verdugo makes it clear that he seeks to collaborate with one wing of the capitalist forces to push it toward a "democratic leadership of the state."

This policy makes Campa's program one of collaboration with the capitalists and, therefore, we cannot support his platform.

APPROACHING THE ELECTIONS: IS THE COALITION OR ITS PROGRAM REFORMIST?

[Following is a translation of an article titled "Ante las Elecciones: ¿Es Reformista la Coalición o su Programa?" which appeared in the February 15, 1976, issue of *El Socialista*.]

By Ricardo Hernández

At the Liga Socialista's Second Congress a majority resolved to do everything possible to immerse itself in the mass movements. To carry this out we developed a line that is at once a mass line and a line of intervention.

It is a mass line because independently of the fact that those we recruit to our party are in the vanguard of the movements, our line is oriented towards the masses and not toward the most advanced sectors. It is a line of intervention because we are laying aside our old position of limiting our commitment to the movements to moral support and one or two articles in our paper.

This line, in fact, cost us a split. We evaluate the line to follow in regard to the elections in terms of this orientation.

We view participation in the elections as a tactic, not a

principle. We participate in them only if it advances the mass movement, which is a revolutionary principle.

In analyzing the Mexican situation, we saw that in terms of the needs of the masses the most important thing was to form a front of the organizations that identify with the working class in order to further the independence of the working class in the face of the bourgeois alternative.

This meant taking on the task of encouraging unity on the basis of a class-struggle program. Our participation was, and is, governed by the following criteria:

- a) As was already stated, the campaign should encourage the mass movement.
- b) It should not create illusions in the electoral process, since it is a bourgeois process.
- c) To arrive at a principled programmatic accord.

We believe these three conditions are met in this campaign. Therefore we ask our critics (the most serious ones, since there are others who believe that participating in the elections is a breach of revolutionary principles): Are these three criteria sufficient for participation? If not, what other criteria would they propose?

Perhaps some think that these criteria have not been met in the Coalition in which the Liga Socialista is participating with the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) and the Movimiento de Organización Socialista (MOS). Therefore we will show that, in fact, our commitment is 100 percent principled.

The Campaign as a Promoter of the Revolutionary Movement

Presenting an independent, left-wing candidate in a country like Mexico begins to awaken the interest of certain sectors. In this country where there is no mass party with a leftist or even reformist orientation, wherever we go we find that people are anxious for the forces on the left to get together.

The PRI, with its puppet rivals like the PAN, can do and undo what it wants to, not so much because of the illusions it awakens, but rather because of its bureaucratic control, its ability to deliver. The PPS, the Partido Popular Socialista, which could have been the pole of attraction for the currents that are for the working class, submissively and subserviently prostrates itself before the PRI.

Who then can provide this alternative to the PRI, the party of the bosses? Who can fill this need to unify the struggle on a national level, a need already understood by many?

In Mexico a rise in the class struggle is taking place; there are continually more workers' struggles. Revolutionaries have an obligation to politicize these struggles and to try to centralize them. We believe that at this time the best way to attempt this is through the elections. That is, to link the economic and trade-union struggles with the need to struggle against the party of the bosses, and at the same time to try to link these struggles to each other through the election campaign.

What better way is there to do this than through the formation of support committees for the coalition of the left? If this is not the best way at our disposal for carrying out this aim of politicizing and centralizing the struggles, what other way do the comrades who criticize us propose? To push soviets? Perhaps the task we propose isn't valid?

Are We Creating Illusions in the Electoral Process?

There isn't one Mexican who doesn't know who the next president of the republic will be. In this period it is practically impossible to put forward the idea that the changes so urgently needed will be achieved through the elections.

Everyone knows that the PRI always wins and that when it loses, it steals the elections. Even the PAN, when it raises the idea that through the elections it will defeat the PRI, has to present this as a task for the distant future, as a historic task.

The three groups in the Electoral Coalition clearly view the campaign as a way to strengthen themselves in terms of membership and political influence. Neither in its platform nor in its declarations has the Coalition raised the idea that the elections are the road to change.

The electoral platform clearly states:

"The PCM, MOS, and LS recognize that the elections scheduled for the first Sunday of next July will not decide who will become president of the republic, nor the

fundamental composition of Congress. Given the undemocratic way in which the electoral system is set up, the question of who will be the next president has already been decided. The highest circles of government will also handpick the vast majority of deputies and senators.

"Consequently, these revolutionary organizations are not going to contest the presidency and the congressional seats in the polling booth. They are taking part in the electoral campaign with the aim of helping to raise the consciousness of the masses, whose rights it is their duty to defend. At the same time, they seek to strengthen the independent movement of the people, with the aim of enabling it to influence the nation's political life in a decisive way."

If our critics find a single statement that fosters a single illusion among the masses of exploited regarding the elections, they should point it out. If they can't find anything like that, they should tell us whether or not it is correct to use this electoral process as a forum to denounce the electoral process itself. Or do they believe that the masses will listen with more interest to those who abstain, whether from the elections or from the coalition, than to those who participate from the inside? If that is how it is, tell us so.

Is the Platform a Principled Agreement?

Some of our critics have said that our electoral program is reformist. If that were true, we would be in clear violation of the principles of revolutionary Marxism. To participate in the elections with a reformist program would warrant our expulsion from the ranks of the Fourth International.

It would mean that we are trying to create illusions that the capitalist system can be reformed through elections. That is, we would be pushing the idea that it is not necessary to destroy the capitalist system, that it should be reformed over a given period of time. This would indeed be a betrayal of the working class and would earn us the epithet of reformists. However, our program clearly states:

"The above represents only the fundamental points that make up the broad electoral platform of the forces of the left that have united in electoral political action. The objectives of struggle they set forward can be won only by a united and organized movement of the masses, by the independent action of the working class, and by an alliance between the working class, the peasantry, and other sectors of the people. Some points represent demands on the present bourgeois government. Others, which affect above all the property and economic interests of big business, will only be fulfilled with a revolutionary change in which political power passes to the hands of the working people, under the leadership of the working class, and with a reorganization of society leading toward socialism."

Does this create illusions that the capitalist system can be reformed? If not, why the epithet reformist? Moreover, none of the three organizations that make up the coalition has hidden its socialist objectives in the campaign.

For our part, we are aware that the platform is insufficient, that it is not the revolutionary program of Trotskyism. However, we decided to support this class-struggle program because it is a basis for unity; because we feel it is more important to join forces than to

propagandize around some points of our program that are not included in the platform—such as the creation of soviets or political revolution in the USSR.

Do our critics believe that propagandizing around those points—or others that aren't included—is more important than the unity in action of the forces of the left? If the goal is solely propaganda, then they are correct.

If the goal is to participate in and push forward the mass movement, then they are totally wrong.

In fact, it is like this: Those who have decided it is not necessary to participate in the coalition even though it is necessary to support Campa are more interested in their historic or ideological differences with other currents on the left, especially the PCM, than they are in promoting unity of the forces that can provide the working-class alternative to the PRI. If this isn't true, why are they outside the Coalition? Perhaps the class character of the coalition and the type of government it proposes are not clear?

On the other hand, there are a series of points we don't support and we made this known in the platform. We believe these points don't stand in the way of an accord since they are not basic to the campaign. However, it is important to explain why we don't support these points.

Regarding entry into OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), the group of nonaligned countries, and support for the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, we are opposed because we don't feel it is our job to tell the bourgeois government how to handle its foreign policy or how to defend itself from imperialism.

Against imperialism's pressure, we propose the mobilization of the masses and the revolution. Regardless of what measures the governments of the dependent countries take, they always, invariably, will succumb to the economic might of imperialism.

Regarding world peace, we believe that it can only be secured after the total defeat of imperialism; that while imperialism exists, peace cannot exist, regardless of how many treaties are signed, or how many disarmament agreements there are between the U.S. and the USSR, because sooner or later the imperialists will break them. On the other hand, we are opposed to the USSR disarming since Soviet arms are a guarantee against imperialism using its atomic capability.

This is our position regarding the elections. We hope to continue the fraternal debate with organizations that seriously express their points of view.

In a subsequent article we will explain how we see these elections contributing to building the party.

"IT DOESN'T MATTER TO US WHETHER THEY COUNT OUR VOTES"—R. HERNANDEZ

INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES FOR DEPUTY LAUNCH CAMPAIGNS

[Following is a translation of an article titled "No nos Importa si nos Cuentan los Votos"—R. Hernández; Se Lanzas los Candidatos Independientes a Diputados." It appeared in the April 1, 1976, issue of *El Socialista*.]

"It doesn't matter to us whether or not they count our votes; the important thing is to advance the independence of the working class in these elections," said Ricardo Hernández, Organizational Secretary of the Liga Socialista [Socialist League], during his speech at the campaign rally to nominate the Coalición de Izquierda's [Left Coalition's] candidates for Deputy.

This rally took place last March 28 at the Salón Riviera, and it drew about a thousand participants: activists from the organizations in the Coalition—the Partido Comunista Mexicano (PCM) [Mexican Communist Party], the Liga Socialista (LS), and the Movimiento de Organización Socialista (MOS) [Movement for Socialist Organization]—as well as a number of workers, students, and a few farmers.

Hernández, official speaker for the Liga Socialista, centered his talk on the criticisms from various angles that have been made against the Left Coalition and its electoral program. He said that some Trotskyists—the "LS's special critics"—have accused the LS of avowing that the PCM is revolutionary. "They have asked us if we think the PCM is revolutionary. To those comrades we say: The Communist Party is more revolutionary than you are, because it is

participating in the electoral process with a class alternative; it is participating in the class struggle." He expressed his disagreement with those comrades who consider themselves revolutionary "because they have a very pretty program, although they don't set foot in the factories."

At this point in his talk, the speaker was interrupted by applause and chants from all those present, such as: "The united left will never be defeated" and "LS-PCM-MOS."

He said that the FIR (Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria [Revolutionary Left Front]) had said that the Coalition's program was reformist. "Does anyone reach the conclusion that we are for reforming the system when they read our program?" he asked. Hundreds of voices answered "No!"—followed by the chant: "Struggle, struggle is the road—for a workers and farmers government." Furthermore, Hernández invited the FIR—which has called for a vote for Valentín Campa, the Coalition's presidential candidate—to join the Coalition while continuing to hold its own program.

In other parts of his talk, the LS speaker denounced the government's attacks and slanders against the Unión Campesino Independiente (UCI) [Independent Farmers' Union], and came out against the military coup in Argentina and the banning of political parties in that country, especially the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST) [Socialist Workers Party]. Again, the audience raised chants such as: "The struggle, comrades, is international—in Mexico, Argentina, Spain, and Portugal."

Before Ricardo Hernández spoke, the independent candidates had been introduced. They are listed below:

Senatorial candidates for the Federal District [Mexico City]: Gerardo Unzueta Lorenzana, PCM leader; and Evaristo Pérez Arreola, General Secretary of STEUNAM (Sindicato de Trabajadores y Empleados de la UNAM [Union of Personnel of the Autonomous National University of Mexico]).

Candidates for Deputy from the Federal District:

Second Electoral District: Bernardo Fonseca Vázquez, for full Deputy.

Fifth Electoral District: Manuel Guerrero, Treasury workers' leader, for full Deputy.

Tenth Electoral District: Norberto Vargas, longtime railroad worker-militant, for full Deputy; and Juan Moreno, former Moresa worker and Political Committee member of the LS, for alternate Deputy.

Eighteenth Electoral District: Andrés López Huerta, leader of the Chrysler workers fired by the present PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party—Mexico's ruling party] candidate for this same district—union bureaucrat Hugo Díaz—for full Deputy; Heriberto Martínez, also a Chrysler workers' leader, for alternate Deputy.

Twenty-second Electoral District: Professor Juvenal González, Organizational Secretary of the MOS, for full Deputy.

Twenty-sixth Electoral District: Andrés Rosales, a leader of the small landowners of Tulyehualco, for full Deputy; and Emilio Benítez, a militant fighter for the small landowners' rights and member of the LS, for alternate Deputy.

Deputorial candidates for the State of Mexico:

Second Electoral District (Naucalpan): Marco Aurelio Vasconcelos, for full Deputy.

Tenth Electoral District (Netzahualcóyotl City): Felipe García Benítez, a leader of the Unión Proletaria de Colonos (UPC) [Small Landowners' Proletarian Union], for full Deputy; and Reyes Alvarez Quiroz, also a UPC leader, for alternate Deputy.

Ecatepec, State of Mexico: Salvador Díaz for full Deputy, and María de Lourdes Carrasco for alternate Deputy.

Norberto Reyes spoke at the rally representing all of the

independent candidates. He emphasized that now, when the working class is beginning to shake off its lethargy, unity of the forces fighting for the workers' demands was more necessary than ever.

Gerardo Unzueta, official PCM speaker and the Coalition's senatorial candidate, said that our intervention in the elections will prove victorious, because an advance in the organization of the masses will have been accomplished. He explained that this intervention will be a victory over the traditional indifference, impotence, sterile abstentionism, and "who-gives-a-damn-ism." Furthermore, it will also be an objective victory over union bureaucratism.

He stated that the PRI-government candidates, although they may be placed in office, have already been defeated because they have no program. "What does 'Produce to Share' mean if not to produce for the Mexican bourgeoisie and oligarchy?" he asked. Later on he showed that the famous Portillist slogan [Portillo is the PRI presidential candidate], "We all are the solution," was a political hack's solution for building support among people who have chosen the wrong candidate—before his game is uncovered. "We all," he said, does not mean us, the forces of the left, nor the masses of workers. That slogan represents, therefore, *their* solution; it represents *their* basis of unity—the unity of the bourgeoisie. *Our* solution, he concluded, is *our* unity: the Left Coalition.

Before Unzueta, Juvenal González had spoken. He was the official MOS speaker and now is a deputorial candidate for the Coalition.

Unzueta was the final speaker. At the end of the meeting the audience joined in singing *The Internationale*, worldwide proletarian anthem, accompanied by the Víctor Jara folksinging group.

Thus was another stage begun in the National March for Democratic Freedoms, as the Coalition's electoral program has billed itself. This coalition, loyal to its purpose of offering the masses a working-class alternative at all levels, has nominated workers' and peoples' leaders as deputorial candidates. This will undoubtedly give a new impulse to the election campaign.

THE LEFT'S DILEMMA IN THE ELECTIONS: PROGRAMMATIC PURITY OR CLASS UNITY

[Following is a translation of an article titled "La Disyuntiva de la Izquierda en las Elecciones: Pureza Programática o Unidad de Clase," which appeared in the April 1, 1976 issue of *El Socialista*.]

By Augusto León

As we have commented in previous articles, the electoral process is one of the axes that is polarizing the attention of the vanguard sectors of the working class in Mexico. There is no doubt that as the official and independent campaigns progress—the latter represented by the coalition of the PCM-MOS-LS (Partido Comunista Mexicano-Movimiento de Organización Socialista-Liga Socialista)—this polarization becomes more evident.

The Left's Criticisms of the Coalition

The independent candidacy of Campa has taken on so much importance that the left has unleashed an avalanche of criticisms against the Electoral Coalition. Leaving aside the retrograde position that it is unprincipled to intervene in the elections, which nobody takes seriously now, the less absurd criticisms fall into these two categories of arguments:

(a) That revolutionaries violate their principles if they participate with a common electoral program with the PCM (some say with "any reformist organization").

(b) That it is fine to participate with any organization of the workers movement, but that in this case, the PCM-MOS-LS Electoral Platform is reformist.

The obvious result in both cases is a position of abstention from participating in the Electoral Coalition, calling for a vote for Campa but with a different program, or simply to call for a vote for Campa without any other program offered.

Those who are in the first category say that it is not possible to sign an electoral program with the PCM, since what is involved is a governmental program. That is, it has to do with what we would do if we took power. Therefore, they say, it is impossible to sign a governmental program with a party in which we have no confidence, because it would mean accepting a policy that we disagree with. In this way—they conclude—“we don't educate the masses.”

Those who fall into the second category say that the Program of the Coalition (the Electoral Platform) has a “reformist content.” They argue that all the slogans and demands contained in the Platform are correct and that it is impossible to be against them. But—they add—the program as a whole is reformist because it does not call into question the power of the bourgeois state and does not have an “anticapitalist dynamic.” In short, they conclude that this is a reformist or minimum program and not a transitional program.

Is It Unprincipled to Make an Electoral Front with the PCM?

We still do not know how our critics came to this strange conclusion. It could have happened that Lenin or Trotsky or one of our revolutionary teachers once said that no electoral fronts or coalitions should be made with parties or groups of the working class in which we have “no confidence.” But this is not the case. Our critics have presented no quotation of this kind.

We think it is entirely valid and principled to form electoral coalitions with *any grouping in the working class*, if we agree on the electoral program. The only parties with which we cannot form this type of coalition are bourgeois parties. Why? Because what we are trying to do in the elections is to offer a class solution to the workers, as against the bourgeois solution; if we form a coalition with a bourgeois party, we could not attain this objective and—here indeed—we would be mixing together the banners of two different *classes*.

But, except in this case, it is valid *in principle* to form an electoral front with any party or group in the working class.

On the other hand, to sign an electoral platform with other groupings does not mean agreeing completely with all the other signers. Nor does it mean that each signer accepts all the positions of the others. If that were the case, what would be called for is not an electoral platform but a single program and a fusion. That is not the case.

The PCM continues to have deep differences, of program and principle, with the LS. The LS likewise has deep differences with the PCM. The MOS certainly has the same kind of differences with both groups. The LS does not accept the *entire* program of the PCM and the PCM does not accept the *entire* program of the LS. This is obvious. However, these differences do not prevent reaching joint electoral agreements. And what all the groups *are* obliged to accept is the Joint Platform, that is, the area on which all have found agreement. What is unprincipled about this?

Is the Platform Reformist?

We do not know what our critics mean by reformism. For us a reformist program would be one which calls only for *reforms*, modifications, of the system, without calling for workers power as the solution. This is not the case with the Electoral Platform. The axis around which all the demands in it revolve is the workers and peasants government, the government of the working masses. If this is a reform of the system, then the Platform is indeed reformist. But in that case not only the Platform is reformist, but the LS, the Transitional Program and the whole Trotskyist movement, because the workers and peasants government is the slogan for political power which Trotskyism has raised.

This slogan, in the context of the demands in the Platform, is what gives the joint electoral program its class-struggle, anticapitalist character. And this is true because it says that the consistent realization of the whole Platform requires that the workers govern; that is, an alternative of political power is offered as the only real solution. Where is the “reformism” in the Platform? Where is its minimum character?

If what our critics mean is that the Electoral Platform is not *the* program of the socialist revolution, the program of the party, then we agree. The Platform is not in fact the program of the Liga Socialista. But they should not say that it is a “reformist” or “minimum” program or one “that does not call into question the bourgeois state.”

It is true that the LS does not agree with part of the section of the Platform on foreign policy, as it is expressed in the Platform. It is true that we are against peaceful coexistence with imperialism on a world scale and that we believe that it is not possible to peacefully coexist with imperialism.

Why did we sign the Platform in spite of this? Because foreign policy is a problem that interests the masses least now and because they are more in need of political solutions for their concrete problems than ideological debate on what the foreign policy of the workers and peasants government should be. Foreign policy is simply not the axis of the program, as has been shown by the electoral activities, in which international problems have only been touched on to demonstrate solidarity with workers' and people's struggles on an international scale.

The Root of the Criticisms

The program of the party must not be confused with an electoral program. The first is not only a governmental program that projects what we would do if we took power; it also projects what we do in order to come to power. That is, the program of the party is fundamentally the program of the revolution.

An electoral program is a program that begins from a specific given situation and functions while we employ the electoral *tactic*. The electoral program embodied in the Platform certainly would not have been the same one six years ago, nor is it the same one as it would be in 1982. It is a conjunctural program that, taking advantage of the electoral opening, poses political, class-struggle alternatives and alternatives of rule to the most serious problems of the working masses. Thus, although it is a specific and conjunctural program, it should be topped off with a slogan

of political power, which, in the case of the Platform, is the Workers Government.

The program of the party is the *strategic* program for the revolution. The electoral program is a *tactical* program for a particular situation. But, we emphasize, even tactical programs must contain a central notion of power, or transition, because otherwise they would be minimum programs.

Thus, at bottom our critics have confused the revolutionary Marxist program with the Electoral Platform.

To what degree is this confusion intentional? We do not know, but it seems to be true of at least some of our critics. These are people who think that the only way to participate in the elections is with the revolutionary Marxist program, which they consider to be their own program.

In this case there is an obvious confusion between tactics and strategy. Not only that, but there is also an erroneous concept of how the party functions. For them, even in tactical situations it is necessary to propagandize for the party program, regardless of whether the masses have other problems because the masses have to be educated.

We do not want to "educate the masses," because then our task would be to become good professors of Marxism. Our task is to pose concrete solutions to concrete problems, solutions contributing to advancing the mass movement and raising the political level of its struggles. We do this also in the electoral process.

Therefore we prefer raising a class-struggle program, even if it is not our own, and achieving unity which makes mass work more possible, to raising our revolutionary Marxist program and remaining limited to the narrow sectors of the university vanguard.

Therefore we are more interested in proposing political alternatives to the masses, placing the campaign at the service of their struggles, than in taking part in interminable ideological debates on revolutionary foreign policy in the university circles—although we never fear such debates.

Finally, therefore, those who only seek to propagandize *their* program are doomed to act alone; they will never be able to reach unity agreements. They are doomed to act as a sect, with a "pure" and "undilutable" program, but in isolation from the mass movement to a degree directly proportional to the "purity" of their sect.

The FIR and the PCM-LS-MOS Coalition

Different left groupings have been promoting the creation of the Frente de Izquierda Revolucionario (FIR) [Revolutionary Left Front]. Among these the GCI (Grupo Comunista Internacionalista), the main promoter of the FIR, stands out. The GCI has proposed a program for this Front, although as far as we know it has not been officially approved.

Several times we have been asked whether we are against the program of the GCI. Several times we have answered no. The program is, in general, correct.

We have felt that the most important slogans of the GCI—including the workers and peasants government—have been included in the Coalition Platform, although they are handled in different tactical terms—different phrasing, different presentation, etc.

But it seems that the program of the GCI is more concerned with defining and clarifying positions than with making them clear to the masses. It is more concerned with the phrasing of slogans than with the possibility of their reaching wider sectors. In general, the program seems to respond more to the polemics inside the left than to the concrete situation and needs of the masses.

For its part, the GCI has held that the Platform is reformist. We believe we have shown that this is a gratuitous statement. The accusation that a platform and those who support it are reformist—is a position that should be argued further. Why, concretely, is it reformist?

If, on the other hand, the GCI accepts that—as we have said—it is a principled, class-struggle, anticapitalist program—that is, not reformist—then why doesn't the GCI join the Coalition and invite the FIR to do the same? The tactical points of difference with those who radically disagree—as may be the case concerning foreign policy—can be cleared up similarly to the way the LS has done it. Or do they think that this point alone prevents them from signing the Platform?

If any need has been made manifest in the electoral process, it is the need for unity of the left to present a single class-struggle alternative. This is even more imperious for the Trotskyist forces in Mexico.

'ELECTORAL REPORT' TO LIGA SOCIALISTA (TM) CENTRAL COMMITTEE

[The following is a translation of a report on the Mexican elections made to the April 3-4 Central Committee meeting of the Liga Socialista (Militant Tendency). The report was circulated as an internal document of the LS.]

The elections for president of the republic for 1976-82 have been accompanied by new and disturbing phenomena for both the right and the left. Some of the factors that give these elections a different character are the following:

a) An impetuous upsurge of the workers movement, having its highest expression in the struggle of the electrical workers of the Democratic Tendency of the SUTERM [Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores Electricistas de la República Mexicana—United Electrical Workers Union of the Mexican Republic].

These elections reveal an interesting phenomenon. It is in the provinces where you clearly see the radicalization of the exploited classes and where the workers movement will perhaps begin. The campaign meetings held in the important cities in the interior of the country have drawn more than 1,000 persons; in Guadalajara, more than 3,500 attended. Here in the capital, with great difficulty we managed a single meeting of 1,000 persons in Sto. Domingo. (The reason for this phenomenon has not been precisely determined yet, which means that this thesis must be made more concrete.)

b) Poverty in rural areas has reached truly alarming proportions, which has caused a mass explosion among the people of the countryside. This has taken the form of continual takeovers of lands of the latifundists by the peasants.

c) The small landholders are a highly radicalized sector. The problems they face—land ownership; poverty; overcrowding; lack of basic services such as light, water, etc.—give this sector a tremendously explosive character. This has brought with it as a consequence struggles going beyond legal boundaries, extending to phenomena like the independent organization in the Pancho Villa section of Chihuahua, in the October 2 encampment in Monterrey, etc. Because of their largely proletarian social composition and their radicalization, these sectors have seen that it is necessary to link up with the other workers in zones adjacent to their neighborhoods. (Because of the character of this balance sheet, I can't go into this aspect more deeply. However, I suggest it be studied very seriously.)

d) The students have not conducted important struggles in recent years. They have been the sector most beaten down by the state. Up to now, they have not responded to the election campaign. They are neither in favor of it nor opposed to it; they are indifferent.

e) The intrabourgeois jockeying for position among the sectors having real power were revealed in José López

Portillo's *madrugete* [idiom unknown by translator] of Moya Palencia, Muñoz Ledo's and Portillo's disagreement on how to deal with the Democratic Tendency, and now on the *Ley de Asentamientos Humanos* [a resettlement law].

f) The crisis of the bourgeois opposition parties like the PAN [Partido de Acción Nacional—National Action party], which is not putting up a presidential candidate. The PAN's crisis shows the weakness of the most reactionary sector of the bourgeoisie, which now views the PRI [Partido Revolucionario Institucional—Institutional Revolutionary party] as the only alternative. This will strengthen the PRI as the only party that offers an alternative for the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the image the PRI presented to the masses of conducting a plebiscite was affected by its having no opposition.

In addition, there is the PDM [Partido Democrático Mexicano—Mexican Democratic party] supported by the Unión Nacional Sinarquista [National Sinarquist Union, a pro-Catholic reactionary group], proposing to support neither Portillo nor any of the four official opposition parties. (Pay attention to this phenomenon.)

g) The left being impelled to take a stand on the elections, something that had not happened for many years.

These are only some of the elements present during this stage of the presidential race.

The PRI no longer has credibility among the masses as a democratic alternative. Day after day, broad sectors of the exploited notice the lies, tricks, and lack of choice the elections for deputies, senators, and president represent. The masses respond with apathy and indifference or with individual demonstrations of powerlessness. In other cases they vote massively for a rival party—either the PAN or the PPS [Partido Popular Socialista—People's Socialist party]. The peasants take over municipal buildings to protest their lack of a say in choosing municipal presidents. All of this flows from dissatisfaction with the PRI, something the party has not permitted, using the repressive apparatus to forcefully impose itself in places where it is not accepted. This brings as a consequence sullen, individual resentment from the masses, who only hope for a different solution than the PRI, whatever it may be.

Meanwhile, Portillo proposes to follow the path of Cárdenas and Echeverría and to continue the policy of a turn toward democratization. This policy is manifest in the regime's refusal to register any independent party to participate legally in the elections.

However, not being registered has not prevented several groups on the left from putting up candidates for president in these elections. Thus, the socialist coalition has been permitted to hold rallies in places like the Santo Domingo plaza, two blocks from the Zócalo [seat of the federal government], in spite of the laws that restrict and ban

participation in the elections.

During this period the state has tightened the noose of repression against independent movements throughout the length and breadth of the country (Guerrero, Oaxaca, Monterrey, Veracruz, Naucalpan, Ixtacalco). But repression has not affected the LS-PCM-MOS coalition [Liga Socialista—Socialist League, Partido Comunista Mexicano—Mexican Communist party, Movimiento de Organización Socialista—Movement for Socialist Organization]. Our arrest victims have only been held one or two hours and a striking proof is that we held a rally in Atoyac de Alvarez, Guerrero, a town under a state of siege.

II. The Mexican Left and the Elections

At this point, the left has been convinced of the need to take a stand on the elections. Thus it is that:

The LS, PCM, and MOS make up the electoral coalition that is putting up Valentín Campa and presenting a common program. This participation in the elections has two goals: to mobilize the masses and to strengthen our respective parties.

The Reformists

The PMT [Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores—Mexican Workers party], a group that claims to represent the working class and plays an important role in national politics, presents abstentionism as the answer in these elections. They arrived at this position after all their attempts to get recognized as a legal party failed. The abstention line has resulted in their losing several activists from their ranks, like Manuel Guerrero, leader of the struggle at Tesorería and now running for deputy on the slate of the socialist coalition.

Another important grouping is the coalition formed by the PST, MAUS, and Asamblea Permanente del PCM [Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores—Socialist Workers party, Movimiento de Acción Unificada Socialista—Unified Socialist Action Movement, Permanent Assembly of the Mexican Communist party], which calls for a vote for Portillo.

The Maoists

Within this rubric there are a huge number of grouplets that claim to be followers of Mao Tsetung thought. They are characterized by the most abject sectarianism and by their principled ultraleftism, going so far as to use physical violence against their political opponents.

The FPI [Frente Popular Independiente—Independent Popular Front] is the most representative and most important group of this current. It has been pressured by the upsurge and felt forced to adopt a policy of participation in the elections. It has a platform of minimal demands and limits its joint participation to those places where it is putting up candidates for deputy, for example, in Naucalpan. It has no presidential candidate.

Another important Maoist group is the FPR [full name of group not available to translator], a split from the FPI that broke with them over the question of participating in the elections. What this group presents as an alternative is not abstentionism but something even more abstract—“no to the electoral farce.” This group is the one that has given us the worst headache by declaring its fundamental goal in these elections to be to do away with the Trotskyist and reformist opposition of the PCM.

The Trotskyists

GCI [Grupo Comunista Internacionalista—Internationalist Communist Group, recently fused with *Rojo* to form the Liga Comunista Internacionalista—Internationalist Communist League] has called for the formation of the FIR [Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Front of the Revolutionary Left], which it presents as an alternative to the groups on the left that want to participate in the elections but not have anything to do with the PCM. They present a program that capitulates to the vanguard. The only thing it attempts is to differentiate itself from the PCM programmatically and historically, not to mobilize the masses. However, the program they present in and of itself does not have many differences with the coalition's program, which will permit us to reach an agreement such as was made in Monterrey. This should result in unifying more forces against the PRI, but their anxiety to differentiate themselves from the CP prevents this. They have agreed to call for a vote for Campa but not for the program of the coalition.

It is important to point out that an agreement has been reached with the LCI-FIR to join the coalition on the basis of joint action although the two groups maintain their respective programs. This shows the possibility of reaching agreements when they are genuinely sought. *Rojo* had to make a self-criticism of its first position—critical abstention in the coming elections—in order to later join the FIR, the two main props of which are the GCI and *Rojo*.

The FBL [Fracción Bolsheviq Leninista—Bolshevik-Leninist Faction] calls for critical support to Campa, while criticizing the program of the coalition as reformist. As an alternative they propose a “pure” Trotskyist program, which is 100% propagandistic. They attack our program for not including a point on the release of Soviet political prisoners. However, the SWP [Socialist Workers party of the United States] does not base its election campaigns on this demand but on concrete problems (women, Blacks, etc.). This is something the FBL and SWP have to give us an answer on. The FBL also accuses us of capitulating to the Stalinists, of forming the basis of an incipient popular front, and of thinking that the Stalinists are revolutionary. We bother to mention the FBL, not because it occupies an important spot in the Mexican left, but because it represents a current within our international.

This is a more or less general view of the Mexican left. The only groups that have presented a real electoral alternative have been the groups in the Socialist Coalition (LS, PCM, MOS). All the other parties and groups revolve around it, whether to attack it in a fierce and irreconcilable fashion or to seek to distinguish themselves from its program while trying to join forces.

III. Our Relationship to the Coalition

The Socialist Coalition has been the only group to work consistently in these elections. With a clear, concrete program and a presidential candidate of recognized prestige, we have been able to provide a class-struggle alternative, strengthening the three parties in this election campaign.

The most serious problem we have is not being able to cover the entire country. Not even the CP has people all over the country. They have none, for example, in Colima. Other limitations are the lack of economic resources for electoral propaganda and the lack of electoral experience, which has

led us to work in a spontaneous and unplanned fashion.

Repression is not something we have to complain about. We have had our hands free to be active both in the provinces and in the Federal District. We do not represent a very big danger at this time for the state. Nonetheless, from one day to the next our campaign is growing. The newsmen pay attention to our rallies in the Federal District. *El Día* is the newspaper that covers the election campaign regularly in the Federal District, although it treats it like the campaign of the PCM. Only on a few occasions has it mentioned us as the LS and it never mentions the MOS. *Excelsior* covers the main events of our campaign more or less truthfully.

Our Relationship with the Mexican Communist Party

For those who criticize our "capitulation" to the PCM, for those who say we are parasites on the PCM, for those who think we have gotten nothing out of the election campaign—arguments that are raised inside our own party—I answer you in this way: Nobody is ignorant of the fact that the PCM has more economic resources, a bigger apparatus, and more experience—be it good or bad—from close to 40 years of history in Mexican politics. As a consequence, in this campaign the PCM is the one that is making the most gains and that, moreover, is the head of the electoral coalition.

Now, some comrades cannot understand this. Why, comrades? It is an objective fact—we do not have resources, we do not have people in the provinces, and we only have three years of working politically. Some comrades protest—and this is valid—that the CP "maneuvers" us and has more speakers or banners at the entrance of a rally, or maneuvers us for chairperson, etc. Nonetheless, I would ask the party as a whole, if one makes an alliance with someone unknown to strengthen oneself and thus be able to attack the enemy from a position of power, doesn't such an "unknown alliance" offer a real attack strength? Do I have to continue working alone? What is being done here, comrades?

With regard to those who criticize us for not getting rough with the CP, I ask you to consider this:

As of now, we have done one month's work. Most of the propaganda came from the CP. The organization of rallies depended on them. Of the six zones of joint work there was only effective work done in two. The intervention plans were also made by the CP. This month the CP handed out 350,000 leaflets and pasted up 70,000 posters while we pasted up 5,000 posters and handed out 50,000 leaflets, including those gotten out in the provinces. It must be taken into account that the MOS did not carry out any work. After this month of activities we did nothing with the campaign work for about fifteen days. The same was true for the MOS. The CP continued working. Don't you think it is logical that the CP, after measuring our forces, wants to control us? Thus, they proposed to us at the Salón Riviera that there be three speakers from the CP and one from each of the other groups, arguing against our objection by saying that it was on the basis of the relationship of forces that they were proposing this. When we owe them for the joint platforms, the posters, the charges for the Salón Riviera (we owe thousands of pesos)—and I want to make it clear that they have not collected from us—well, is that how you expect, comrades, that we are going to control them? Look at the CP's tendency as I see it. If we continue along the same lines I pointed out, perhaps their tendency won't be to get us out of the Coalition,

but it will certainly be to try to leave us behind. That is how I see our relationship with the Mexican Communist party.

Without explaining why, the MOS simply is not carrying out work in the Valley of Mexico and only rarely in the provinces. For example, they do not have a single fulltime staff member in their organization.

IV. The Liga Socialista

From the previous point we could conclude logically, that since the PCM has an apparatus and tradition while we do not, then we must act as parasites on them. But the answer is not that simple.

Since we proposed our participation in the election campaign, as well as in the Coalition, this task was not understood in terms of the concrete importance it had. Instead it was seen as something that was theoretically correct.

From the leadership all the way to the ranks, the necessary forethought was not given on the implementation of our participation. How far this went is shown by the fact that there has not been a single document since the one presented by Ricardo at the beginning of the campaign that expresses our position on the elections, aside from the articles in the newspaper.

The leadership did not learn how to justify the importance of our participation in the elections. This was shown by the fact that no one in the leadership was given responsibility for taking charge of our participation in the elections until a month and a half after we began.

Moreover, the only thing the majority of the Political Committee has done with regard to the elections is to listen to reports presented on the provincial rallies and to ask one or another question. They have not seen the Political Committee's electoral work as their work. Fundamentally it is in this body that the comrades principally in charge of fronts of work come together and they only decide or commit themselves when the person responsible asks them to. Consequently, the leaders of the LS are not pushing electoral work in the party as a whole and in addition it is not thought to be the policy at this time. Thus, this election campaign is relegated to second place in fact although at one time we said it was the main task of the organization. The comrades in charge of fronts of work are working in a way that is isolated from the campaign.

On the other hand, a sector of the rank and file has emerged that is dissatisfied with the electoral work, mainly because they say we are capitulating to the PCM.

These comrades have not made a criticism of the leadership, something that would educate the party as a whole. Among the ranks of the organization, the election campaign has not been given importance. The comrades are buried in the struggles of their own areas of work. The line we put forward to bring the elections to these struggles has not been carried out anywhere. The comrades have preferred to leave a task like pasting up or leafleting for the elections to begin to study for the cadre school. This shows that the election work has fallen into second place, not because of the cadre school in and of itself but because the elections have not been promoted among the ranks in a serious way by all the comrades of the leadership.

The comrades who criticize us for not having achieved anything have not taken into account that the LS has not exhausted even 20% of its possibilities.

Let's look at the situation front by front.

The Southern Zone. This zone is one of the most important for the LS. We have close to 60 comrades there between the JS [Juventud Socialista—Young Socialists] and the LS. This front is one of those that has done the most work on the election campaign. It has supported us within the limits of its possibilities, without putting all its cadres into this activity, but because of the disorganization of the front and because of the lack of an electoral alternative [alternative candidate?—translator], close to half a month has passed without its doing work for the campaign. The front has gotten lost in its own special problems. This front has to deal with problems of political consolidation for not giving assignments to its members. In this zone the MOS is putting up the candidate for deputy.

The Netzahualcoyotl Zone. In this zone we have not carried out the work, since it is one of the weakest points of the LS. It will not be difficult here to carry out work that produces for us with a vengeance. The candidates for deputy come one from the MOS and one from the PCM.

The Vallejo-Tlatelolco Zone. This is one of the most important zones in the Valley of Mexico. We have more than 100 comrades of the JS and LS in the Fresno preparatoria popular and the only thing that has been done is to hold 2 or 3 rallies at the Metro de Tlatelolco and to put up posters in the neighborhood around there. The elections have not been an area of work for the members of the JS. Among all the people they have, only 10 or 12 comrades have been involved in election work. In this zone there are two candidates for deputy, one from the CP and the other one ours. In Tlatelolco there is a candidate for deputy from the MOS.

The Ecatepec Zone. This is another extremely important zone. We have a cell there that is just now beginning to recover from an organizational crisis it got out of, thanks to our sending in three comrades. That is why there has not been effective work in the zone. Now they are focusing their forces on the factories of the zone, letting the chance to take advantage of the radicalization of the small landowners pass by. And they are not taking advantage of the prestige that the comrades have there. There are two CPM deputies there. The comrades did not understand that it was more important to have one deputy than a contact in a factory, that that would make it easier to consolidate those contacts. Thus they did not put up a candidate.

The Naucalpan Zone. We have no report on this zone. The comrades never handed one in and the person in charge never worried about communicating it by other means. There are two PCM candidates for deputy.

This is the situation of the LS. There has not been real participation in the elections. Let us hope that in the coming days we can repair this big weakness, keeping in mind that we will have to make an effort in this period.

V. Achievements of the Election Campaign

We have not achieved much but we have achieved more than if we had not participated and more than if we participated alone.

Two cells were formed at the start of the election campaign, one in Santa Fe and one in Tulyehuañico. We recruited the leader of Chrysler, who is our candidate for deputy, and an entire group in this factory that has come out for the LS.

The comrades in the provinces have to report what has

been achieved there. The possibilities are immense. Even though our work is not strong, big opportunities are presented to us.

VI. Finances

This has been the big obstacle preventing us from being able to participate effectively. We have no money and every day our debt to the PCM and to Distribuidora Avanzada increases.

All the plans we set in motion have failed. All the comrades have responded irresponsibly and apathetically. They have been asked to return the money they get from the election campaign to the headquarters and they have not done it, keeping the money for their fronts of work.

Because of the lack of money we have had the following problems:

- a) Not paying attention to the provinces in the elections.
- b) Not picking up the joint poster (the trefoil), 2,000 copies of which were for us.
- c) Not picking up more joint platforms. All the fronts took platforms and no one returned a single cent.
- d) Not putting out a leaflet where we explain why and how the LS is participating in these elections.
- e) Not being able to put out the platform for the Valley of Mexico.
- f) Not having our own leaflets for the campaign.
- g) Not being able to meet the agreement to put out three joint leaflets for the coalition.
- h) Not being able to agree to sign advertisements in the newspaper because of the lack of economic resources.

Moreover, we owe for 1.) the joint platform, 2.) 20% of the fee for the rental of the Salón Riviera, 3.) payment for the joint propaganda for the 6th, 7th, and 8th.

VII. What We Propose to Do

The vote of the majority of the central committee was to again make this campaign one of the principal axes of the Liga Socialista's intervention. To make this happen, the leadership of the LS must take the electoral work as a task of everyone. An electoral commission has been formed, entrusted with promoting the elections. To start with, this commission is made up of Lupín, Ricardo, Alicia, and Vilchis.

Another of the aims we hope to put into practice in the LS is that both the members of the JS and of the LS will have as their central work the election campaign.

The formation of support committees

The most viable place to form support committees, where they will function, is in the neighborhoods [*colonias*]. That is why one of the main tasks in the elections is to go from house to house to form a support committee. During these visits it is essential to try to sell subscriptions to *El Socialista*. With this we will achieve a big zone of influence.

We recommend the neighborhoods where there are struggles going on.

Bring the elections to the struggles

We have to present our electoral alternative in whatever struggle emerges, in addition to going there as militants and to work with them with our program and solutions.

Consistent with this political line, we call on the democratic tendency of SUTERM to put up candidates in the coming elections, who will be supported by the Socialist Coalition.

We must continue with our propaganda in general, making ourselves known although we may not be able to get immediate results.

In the schools, the Juventud Socialista must promote the election campaign, calling forums and debates and propagandizing it among the students.

We must promote joint work with the LCI, which is willing to send all the cadres necessary to sectors where we have candidates for deputy from our organization. This collaboration must be loyal and fraternal.

Provinces

For the time being in the places where we do not have cells we will not send work brigades because of a lack of resources, both for propaganda in such places and for maintaining contacts.

In places in the provinces where we do have cells, it is

necessary for them to put out their own propaganda.

Objectively the provincial work that was carried out at the beginning of February cannot achieve absolutely anything, because of the lack of economic resources more than because of the lack of contacts. The lack of human resources also is a factor that prevented us from achieving anything.

Finances

We are not making any specific financial plans for this period. The electoral commission will have pertinent propositions for discussion among the ranks in the internal bulletin.

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This document was presented by Comrade Vilchis to the second plenum of the Central Committee, which met April 3 and 4, 1976. Additions and corrections suggested by the Central Committee have been incorporated into this document.

JOINT ELECTORAL PLATFORM OF THE MEXICAN CP, MOS, AND LS

[The following is the joint electoral platform of the Partido Comunista Mexicano, Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and Liga Socialista (Tendencia Militante),¹ as published in the January 16-31 issue of *El Socialista*, newspaper of the Liga Socialista (TM). For an account of the split in the Liga Socialista that preceded the TM's adherence to this platform, see *Intercontinental Press*, February 9, p. 195.

[The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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The Partido Comunista Mexicano, Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and Liga Socialista are jointly participating in the current federal election campaign, without diminishing the autonomy of any of the organizations. They are presenting a common platform and are supporting the presidential candidacy of Compañero Valentín Campa, along with a single slate of deputies and senators for Congress.

They propose to encourage united action by the masses, particularly by the working class, for immediate demands and in defense of their economic and political interests. At the same time, they propose the following: to advance the unity of the forces that support democracy and socialism, with the aim of increasing their political weight and mass influence; to strengthen the struggle of the Mexican people against imperialism; to compel respect for the political rights of the Mexican people, including their electoral rights; to combat the repressive political climate of intimidation arising from current governmental practices; in short, to contribute to the organization and development of an autonomous political force capable of challenging the bourgeoisie for power, defeating it, and building Mexican society on a new basis, without capitalist wage slavery, with a higher economic and cultural standard of living for the masses of people, and with truly human conditions of existence.

The organizations that have united together to act in this electoral process do not hide their socialist objectives, nor their revolutionary method to achieve them.

They consider it their duty to labor stubbornly to achieve them.

They propose limited objectives of struggle to the working class, peasants, students, to all manual and clerical workers—objectives that take into account the degree of seriousness of the problems requiring solution, the level of class consciousness and organization of the masses, and the necessity that the masses undergo their own experiences, enabling them to understand fully the need for a revolution to bring about deepgoing, radical changes in Mexican society.

The PCM, MOS, and LS recognize that the elections scheduled for the first Sunday of next July will not decide who will become president of the republic, nor the fundamental composition of Congress. Given the undemocratic way in which the electoral system is set up, the question of who will be the next president has already been decided. The highest circles of government will also handpick the vast majority of deputies and senators.

Consequently, these revolutionary organizations are not going to contest the presidency and the congressional seats in the polling booth. They are taking part in the electoral campaign with the aim of helping to raise the consciousness of the masses, whose rights it is their duty to defend. At the same time, they seek to strengthen the independent movement of the people, with the aim of enabling it to influence the nation's political life in a decisive way.

With full clarity of objectives, without illusions of any sort, and placing confidence solely in the power of the masses and their own organization, the Partido Comunista Mexicano, the Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and the Liga Socialista propose to citizens who support democracy and public well-being a platform of struggle that includes the positions, objectives, and immediate demands that correspond to the present situation in the country.

This platform contains both demands on the present government and objectives that are realizable only with the taking of power by the working people. Everything depends on the organized and united strength of the masses and on the mettle of their political leadership.

The platform of the Partido Comunista Mexicano, the Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and the Liga Socialista is the following:

I. Political Rights for All Citizens

It is a well-known fact that Mexico has an undemocratic political system that prevents the majority of citizens from participating in the solution of the most pressing national problems. Paternalism and despotism reign in this country, not democratic methods of rule. The political and social rights of citizens, especially of those who oppose the system and fight for democracy and socialism, are respected by neither the government nor the law. They cannot legally organize in independent political parties, and efforts at democratic trade-union organizing encounter endless obstacles. They cannot freely exercise either the right to vote or to assemble in the streets and public places, particularly in Mexico City, so as to put forward their views on the political issues before the country or on topics of interest to the masses of people. They suffer repression—murder, imprisonment, kidnapping, threats, and so forth—for dissenting from the official point of view, and for taking political and social action independent of the government. The hundreds of political prisoners are a telling example of this reality. Some have been sentenced to prison, others have simply been kidnapped by the government. Many are under indictment, out of jail on bail or "freed under protest," with their political rights suspended. More than a few have been persecuted and forced to seek exile abroad.

The exercise of political freedom would begin to become a reality under the following conditions:

1. The passage of a general amnesty law that would free all those imprisoned for political motives, while voiding all political trials and halting all persecution of a similar nature.

2. A halt to the repression of the trade-union, peasant, student, and people's movement in general, a practice carried out by the present government.

3. Elimination of Title II of the Federal Penal Code and of other legislation of this sort that involves political repression.

4. Abolition of the present Federal Election Law and the corresponding laws in the states. Replacement of this law by one that would institute proportional representation in Congress; establish a system of registering political parties not on the basis of their

1. Mexican Communist party, Movement for Socialist Organization, Socialist League (Militant Tendency).

membership strength and the recording of each member with the secretary of state, but on the basis of their actual political existence; institute an autonomous body to organize the electoral process; form an electoral tribunal independent of the government to certify the elections impartially; and finally, establish guarantees that all citizens may freely exercise the right to vote.

5. Elimination from police and traffic regulations of all obstacles to the right to hold demonstrations and public assemblies, especially in the Federal District [Mexico City and the surrounding area].

6. Respect for the right to strike. Freedom of political affiliation for workers and other unionized sectors, and a ban on the incorporation of unions as such into any political party. Elimination of the government requirement that unions be "registered" and an end to any government interference whatsoever in the trade unions.

7. Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

8. Defense of the right of every citizen to hold any creed or religion, or none at all.

II. Means for Improving the Standard of Living of All Workers

Workers and their families experience living conditions that grow worse daily. At the same time the exploiters, especially the most powerful capitalists, not only enjoy all the necessities but live in luxury and riches.

Real wages are declining constantly despite nominal increases because the cost of goods and services, particularly the ones that are most necessary, increase systematically. The share of the social wealth that goes to the workers is constantly diminishing, while the bourgeoisie's share grows. The rate of exploitation of the workers is also increasing. The masses of people live in poverty. Lack of the most basic needs marks their lives.

In addition to the insufficient number of housing units and the unhealthy conditions under which the families of workers and peasants live, rents are very high, amounting to as much as half a worker's wages. As if this were not enough, the leases are weighted heavily in favor of the landlords. If they wish to rent housing, tenants are forced to relinquish their rights. Judges almost always rule against tenants; they are paid off by the landlords.

Unemployment is at a very high level. This includes not only those who have been laid off from a large number of companies but also the lack of jobs for hundreds of thousands of youths, men and women, who enter the labor market each year.

For these reasons the organizations that have joined together put forward the following as objectives of struggle:

1. An across-the-board increase in wages, salaries, and pensions.

2. Reduction of the workweek to forty hours, with fifty-six hours pay.

3. Establishment of a sliding scale of wages, that is, pegging them at regular intervals to the increase in the cost of goods. This must be complemented by genuine price controls, on a national scale and with the participation of consumers.

4. Institution of a rent freeze in public housing and passage of legislation making leases a matter of public concern and containing inalienable rights for tenants. Reinstitution of Section XII of Article 123 of the constitution, a provision that compelled employers to provide comfortable and decent housing for their workers. In sum, a struggle for decent, cheap housing for workers.

5. Subsidies for the unemployed from the government and the employers and coverage for the unemployed under Social Security.²

III. Demands of the Agricultural Workers

Bourgeois agrarian reform in our country has not and cannot resolve the pressing problems of the rural masses. More than half a century after the proclamation of land reform, a great proportion of the best land remains private property in the hands of a few persons. The big estates continue to exist up to this day, either openly or in a concealed fashion. The right of landholders to exemption, reestablished under the government of Miguel Alemán, serves to prevent the handing over of land to the peasants. Those who farm public land held in common [*ejidos*] usually lack water for irrigation and farming machinery, as well as sufficient, readily available, low-cost loans. The trend is toward agribusiness combines, through the intervention of the industrial, commercial, and financial capitalist monopolies. Millions of agricultural workers have neither land nor jobs. Field workers do not receive the minimum wage, and their right to an eight-hour day and a day off each week with pay is not respected. Governmental authorities make a mockery of their right to organize in trade unions. An agricultural crisis reigns in our country.

In face of this situation in Mexican agriculture, the organizations united in the present electoral campaign put forward the following demands:

1. Turn over the land to those who work it. Total elimination of the landed estates and the big capitalist landholdings. Encourage collective farming of the common lands on a voluntary and autonomous basis, under the peasants who work them.

2. Repeal Paragraph III, Section XIV of Article 27 in the constitution, which pro-

tests landholders who have obtained a certificate of exemption.

3. Reduce exempted property to twenty hectares of irrigated land and its equivalent in land of different value.

4. Priority in the allocation of irrigation water to those who farm land held in common and those who hold fewer than twenty hectares.

5. Sufficient, readily available, low-cost loans for those who farm land held in common, and for those who are genuine small landholders. Supervision of the Banco de Crédito Ejidal by genuine representatives of the peasants.

6. An independent organization of the peasants to oversee the sale of crops and all matters related to production in agriculture, cattle raising, and forestry.

7. Respect for the right of wage workers in the fields to unionize and bargain collectively, as well as for the right to an eight-hour day, one day off a week with pay, a minimum wage, social security, and other benefits established under the federal labor act.

IV. Measures to Reorient Government Economic Policy

The crisis of the Mexican economy is reflected in the low rate of growth in production (in agriculture, the rate of growth is lower than the annual rate of increase in the population); in the enormous and growing deficit in foreign trade; in monetary inflation, which in recent years has reached an annual rate of 25 percent; in the government's budget deficit, which is constantly increasing; and in the foreign debt, which now totals more than 250 billion pesos [about US\$20 billion]. All of this is expressed in the very low standard of living of the masses of people.

In its main aspects the government's economic policy is aimed at protecting the interests of the big bourgeoisie, and more narrowly, those of the financial oligarchy.

Consequently, big business pays less than its proportionate share of taxes; the biggest banks and financial holdings are in reality given the most favorable treatment; and the state enterprises are placed at the service of private capital, turning over to it fuel, electrical energy, railway transport, and credit at prices lower than cost.

In short, the government uses inflation, fiscal policy, state capital, state-guaranteed loans, and other measures to stimulate the most exorbitant profits for national and foreign concerns. As these capitalist profits increase, the income of the masses of people decreases proportionally.

This state of affairs can be confronted, in a way that conforms to the public interest, only by adopting these proposals:

1. A fiscal policy that places a heavy and

2. The national health system, which provides certain medical and hospitalization benefits.

graduated tax on the huge profits of foreign capital and on those of the big Mexican capitalists.

2. Control of foreign trade and exchange. Effective means to halt the increase in foreign debt.

3. Nationalization of private banks.

4. Nationalization of basic industries, whether in the hands of national capital, foreign capital, or mixed national and foreign capital, as well as of the food and drug industries. Workers control of these nationalized concerns, which means giving the workers access to their real records so that they can report irregularities thereby revealed and demand rectification of them. This would include such questions as workers' share of the profits, payment of taxes, and the possibility of increasing wages, taking into account increases in productivity, the level of profits, and the cost of living.

5. Reorientation of the state sector of the economy, mainly toward productive activity and putting an end to its role as a prop for private enterprise.

6. A halt to monetary and credit inflation through economic measures that will permit an increase in industrial and agricultural production and a limitation on capitalists' profits.

V. A Foreign Policy of Independence and Peace

Despite the establishment of relations with a growing number of countries, including socialist countries, and its participation in some independent-type actions in Latin America, Mexico's foreign policy continues solidly in the orbit of the United States. It continues to remain part of the Organization of American States and has not renounced the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. The Mexican government is seeking to attract a greater investment of Yankee capital and encourages the joining of Mexican and American capital, thus increasing the country's dependence. In the field of propaganda, the government defends the fallacy of considering the United States and the Soviet Union in equal terms, viewing both as rich countries opposed to the poor ones, including Mexico.

This foreign policy, indelibly imprinted by the crisis of American domination and the present international situation, is neither anti-imperialist nor fully autonomous. For that the popular masses must struggle for:

1. The immediate incorporation of Mexico in the group of nonaligned countries. This camp is composed of both underdeveloped capitalist countries dependent on imperialism and socialist countries. Their foreign policy fundamentally goes in an anti-imperialist direction. It is for that reason

that the Mexican people must demand the inclusion of our country in this group.

2. The strengthening of relations of economic and political collaboration with the Latin American governments that are fighting for the recovery of their resources and for their full autonomy. This category includes Peru, Panama, and Ecuador, which, in varying degrees, tend to carry out the policy described above.

The withdrawal of Mexico from the OAS. Renunciation of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. A policy of action against colonialism in Latin America, supporting in particular the people of Puerto Rico, who are fighting for the national independence of their country; the national self-determination of the people of Belize; the autonomy the peoples of the French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe are fighting for; and in general the elimination of colonialism in Latin America.

3. An active defense of world peace, and solidarity with the peoples who are struggling for their independence and against imperialist aggression.

4. Effective measures to put into practice the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.³ In addition to the general points concerning peaceful coexistence among the various states, particular importance is attached to the right to nationalize foreign investments and to trade with all countries, including those under a socialist system—a right that Mexico must exercise. Diversification of foreign trade and defense of the prices of exported raw materials must be put into practice by Mexico, as called for in the charter. The public interest demands the realization of some of the measures called for in the charter—which is subscribed to by 120 countries, including all those under a socialist system, and rejected only by the major imperialist countries—if it is not to become simply a moral statement rather than a document of practical application.

5. The entry of Mexico into the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), that is, into the association of countries that sell raw materials, in this case oil, to protect price levels and the conditions of sale, would be an anti-imperialist measure. It must be pointed out that Venezuela and Ecuador are discriminated against in foreign trade by the United States for being members of OPEC. Mexico must unite with these countries and strengthen the resistance in all matters that concern the export of this raw material.

6. Expansion of commercial and techno-

3. An economic charter proposed by Mexican President Luis Echeverría Alvarez. Adopted by a vote of 120 to 6 in the United Nations General Assembly December 12, 1974.

logical exchanges with the socialist countries.

7. The establishment of diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations with the People's Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of Mongolia, Laos, the democratic state of Cambodia, the People's Republic of Angola, and the other countries that are on the path of liberating themselves from colonialism.

It should be noted that the Liga Socialista differs with some points in this section. However, the three organizations declare their support to the anti-imperialist struggles of the Latin American peoples and of those of other colonial and semicolonial countries, including the struggle of the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) against imperialist aggression and the forces of reaction in Africa. They call for Mexico to withdraw from the OAS and to denounce the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance. The three organizations also declare their defense of the Soviet Union and other socialist states against any imperialist attack and call for Mexico to establish diplomatic, commercial, and cultural relations with the aforementioned countries.

VI. Democratization of Education

The backwardness of our people, which stems from capitalist exploitation and the country's dependence on Yankee imperialism, is shown in the field of education, to take just one example. There are millions of functional illiterates, the vast majority of whom have not even been able to finish primary school, while only a tiny minority of those who enter secondary school or the university manage to attain a professional career. The children of workers and peasants are practically excluded from higher education.

Education in general is at a low scientific and technical level. It is carried out in an authoritarian and undemocratic way, guided by the interests of the bourgeoisie. The national educational system is in crisis. The organizations that have joined together in this electoral campaign propose to fight for the following:

1. Education for all Mexicans, compulsory and free of charge up to the ninth grade (primary and secondary school).

2. Total elimination of illiteracy. A state monopoly of education at all levels and the elimination of private schools.

3. Autonomy for the university and for all other institutes and schools of this level even if they are not called universities. An end to authoritarian structures in all higher education (universities, institutes, and industrial and agricultural technical schools). Replacement of such structures by forms of self-management exercised by the teachers, students, and workers. Assistance benefits

for students, such as free room and board at school.

4. Professional, economic, and social improvements for the teaching profession at all levels.

5. Unification of the entire national educational system and institution of long-range planning in education. Jobs for all who come out of the secondary schools.

The above represents only the fundamental points that make up the broad electoral platform of the forces of the left that have united in electoral political action. The objectives of struggle they set forward can be won only by a united and organized movement of the masses, by the independent action of the working class, and by an

alliance between the working class, the peasantry, and other sectors of the people. Some points represent demands on the present bourgeois government. Others, which affect above all the property and economic interests of big business, will only be fulfilled with a revolutionary change in which political power passes to the hands of the working people, under the leadership of the working class, and with a reorganization of society leading toward socialism.

The Partido Comunista Mexicano, Movimiento de Organización Socialista, and Liga Socialista call on the working class, the peasants, the students, all manual and clerical workers, men and women, the youth, to hold this platform high, to fight

for it, and to join together in a great independent force opposed to the dependent capitalist system and to the government, to fight the reactionary and profascist forces—so as to emerge from the election campaign stronger in forces and in social and political influence.

Political freedom to advance toward democracy and socialism!

Mexico City
January 12, 1976

Central Committee of the Partido Comunista Mexicano. Political Committee of the Liga Socialista. Secretariat of the National Committee of the Movimiento de Organización Socialista.

INTERVIEW WITH MEXICAN CP LEADER

[As part of its coverage of the Mexican presidential election, scheduled for July 4, the Mexico City weekly *Revista de Revistas* interviewed leaders of various political groups, publishing their remarks in its May 5 issue.

[Of particular interest is the interview with Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, general secretary of the Mexican Communist party. His remarks help clarify the joint electoral platform signed January 12 by the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist party, the Political Committee of the Socialist League (Militant Tendency), and the Secretariat of the National Committee of the Movement for Socialist Organization.

[The full text of the joint electoral platform, in both Spanish and an English translation, was published in the March 1 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

[The translation of Martínez Verdugo's comments is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, general secretary of the Partido Comunista Mexicano, said:

"In face of the political crisis our country is undergoing, we think that unity of the left is the formula through which all those who seek a democratic solution to such crises can wield more effective influence. We see a very clear motivation that should encourage all people on the left, all those who are for democracy, to find points of agreement and bring to bear the weight of this historic current in the search for a democratic solution."

The Communist leader insists that a

political crisis like the one he describes could evolve toward either of two outcomes. "One is a democratic solution; the other is a hardened authoritarianism. And there are forces seeking the latter solution."

To orient the situation toward the first alternative, he adds, the main thing is that not only can the forces on the left be united but also the democratic forces. The former he defines as those that have a revolutionary program and tactics. The latter, he says, are those seeking to reform the system in a positive way, in a democratic way.

"This is the plan," he said, "of what at our last congress we called a policy of broad alliances. The fundamental role in it, clearly, is played by the forces of the left, which have to be the key to an authentic democratic transformation in our country. But we specify that other forces and institutions must also be taken into account.

"Among these, for example, we include the forces that are rejuvenating the church. For any meaningful change in the country, they must be taken very much into account and be included in any strategy for the formation of a new bloc of forces, which is what the left should aspire to."

Martínez Verdugo also mentioned among those that should be considered in a policy of broad alliances, as proposed by the PCM, the university, the "patriotic democratic" forces in the army, and even some progressive sectors of businessmen.

1. Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary party), the ruling bourgeois party.

"In such a plan would you include some elements or sectors of the PRI?" he was asked.

"Yes," he quickly responded. "There are some tendencies in the PRI that can be considered to be an official left and that are now becoming reactivated. They must be taken into account. They too can provide important support. Rafael Galván is a member of the PRI and nonetheless it has been possible to forge a relationship of unity with him in the workers movement. Of course, I am not talking about all of the PRI."

The PCM general secretary went into the situation of the Mexican left, which, he said, "is still passing through a period of fragmentation that has caused much harm." He thinks the main factor that has prevented unification is to be found in the tactical conceptions held by some sectors.

"Fundamentally," he said, "it seems to me that the difference lies in the attitude taken toward the governing bloc. For example, the PPS² sticks to the tactical concept that caused the failure of the left starting in 1940; that is, the so-called 'patriotic front,' as they formulate it. This consists of unifying the democratic and left forces around the government and under the leadership of the government.

"I think what is wrong with that tactic is it does not take into account the changes that have taken place in the governing bloc, above all starting with the Miguel Alemán government.³ It does not take into

2. Partido Popular Socialista (People's Socialist party).

3. Miguel Alemán was president of Mexico from 1946 to 1952.

account that the interests of the big bourgeoisie began to prevail in the government. Nor does it take into account that state capitalism began to be transformed into monopoly capitalism, above all from the time when the state sector placed itself at the service of the private monopolies. And this meant that the Mexican state no longer represented the interests it was able to represent during the Cárdenas government,⁴ for example.

"In our opinion, what the left should propose now is a struggle for a democratic leadership of the state, for a democratic leadership in national affairs, which requires that the forces on the left join together under their own leadership and not depend on the state apparatus."

Martínez Verdugo makes it clear that forming a grouping of the left like that

4. Lázaro Cárdenas was president from 1934 to 1940.

would not mean the adoption of a sectarian position. The unified left, he explains, could establish effective alliances, agreements with government forces, "so long as it acted in accordance with its own policy, its own tactics, and its own strategy, and not as an auxiliary of the government, which is how the government would like to have the democratic and left forces act.

"As long as the concept is not extended of the left advancing its own alternatives, its own solutions to the economic and political problems of the country, and as long as the left does not act autonomously, it will be difficult to unite the left," he warned.

Then he bemoaned the fact that due advantage has not been taken of the conjuncture presented by the presidential succession.

"Faced with the presidential campaign, the left had big possibilities to present an alternative and to utilize its strength.

However, it ended up neutralized because the PPS decided to follow its same tactic of supporting the official candidates, and the PST⁵ opted for a similar position."

"Concretely, what formula does the PCM propose to achieve a unification of the left?"

"Even now, despite the different positions adopted by the forces on the left toward the electoral campaign, we think an effort can be made so that before the campaign ends the forces of the left will succeed in drawing up a common program. To do that, we suggest the convocation of a national assembly of left forces. That would be a start."

Finally, Martínez Verdugo made the pronouncement:

"When the left really unites, there will be chances for a change in this country."

5. Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers party).

MOTIONS ON MEXICO AT UNITED SECRETARIAT MEETING MAY 22-23, 1976

Motion by Jones (passed)

The bureau of the United Secretariat will send a letter to Comrade Ricardo concerning points and formulations on the CP and other issues raised in his article. It will take a position on publication of this article after a clarification of Comrade Ricardo's views and those of the Liga Socialista at the next United Secretariat.

Motion by Galois (defeated):

The United Secretariat decides to recommend immediate publication of the article by Comrade Ricardo in either public or internal format. The United Secretariat will issue a short statement of disassociation from the position on the Mexican Communist Party taken in Comrade Ricardo's article, to be published in the same format (public or internal) as the article.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN JOSEPH HANSEN AND UNITED SECRETARIAT ON POSITION OF COMRADE RICARDO ON MEXICAN ELECTIONS

May 20, 1976

United Secretariat

Dear Comrades,

I am writing you concerning the article "Reply to an Essay on Sectarianism" by Comrade Ricardo Hernández, which, as you know, he has asked us to publish in *Intercontinental Press* as a reply to the article "Is the Mexican CP No Longer

a Stalinist Organization?" The latter document was translated from the February 1-15 issue of *El Socialista* (FBL) and carried in the March 1 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

The first paragraph of Comrade Hernández's reply ought to be recast, in my opinion, so as to eliminate the inaccurate reference to the sponsorship of *Intercontinental Press* as well as the "robbery" allegations. I hope that Comrade Hernández will agree to this.

However, I would like to call your attention to something of a more serious nature. Aside from incidental debating

points, which Comrade Hernández is, of course, entitled to make, the central thesis of his argumentation runs as follows:

A revolutionary program is correct on the historic level, but "conjuncturally" it is of little use.

From this he draws the conclusion that either ultraleftists or reformists can be more revolutionary at a given moment than Trotskyists who adhere to the program of revolutionary Marxism. In fact he maintains that Trotskyists of that kind are not revolutionists but sectarians.

Going still further, he maintains that although the Mexican Communist party betrayed the working class in the past, and most likely will do so again in the future, right now—in contradiction to Moscow's line—it is advancing a revolutionary platform. Hence he concludes that the electoral platform of the Mexican Stalinists must be upheld and advanced, and presented to the workers as the most important political development in Mexico today.

On the theoretical level, this thesis constitutes an example of empirical reasoning of the most vulgar kind. A discussion on this could have educational value.

Of more immediate concern to the Trotskyist movement as a whole is the fact that Comrade Hernández's thesis stands in direct opposition to the main proposition on which the Fourth International was founded; that is, the absolute necessity of adhering to and applying the program of Marxism-Leninism against both opportunists and ultraleftists in all the activities of the revolutionary party.

In support of his position, Comrade Hernández advances arguments concerning the nature of Stalinism (at least in Mexico) and the characteristics of popular frontism that can seriously miseducate militants if they remain unanswered. The same goes for his identification of engagement in the class struggle with involvement in an electoral campaign, in this case the electoral campaign of a small, discredited Stalinist group that is seeking to refurbish its leftist image.

It seems to me that it is the duty of the United Secretariat to take a stand on Comrade Hernández's position with regard to the presidential elections in Mexico. A statement should be issued, explaining, particularly to the ranks of the Fourth International, wherein he is wrong.

I should add that in my opinion closer attention should be paid to the meaning and possible consequences of Comrade Hernández's course.

To my knowledge, he has up to now given no account to any responsible body of the Fourth International of his negotiations with the leaders of the Mexican Communist party. How were the conversations initiated? What occurred in the sessions? What commitments were made by both sides? Why the strange reticence about reporting what went on? Isn't the leadership of the Fourth International entitled to know the facts? Doesn't Comrade Hernández's silence about this play into the hands of the Stalinists and make it more difficult to expose them?

Comrade Hernández's course of portraying the platform of the Stalinists as revolutionary and his deep engagement in championing their electoral campaign can have very detrimental consequences. His political line inevitably fosters a mood in at least part of the ranks of the Liga Socialista to capitulate to the Mexican Communist party.

In addition, Comrade Hernández is clearly proceeding in defiance of the position taken by both the Grupo Comunista Internacionalista and the Fracción Bolchevique Leninista against supporting the electoral platform of the Mexican Stalinists. That position was incorporated in the

unification agreement under the formula of engaging in a "common effort" to "start immediate common activity in all fields of work . . . including a common electoral campaign of all those concerned, in the presidential elections in Mexico." Comrade Hernández's course jeopardizes the unification process, for a principled unification would be impossible in face of opposing positions and lines of action on such a fundamental question as supporting a Stalinist electoral platform.

All this speaks for political intervention on the part of the United Secretariat, that is, a statement of opinion that could have a salutary effect among those who may have been misled by Comrade Hernández's central thesis.

To defer criticizing Comrade Hernández's rupture with one of the basic principles of our movement would constitute a bad mistake, in my opinion. The elections will be held July 4. The criticism, to be effective, should be made at once; in fact, it should have already been made.

To postpone action until after July 4, that is, until after the elections are over, would open the United Secretariat to charges of evasion of a clear political responsibility that would be hard to answer.

Comradely yours,

s/Joseph Hansen

* * *

Dear Joe,

We received your communication regarding the article sent by the Liga Socialista leadership in reply to the criticism of their electoral policy published in *Intercontinental Press*. We are glad to note that you are seeking consultation *prior* to publishing articles on controversial matters. Our advice is not to publish this article until after clarification of some of the political issues it raises. We will discuss the electoral policy of the Mexican Trotskyists at the July United Secretariat meeting, on the basis of a full dossier and information from all the groups involved, and will then decide whether a statement of the USec on that electoral policy is necessary or not, and whether and where this particular article should be published.

We only regret that the correct procedure you applied this time with regard to the publication of the LS leadership's reply to *IP* was not used before in relation to the publication of the criticism of the LS's policies in *IP*. In our opinion, it was a mistake to publish that criticism. This was in clear opposition to the tradition we have followed for many years of not *publicly* criticizing *tactical* moves of sections or sympathizing organizations with which we disagree; on several occasions, we were confronted with much graver mistakes than those committed by the LS comrades. By applying a double standard—*not* consulting the associate editors and the USec in the case of the criticism of the LS, but only consulting them in the case of the LS's reply to your criticism—you have once again confronted us with an accomplished fact and thus risk preventing the readers of *IP* from reading both sides of a controversy. From both points of view the procedure initially followed was wrong. We only hope that it will not be repeated, and that from now on you will consult us on the publication of all material in *IP* that is likely to provoke conflicts inside our movement.

Fraternally yours,

Walter, for the United Secretariat

* * *

New York, N.Y.
June 14, 1976

United Secretariat

Dear Comrades,

This will acknowledge receipt of the letter dated May 26 signed by Walter in behalf of the United Secretariat.

I find this reply to my letter of May 20 rather surprising. In publishing articles in defense of the basic principles of Trotskyism or in publishing counterpositions such as the article submitted by Comrade Ricardo, I did not raise the question of protocol in relation to either the contributing (not "associate") editors or the United Secretariat. Yet this is the main theme of your reply of May 26.

Let me recapitulate my letter of May 20. As I indicated, I am in favor of publishing Comrade Ricardo's article with the exception of some allegations in the first paragraph that have nothing to do with the argumentation in the rest of the article. I was hopeful that you would be able to persuade Comrade Ricardo to make the indicated changes in that paragraph.

The chief purpose of my letter of May 20 was to draw your attention to Comrade Ricardo's departure from some of the basic principles of Trotskyism in both his article and in his public political course in Mexico. The majority of the United Secretariat seemed not to have noticed Comrade Ricardo's deviations, although a copy of his article was sent by him to you for your information, and his course was well publicized in the Mexican bourgeois press. In this instance, the reports in the bourgeois press were more accurate than usual, as can be judged by the material in *El Socialista*.

In view of the failure of the United Secretariat to take note of what was happening, I indicated the ways in which Comrade Ricardo was departing from Trotskyist principles, the main one being his support of the platform of the Mexican Communist party and his depicting of that platform as revolutionary.

You say absolutely nothing about the questions I brought to your attention save the one concerning supporting and peddling the Stalinist electoral platform, which you aver is only a *tactical* question that you will consider after the election is over. Meanwhile Comrade Ricardo has continued his public advocacy of that platform on the basis of commitments to the Mexican Stalinists that still remain unknown to the Trotskyist movement.

As to the little you do say about Comrade Ricardo's course and his shocking defense of it, I differ with both your position and your procedure.

1. Our movement has never regarded support to a Stalinist platform as a tactical matter. *It is a political question involving basic principles.* Political intervention was called for in the Mexican situation in the form, at the very minimum, of a public statement, inasmuch as the violation of principles had been carried on publicly since last January, to the damage of the Trotskyist movement internationally.

2. To defer taking a political position until after the election is over would, as I noted in my letter, "open the United Secretariat to charges of evasion of a clear political responsibility that would be hard to answer."

It is now hard to avoid the conclusion that the majority of the United Secretariat does not hold that the programmatic line demarcating Trotskyism from Stalinism can be disregarded, or bent as one pleases, to facilitate wheeling and dealing in an electoral farce like the one in Mexico. Damage has already been done. Worse damage will result if the errors are not recognized and the proper balance sheet drawn, including criticism of the default in leadership committed by the majority of the United Secretariat through its failure to take a political stand on this question in a timely way.

Comradely yours,
s/Joseph Hansen

LETTER FROM BARRY SHEPPARD TO JOE HANSEN

July 5, 1976

Joe Hansen

Dear Joe,

At the July meeting of the United Secretariat the majority once again decided not to disassociate themselves from the positions taken by Comrade Hernández and his group toward the Mexican Stalinists in the presidential election campaign.

Six weeks ago, at the May meeting of the United Secretariat, the majority comrades decided to write to Comrade Hernández to ask him to change certain formulations in the article concerning the CP that he submitted to *IP* for publication. At the July meeting, they said they had decided to send a telex message instead of a letter. They had no copy of the telex message, and hadn't

received a reply.

LTF members at the United Secretariat meeting reiterated our opinion that enough information was already known for the United Secretariat to be able to take a position. Although the elections were scheduled for July 4 and the United Secretariat ought to have taken action months ago, comrades of the LTF again (as at the May meeting) submitted a motion that the United Secretariat disassociate from the position taken by Comrade Hernández. The majority voted this motion down, and proposed no other action, arguing that only a tactical question was involved.

Comradely,

Barry Sheppard

REPLY TO AN ESSAY ON SECTARIANISM

[Following is a translation of the article by Ricardo Hernández that is referred to in the above correspondence. On July 20 it became known to us that the article had been printed in the April-May 1976 issue of *Revista de America*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

By Ricardo Hernández

In the March 1 issue of *Intercontinental Press*, weekly organ of the SWP of the United States, an article was reproduced that appeared in the pirate edition of *El Socialista* dated February 1-15 "Is the Mexican CP No Longer a Stalinist Organization?" On this occasion we will not engage in describing how a small minority, of less than a third of the organization, stole our property, machines, finances, and even name of the publication of our party.

For the time being we will dedicate ourselves to answering their criticisms on our participation in the elections, since these have found an echo in the SWP, one of the most important sectors of world Trotskyism. The fundamental charges are the following:

(a) That we have endorsed the PCM [Mexican Communist party] as a revolutionary organization.

(b) That we constitute part of an embryonic popular front.

(c) That we have abandoned revolutionary principles, the Transitional Program, and the slogan "For a Workers and Peasants Government."

(d) That we believe that by means of "audacious maneuvers" we will succeed in finding a shortcut to constructing the party.

We will reply, then, to these charges, first discussing some of the conceptions of this small sectarian splinter, not so much because of its importance in Mexico—it is insignificant—but rather to contribute to a debate in the international Trotskyist movement.

The Reality Is Not a Program

We discussed the positions of the comrades who split (Fracción Bolchevique Leninista—FBL) before they broke from the Liga Socialista. Because of this we are familiar with their points of view and conceptions, apart from the fact that these emanate from a sector of the world Trotskyist movement.

They believe that the revolutionary program in and of itself makes revolutionists. That the mere fact of waving the Transitional Program links us to the working class and confirms us as its representatives. They frequently speak of the working class as "our class," although they lack a working-class composition and have no direct links with the proletariat or its struggles. Their link is first of all programmatic, and through abstract propaganda appearing in their newspaper. Articles and editorials advising the workers to demand this or that, although paradoxically these newspapers are distributed almost entirely to students.

For them, it is not necessary to make an effort to link up with the masses; it is not necessary to submerge oneself in the class struggle. Why? Because the program shows them to be the genuine representatives of the historic struggle of the proletariat. Thus we do not find it strange that they have made a fetish of the program, that it is the center of their constant preoccupation. Not in vain do they maintain that in Angola the MPLA as well as the FNLA and the UNITA are equal and none of them must be supported in their struggle against the others. Why? Because their programs are similarly nonsocialist. Everything is judged exclusively by the program: they are proletarian revolutionists although they do not put a foot into a factory; and the three groups in Angola are equals or "representatives of different tribes," although a civil war exists among them and on one side are the workers states and on the other imperialism and the African reaction. Nothing matters, only the program, only orthodoxy and its "authorized" formulations.

For example, they accuse us of no longer upholding the slogan "For a Workers and Peasants Government." They say: ". . . it is necessary to constantly explain—and to include as the crowning programmatic demand—the call for a *workers and farmers government*."

"The compañeros of the Liga Socialista (TM) have abandoned these basic concepts of revolutionary Marxism."

The joint platform that we signed with the PCM says: "Some points represent demands on the present bourgeois government. Others, which affect above all the property and economic interests of big business, will only be fulfilled with a revolutionary change in which political power passes to the hands of the working people, under the leadership of the working class, and with a reorganization of society leading toward socialism."

As our readers may note, the quotation from our platform does not say workers and farmers government. Nevertheless, although it is not the exact formulation utilized in the Transitional Program, concretely in this case what is the difference?

In the campaign we have always participated with a big banner that reads: "For a Workers and Peasants Government—Liga Socialista." In our speeches we identify ourselves as socialists against the capitalist system. And not only do we do this, the PCM and the MOS [Movement for Socialist Organization] do it, too. The latter pressed the slogan "For the dictatorship of the proletariat" at a meeting (please do not interpret this as a political endorsement of the PCM or the MOS). But who in the hell in Mexico, aside from them and this or that ultra group considers that this is a campaign to reform the capitalist system? Perhaps neither the Mexican masses, nor even the student activists have the clinical and orthodox Trotskyist eye of the FBL to note the "principled difference" between one or the other formulation.

One more example to demonstrate the sectarian and dogmatic character of our critics, the FBL. They accuse us

of having forgotten the slogan for trade-union independence and democracy:

"And what happened to the extremely important demand for *trade-union independence and democracy*, which more than 150,000 persons mobilized for in Mexico City November 15, 1975, and which thousands of electricians and tens of thousands of workers are fighting for?"

Let's see whether in reality this demand is included. Our platform says:

"6. Respect for the right to strike. Freedom of political affiliation for workers and other unionized sectors, and a ban on the incorporation of unions as such into any political party. Elimination of the government requirement that unions be 'registered.'"*

We would like to be at least shown the difference by which principles are broken, and what are the negative results that flow from such a difference. We are very simple—we do not see the difference.

What Is a Revolutionist?

To this question we are sure that the FBL would reply that a revolutionist is someone who has a correct program, and, perchance, they would add that they must put it into practice. This reply may be correct on a historic level. But on the conjunctural level the problem is more complex. For example, at the present moment any ultra or reformist group that objectively advances the mass movement because they are participating in it is more revolutionary than the FBL with its programmatic purity and its limpid Trotskyist banners which it does not contaminate in the swamps of reformism or ultraleftism. This is so although the FBL is programmatic above all these people.

Hence the revolutionist is not above place, time and space. Those who can play an objectively progressive role now can be monumental traitors tomorrow. But does the fact that they can become monumental traitors tomorrow bar us from acting with them now?

For us, the principal problem facing the Mexican Trotskyists is implantation in the masses and not "defining" the revolutionary program. Trotskyism in Mexico (and in many other places) has committed the sin of sectarianism, not opportunism, and this is the problem to resolve. Linking up to the masses is not resolved by the program in itself, nor by propagandizing it. The question at the present moment is, What links us closest to the mass movement—agitating for the Transitional Program with the FBL and other Trotskyist forces or advancing a limited platform with the PCM?

In conclusion, the revolutionist is identified by the degree he advances the movement of the masses and their consciousness. Politics is concrete. For us at this time, this platform, which in no way breaks principles (as we shall see further on) but which at the same time is not the Transitional Program, permits us to advance in the consciousness of the masses, obtain a greater audience for our own political line and link ourselves more to the movements; therefore this alliance has been well worth the trouble.

* In the platform, the final sentence of the quotation reads: "Elimination of the government requirement that unions be 'registered' and an end to any government interference whatsoever in the trade unions." The truncation may be a typographical error.—*Translator*.

If all this could have been done with the FBL, we would have committed a grave error in preferring to participate with the PCM rather than with the Trotskyists. In short, the last word will belong to the real balance sheet that each organization will be able to cast on its electoral experience.

Are We Apologists for the PCM?

The FBL, in its constant wandering among historic truths, fails to see the forest because of the concrete trees it encounters at each step. In Angola only socialism will resolve the problems. And meanwhile what does it propose in the civil war and on the MPLA? What do they say should be done? Nothing! Only socialism will resolve the problem of Angola.

In Mexico they tell us that only the Transitional Program will lead to the Socialist Revolution. Consequently we must be against Stalinism, they say. But the PCM calls for the unity of the left and is willing to undertake a campaign for democracy and socialism in Mexico. What should we do? Nothing! They are Stalinists.

According to the FBL we have already thrown ourselves into the arms of the PCM. We have endorsed it as a revolutionary organization. They base themselves on the following quotation from our platform:

"The organizations that have united together to act in this electoral process do not hide their socialist objectives, nor their revolutionary method to achieve them. They consider it their duty to labor stubbornly to achieve them."

Eureka! They found the key to the problem! Here we have the endorsement of the PCM. Finally they found the formulation that reveals the mystery. Here they went over to Stalinism. It is interesting that from a formulation they make out a whole policy. In the first place they do not notice that the platform proclaims as its methods: the independent mobilization of the working class to achieve its objectives; the necessity to bring about a change in structures to resolve Mexico's problems; and the necessity of contesting the bourgeoisie's power. Whoever stands consistently on this is a revolutionist and our ally.

If the PCM breaks with this—as is perhaps most probable—it will be the most affected, since its ranks, especially the youth, are educated in this. Fundamentally in the conception of the democratic and socialist revolution as a single process. That this is in contradiction with Moscow's line is obviously the case. We will see how the contradiction is resolved. But the members of the FBL point with their finger of fire: they are Stalinists and they must be denounced for their past, present and future.

In addition, our critics forget that in the same number of *El Socialista* in which the platform was published a criticism was likewise directed against the PCM for its behavior in the conflict at Fundidora de Monterrey. But this is a concrete criticism, at a concrete place, where the role of the Monterrey section of the PCM was clear. It was not an abstract sectarian criticism such as sects make to acquire a political personality, demarcating themselves from the rest of the left.

A Popular Front Without a Bourgeoisie and for Socialism. Or the Art of Finding Popular Fronts in the Most Difficult Situations.

The comrades of the FBL find a popular front to attack in order to give vent to their Trotskyist impulses. Clearly

the bourgeoisie is not included in this front, but the program is already set up for them.

In speaking with a member of the leadership of the PCM, I told him that the platform must make very clear what type of government we wanted so as to avoid confusion on the character of the alliance we were making. That is, we did not want anyone to believe that we were calling for an alliance with some sector of the bourgeoisie. The old leader of the PCM gave a laugh and told me: Not even a danger of this exists.

He was completely right. In Mexico the bourgeois left has its party, the PRI [Partido Revolucionario Institucional], and does not in the least need an alliance with the PCM or any other force of the left. The PRI is in fact a popular front (and Trotsky defined it as such), bringing together the bourgeoisie and the government bureaucrats along with the trade-union and peasant bureaucracies. Why another popular front? In Mexico whoever wants a popular front has to support the PRI, as the PPS [Partido Popular Socialista] does.

In addition we do not believe you can have a popular front that poses combatting the bourgeoisie, that calls for a sliding scale of wages, the nationalization of the banks and basic industries, including foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals, and that advocates a government of the working people under the leadership of the working class, with a social reorganization pointing toward socialism. A curious popular front!

What do our critics propose? First, it is clear beyond a shadow of doubt that they are not inclined to unite with anyone—not even the FIR [Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria] boosted by the other sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Mexico, the GCI [Grupo Comunista Internacionalista], which proclaims support to Campa but on another program. Having made very clear

that its Marxist Leninist Trotskyist orthodox thought does not mix with any deviation of any kind, they adopt the position of voting for Campa but against his program. Between parentheses, they vote for Campa “as a way of casting a class vote.” (But did they not say that Campa is the candidate of a popular front, and consequently not of a “class” organization but of class collaborationism? There they go with their contradictions.)

In other words, they call for voting for Campa after having denounced him, as well as his party and the coalition it launched; they write articles in their newspapers and that completes their mission. They completed their task in face of the most important political happening in Mexico today.

We are not going to lose a single opportunity to link up with the masses. The last thing we will take into consideration is the sectarian and dogmatic criticisms of ossified Trotskyists and their apprentices.

Our participation is governed by various principles that we have not violated in any way:

- (a) Not to create illusions in the electoral system.
- (b) Not to create illusions that the capitalist system can be reformed.
- (c) To denounce the capitalist system and its government.
- (d) To make clear that only the independent mobilization of the workers will achieve results.
- (e) That the solution to all the problems is socialism.
- (f) That the struggle for socialism is international.

These principles, combined with the advance in consciousness of the masses and their vanguard sectors, are the requisites for our participation. This we are achieving to the extent of the possibilities open to us. Our policy is dictated by the needs of the masses and not by the purist worries of a propagandistic sect without perspectives.