

[XS: PC]

January 9, 1978

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are materials in preparation for discussions at our next meeting, which will take place on January 27, 28, 29 in the usual place. The material relates to two agenda points.

1) Italy. Enclosed is a written report on the situation in Italy, which summarizes the oral report given at the last meeting. Also enclosed is a translation of the interview with Comrade Caronia, which appeared in Bandiera Rossa, along with excerpts from his letter of resignation from the GCR. It should be noted that, while the introduction to the interview states that it was published without any response from the editors, Bandiera Rossa has since carried several articles that reply to the points raised in the interview. This translation was prepared before these responses appeared.

2) Colombia. Three translations are enclosed.

a) Platform of the tendency formed at the founding convention of the PST, held in September 1977.

b) Platform of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency of the PST, dated December 9, 1977.

c) Resolution passed by the December meeting of the PST Central Committee on "The Existence of the Tendency and Sanctions."

If our resources permit, other preparatory materials may be sent out before our next meeting.

Comradely,

Pola, for the United Secretariat Bureau

NOTES ON THE SITUATION OF THE GCR, ITALIAN SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

1. In the past two months, delegations of the Bureau, at the request of the Italian section, have gone to Italy on three occasions. They participated in the November meeting of the Central Committee, in meetings with the GCR Political Bureau, and in a meeting with the LSR (an organization claiming allegiance to the Fourth International with which the United Secretariat decided to maintain relations -- see the minutes of the December 1977 USec meeting).

This report provides some initial information to United Secretariat members and leaderships of sections and sympathizing organizations as a means of facilitating future USec discussions.

2. The GCR is once again in an extremely difficult organizational situation. The present crisis was brought to light by the resignation of the Political Bureau member who was also the editor of the section's newspaper, Bandiera Rossa (see the attached translation of an interview with him and excerpts from his letter of resignation). This resignation served to highlight both the extreme difficulties encountered in developing a stable and coherent leadership for the section as well as the depth of the ideological break with the political and theoretical fundamentals of the Fourth International on the part of a long-standing member of this leadership.

Thus this resignation accelerated the emergence of a new crisis which had been brewing in the organization since the last congress (held at the beginning of 1977). The most immediate and most radical expression of this crisis takes the form of strong pressure in a significant section of the organization in favor of dissolving the GCR, de facto or theorized. In various ways, several members of the Central Committee took such positions at the mid-November CC meeting. It is not necessary to stress that dissolving the organization, even under the pretext of "eliminating an obstacle to the building of a genuine section of the International in Italy," can only lead to programmatic liquidation, especially since no concrete project for constructing an Italian section of the International accompanies this professed desire to "get around the obstacle of the GCR." This point was clearly stressed by the United Secretariat Bureau representative.

3. It is difficult to trace the causes of the present crisis in an exhaustive way. In the framework of the preparations for the next congress (which should take place in the first three months of this year), part of the discussion will be devoted to providing answers to this question. Nevertheless, several elements can already be pointed to:

a) The current crisis is located in the general framework of the crisis of the far left (the dissolution of Lotta Continua, very big organizational difficulties for Avanguardia Operaia and the partial failure of its project of fusion with Manifesto-PDUP, etc.). This crisis results from the incapacity of these organizations to respond to the central political questions posed in a more and more pressing manner since 1974-75. The deep recession of the Italian economy brought increasingly to the fore the necessity for the working class to find overall solutions. The political matrix of the three main centrist organizations, whatever their profound differences, rendered them incapable of providing correct political answers. This only increased their ineffectiveness in face of the initiatives of the PCI and their inability to define a clear policy on the trade-union level (Lotta Continua generally developed a position which "ignored" the question of the reformists or at best sought to "bypass" the traditional workers movement). To this must be added the effects of the general crisis of

These elements are combined with the profound social crisis racking Italian bourgeois society, and with the emergence of movements (women, youth, unemployed youth, etc.) which will serve to accelerate the crisis of the far left and which, given this crisis of political line of the centrist organizations, will have difficulty finding a political outlet and linking up with the workers movement. A new wave of spontaneism, with ultraleft aspects, is developing in the milieus that made up a big part of the "social space" in which the far left has sunk its roots since its emergence.

The effects of such a situation could not fail to make themselves felt in the GCR, especially since the organization was again undergoing stagnation and since its political project -- despite imprecisions -- was strongly linked to developments in the far left, more specifically Lotta Continua.

b) For several years the GCR has continuously encountered extreme difficulties in defining a politico-organizational project and in implementing clear and resolute choices in the sense of building an overall political organization. This has been accompanied by very big weaknesses in the systematic construction of a central political and administrative apparatus, and in the definition of a policy of recruitment and education.

c) Linked to this weakness are big difficulties evidenced in coming to grips with the construction of a collective leadership which functions on a regular basis and is located in the same place. This weakness now makes it very difficult to put forward a determined response to the overt crisis.

d) Finally, it is necessary to stress the lack of regular discussion between the Italian section and the International.

4. If after the November Central Committee a brake has been put on the process of dissolution of the organization, the situation remains no less precarious.

The groups in Rome and Genoa are dissolved, either in fact or by conscious decision. Only the Turin organization (65 militants) is functioning as a group properly so called. While in Milan (40 militants) losses up to now haven't been significant, the functioning of the organization as such is nonexistent with the exception of the factory cells (Alfa, O.M., Imperial...). However, to give a more accurate picture of the organizational situation, it is necessary to underline the quality of the workers implantation in a series of factories in Milan, Turin, and Bari; this is of outstanding importance for any project of strengthening the Italian section.

5. For the present, the Political Bureau of the GCR has defined three priority tasks:

a) assure the participation in the preparatory discussions for the congress of all comrades who, although they've "taken their distance" from the GCR in the past period, claim allegiance to the International and affirm their willingness to build a section;

b) open discussions with the LSR in order to explore the possibilities for closer collaboration and common work, with the possible perspective of fusion;

c) begin a discussion on an organizational balance-sheet and on methods and norms of functioning.

All this is obviously situated in the framework of a general political discussion. A text analyzing the political situation has been unanimously adopted by the Political Bureau and an English translation will

be sent out shortly to United Secretariat members in order to prepare the USec discussion in January.

6. According to information provided by the LSR leadership at the meeting with the USec Bureau, the LSR had between 230 and 240 members at their last congress and presently numbers 300. A big majority is comprised of high-school students or apprentices (students from schools of the CET-type).

The LSR puts out a weekly, Punto Rosso, for its intervention in the youth milieu. Sympathizers are grouped around the newspaper, with the perspective both of defining a "current" in the high-school movement and of accumulating forces for the building of their organization. Three thousand copies of Punto Rosso are sold. Since July, the LSR has not had its own newspaper, but will launch a monthly sometime in early 1978.

The LSR leadership states that three points must be at the center of its discussions with the GCR:

-- the characterization of the present period in Italy and the central political questions that flow from it ("what struggle against the various forms of popular-front government," "the question of a workers government");

-- the way in which the reformist parties (PSI, PCI) must be approached, and the trade-union question;

-- the modalities of constructing a Leninist organization in Italy today.

On January 9, a meeting should take place with the Political Bureaus of the GCR and the LSR, and a delegation from the USec Bureau. The GCR BP has invited a representative of the LSR to its Central Committee meeting scheduled for the beginning of January, in order that this comrade can participate in the discussions on the political situation and explain the positions of the LSR.

Interview published in Bandiera Rossa, No. 20, December 1, 1977

Comrade Antonio Caronia has left our organization. He was editor of Bandiera Rossa. In this interview he explains the reasons for his decision. We are opening a discussion with all our comrades and readers on the subjects raised here. The interview is published without any response from the editors of the newspaper -- Translator's note.]

* * *

Q: How do you see the present situation of the movement and of the revolutionary left?

A: It seems to me that the Congress of Bologna in September and many of the events that have followed it show that the crisis of the revolutionary organizations is now unavoidable. There is a tendency among comrades, both in the factories and outside, to organize themselves in a united way, to tear down barriers, to refuse to accept agreements from above. Even in a situation such as in Milan, which is still backward from the point of view of the presence of the movement and where the organizations (MLS -- Workers Movement for Socialism and DP -- Proletarian Democracy) play a pernicious role, this tendency was plainly expressed in the assembly of November 14 (an assembly of student collectives, far-left organizations, and trade unionists in Milan to discuss an upcoming demonstration against repression -- translator). Of course, the organizations recognized this situation and tried to come to grips with it as well as they could. There was the left turn of the DP, which had a manipulative character (I don't know how productive it was for them). There was the attempt by all the organizations to "get at the head of" this upsurge toward unity. But the more they act, the more these organizations demonstrate that they represent an obstacle to the development, growth, and maturation of the movement.

Q: Do you think that the construction of a party is no longer an objective to be pursued, and that the problem of political centralization is no longer posed?

A: I don't think that it is no longer necessary to work toward the construction of the party or of a vanguard political organization. But times change, as do the characteristics of the vanguard and of the movements that express it. The "historical" organizations of the revolutionary left (from now on we can refer to them as such) were the product, or organizational crystallization, of the radicalization of the student movement of 1968 and partly (a rather small part, and not always the most significant) of the vanguard in the factories. These forces made a link through a pre-existing theory, the theory of the small groups and journals from before 1968 (Quaderni Rossi, Classe Operaia, Quaderni Piacentini) and of the "left" currents inside the historic parties of the class (PCI and PSI as well as the experience of the PSIUP). These groups brought to the vanguard workers and students schemas of interpretation of reality which corresponded to their experiences and objectives that corresponded with their expectations. This is how Lotta Continua, Manifesto, and Avanguardia Operaia were built up as "parties." Today this kind of elaboration is burned out; it has been consumed in the living struggles of the past years and in the changes in the tissue of society and the political framework which these struggles have helped modify. The results of the June 20 elections and the developments that followed (the agreement of the six parties) have rendered useless the policies previously elaborated and utilized ("united front" and "government of the left parties") -- even if they have not eliminated the need for a tactical approach toward these parties. The emergence of the new movements (women, youth, intellectual workers in precarious economic straights) demands the fulfillment of needs that are impossible to integrate inside the old schemas:

cultural needs, demands for socialization (social integration -- translator), the refusal to subordinate the struggle for liberation to the struggle for the revolution (that is, for overthrow of the economic structure). The crisis of the organized far left arises out of the convergence of these two factors. All interpretations of this crisis in terms of "errors in political line" seem to me very reductionist. Properly speaking, the crisis is a "crisis of politics" of these groups, a crisis of conception of political activism, a crisis of perspectives. Without this understanding one could think that it would be sufficient to correct "the line" or to extend internal democracy.

In my view, today -- and I don't know for how much longer -- there is no room for the construction of a new "party" of the revolutionary left; the conditions do not exist for an overall and general political synthesis. The vanguards of the movements must still go through a rather long process of reflection, maturation, and getting to understand each other. A whole series of functions that in the past were performed directly by the organizations (for example, the spread of information in the movement and among the vanguard as well as, to some extent, elaboration) are today carried out by the radios and also by journals such as Lotta Continua. Other functions, such as political centralization, are today incompatible as such with the characteristics of the movement. The process that is developing takes on quite different rhythms and characteristics from city to city -- look at Milan, Bologna, and Rome, to take three indicative cases. This is not to say that it is not necessary to aim for national initiatives (journals, congresses, discussions), but we should have no illusions that such attempts at aggregation will have results that they cannot possibly have.

Q: Up to now you have only spoken of the youth movement and the "new subjects," as they are called (the new politically active forces, such as women, youth, etc. -- translator). But what are your views in regard to the existence and activity of the working class?

A: I want to make clear right away that on the fundamental problems raised by this question I don't have any clear answer, and I don't think that anyone has, since this is one of the central points of the crisis of Marxism today. From the more conjunctural and political standpoint, it seems to me that no one has any clear idea of what to do. And this is precisely one of the reasons for the impasse in which both the movement and the different sectors of the workers' opposition find themselves. I think it is incontestable that the crucial tactical problem for the movement today is precisely to know how to integrate sectors of the working class (of the proletariat generally but especially of the "strong sectors" of the working class) in a movement of struggle and opposition to the government and to the agreement of the six, and to know how to help the left inside the factories to reach this goal. I think that the movement in Bologna and in Rome has shown that this question is being posed. But in addition the debate that was opened at Bologna, including the interesting contribution by Claudio Persanti (Lotta Continua, 9/11/77) indicates that a part of the movement (and not only "the eleven"*) has decided to carry out a battle

*The "group of eleven" is a group inside the student movement in Rome which published a document calling into question the actions of the "Autonomists" inside the movement and in its relationships with the traditional organizations of the workers' movement. Among these eleven -- who have become a kind of temporary reference point for those who want to take their distance from the Autonomists -- five are either ex-members of the GCR or are still formally members.

against the image of the movement of "the people with no guarantees" (marginalized layers -- translator) as a "totalizing social entity" (I am referring to this contribution) and against the "Laing-Cooper line," quickly digested and badly assimilated. Obviously I don't think that one can pose the problem of relationships with the working class in terms of penetration from the outside by a program and a leadership (which is what the Autonomia wants to do, despite its theorizations). Just as the youth movement needs to recuperate and rethink its own original content without becoming banal and withered through the ritual of the "old mode of politics," so too the vanguard in the factories, the working-class left, will also be faced with the problem of knowing how to integrate these considerations and propositions and how to utilize them in building its own programmatic proposals.

Q: So in brief, you think Marxism and Leninism have been bypassed?

A: More than ever before, I cannot give a clear and unequivocal answer to such a question. I think it is obvious to everyone that Marxism is in crisis. In addition, the crisis of the revolutionary left, if you look at it more closely, is the crisis of the Leninist model -- of course, in the manner that it has been applied (other "interpretations" of Leninism are perhaps not in crisis because they have not had the possibility of going through experiences which would give rise to such a crisis). I speak here above all of Lotta Continua, despite all its theorizations. I see two new facts which must at least lead us to question the "classical" Leninist model of party building (I don't know what conclusions will flow from them). The first is the enlargement of the proletariat and the process of struggle and partial conquests that has resulted in important sectors of the working class no longer being -- as they were in Marx's time -- the poorest sector of the population. The second relates to the enormous diffusion of information and culture (even if only in the form of "sub-culture") in a process that is at the same time the crisis of bourgeois ideology and of the management of this crisis by the bourgeoisie. In my view it is from this standpoint that one must consider the phenomenon -- not present to such a degree during past revolutionary upsurges -- of the "production of culture" by movements in revolt, whether proletarian or not, in a capitalist society in decline (in this sense the "Movement of 1977" bears more resemblance to the movement of 1964 in the United States, the Berkeley movement, and the antiauthoritarian movement in Germany in 1967-68 than to that of 1968 in Italy). I think we have to put to the test the classical affirmation that the proletariat does not have the capacity to build its own culture before overthrowing capitalist relations of production. Because in view of the degree of crisis of bourgeois ideology, the forces liberating themselves are so strong, the accumulation of unutilized knowledge is so great, and the number of unsatisfied needs are so numerous, that perhaps the production of culture is no longer tied to the conquering of a certain portion of the economy, the means of production, and the pre-existing political forms -- as was the case with the bourgeoisie emerging from inside feudalism in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. But I don't know whether this is true or not. It's only a hypothesis that I think we need to work on and think about. What seems to me certain is that the central problem of the revolution in Italy remains the relationships between the "new subjects" and the "strong sector" of the proletariat; but it must also be posed in these terms. And, at any rate, all conceptions of this relationship in the sense of an already-formulated "program" that only has to be articulated and introduced into the class (and among the new subjects) will not serve to advance things very much.

EXCERPTS FROM THE LETTER OF RESIGNATION FROM THE GCR BY COMRADE CARONIA, DATED NOVEMBER 7, 1977

". . .I have been convinced at least since the congress of February of this year that the GCR is no longer (and perhaps has never been since 1968) an instrument that is useful to the political vanguard and the revolutionary process in Italy. However, it is possible to remain in an organization even if one does not agree with its political line, methods of work, or daily choices, and it is possible even to take part in a leadership while having lost all confidence in its members as well as in its actions (my situation demonstrates this over the past ten months and perhaps over the past two years) -- but this is possible only if certain conditions exist.

"For me, these conditions are two: First, to be convinced of the validity of the fundamental options, the "ideal" characterizations, and the theory on which the GCR and the Fourth International are founded (even if they are applied in a disastrous or sterile way by the political body of the organization and its leadership). Second, to be convinced that in the GCR there remain comrades, groups, sectors, and experiences that are still utilizable but are openly marginalized (not by "bureaucratic" decision, of course, but by the logic of short-sighted political choices) or not sufficiently recognized as valuable. After the last congress I agreed to remain in the leadership bodies (I had questioned this periodically for a long time, largely because of a lack of confidence in my own forces and capacities). This decision was exclusively for this reason: to give a guarantee to all the comrades and also, in a certain sense, to give a kind of "representation" (take this statement with a sense of humor) of those comrades with whom, obviously, I have had consistent and significant convergences over the course of the past internal discussion.

"Of the two conditions that I have cited, the second remains, for me, still valid, but not the first. I am no longer convinced that the totality of the theoretical and political heritage of Leninism as the organization defends it (and also in the way in which it applies it, which is disastrous, but on this the present pre-congress discussion demonstrates that there is a convergence on the part of those who have the most divergent positions) is sufficient to explain the reality that we live. . . ."

Declaration of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency
and Counterreport on the Party Regime

Very important developments have just occurred in our International, in the Bolshevik Tendency, and in various national parties, especially in the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores in Colombia (former Socialist Bloc). In assessing the attitude of all the members and leaders of the International, these events are crucial. In the case of the PST, they are influencing its development in a decisive way.

The first outstanding item is the decision of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction and the International Majority Tendency to dissolve and accept a common framework of discussion in preparation for the Eleventh Congress of the Fourth International. This decision is a consequence, in our opinion, of a number of factors, the most important being a rise in the world revolution, mainly in Europe, and the resulting growth on an international scale of our world organization by hundreds and thousands of new members. This rise and growth poses an objective need to struggle unitedly to provide the Fourth with policies and a leadership conducive to centralizing the action of our movement on all levels. No one is under any illusion concerning the fact that the present leadership of the International, as well as that of the minorities, such as the dissolved LTF, are too limited politically to lead the Fourth. Likewise no one is under any illusion about the dissolution of factions necessarily implying unity of the forces in an automatic way, still less the disappearance of ideological-political differences, including in decisive matters. And we are aware that entering into the decision of the factions to dissolve was an attempt to seek political and organizational readjustments in face of defeats in the execution of certain policies.

But what is decisive, what we must assess as Marxists and Trotskyists, is the vitally important aspect of creating the best possible conditions -- through collective discussion, democracy, and common action -- to promote the greatest unity and centralization. All this must be done without impairing the necessary discussion, criticism, and formation of ideological groups or tendencies within the framework of the Fourth International. More favorable conditions are being created for developing a policy and an international leadership better fitted to deal with the necessities and possibilities demanded by the present course of the world revolution.

The second outstanding item is the contrast between this positive fact and the deep crisis that has struck the up-until-recently dynamic Bolshevik Tendency. The tendency was formed with the correct claim of offering political alternatives and a leadership in face of the picture of crisis presented by our world movement, especially with regard to orientation for building Trotskyist parties with mass influence in those countries experiencing revolutionary upsurges. The Bolshevik Tendency formulated criticisms of the initial drafts of the document on Europe approved by the United Secretariat that were, in our opinion, correct as a whole. It proceeded in an equally correct way in its criticism of the ambiguous formulations of the LTF on the course of the Portuguese revolution and its political attitude in face of the Black revolution in Angola. As a whole these differences, so burning in themselves, justified the proposal to form a new tendency within the existing framework of the International.

Nonetheless, the Bolshevik Tendency exaggerated the class character of the differences not only polemically but in practical conclusions. It

forgot to emphatically underline that the differences fell within the framework of Trotskyism and the Fourth International and it evaded a frank discussion in the leading bodies of the International, failing to present positive alternatives or to open the discussion in a collective way. It acted in a way that was not only factional but extremely sectarian, constantly alluding to the incurable or almost incurable character of the majority of the leaders of the International, including the present leadership of the SWP which it considered to be "living on its prestige" and compromised by involvement in morally condemnable affairs. It made Revista de América not only the organ of a public faction but a sectarian instrument of political combat. The necessity for a principled and vigorous discussion was unfortunately equated with McCarthyism, the IMT was branded as Paunist, positions were misrepresented as in the case of the French LCR and the Spanish LCR (see the articles in Revista).

Comrade Moreno announced that a decision had been made to reply after the IEC meeting to the proposal to dissolve tendencies; the BT was transformed into a faction, which was equivalent to deepening still further the sectarian course that had been taken. In line with this, an image has been projected in the most demagogic way of the BT preparing to take over the leadership of the International; this was done at the last meeting of the tendency attended by delegates from the parties in Argentina, Peru, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Ecuador (October 1977). In addition the thesis was offered that these tendencies had dissolved with the objective of forming an unprincipled united front against the BT and that the dissolution was a consequence of the pressure of bourgeois public opinion, mainly in Europe. We consider such a step to be most unfortunate and we hope that it will not be carried through in view of the new political situation that has developed in which the leaders of the BT can contribute to the discussions for the Eleventh Congress.

Proceeding further, the BT laid out tactical orientations, including some of the most detailed nature -- reflecting a paternalistic approach to national leaderships of certain parties (Spain, Venezuela, Colombia) that resulted in the withdrawal of one of the groups of the BT in Spain, the one led by Lucas, and the withdrawal of Antonio and Yarak from both the BT and the International. The case of Antonio merits special attention, since he was the main leader of the Venezuelan party and the main person in charge of work for the BT in Spain. Antonio was presented by Comrade Moreno as a model Bolshevik leader and the prototype of a genuine revolutionist. As shown by the documentation we have seen, Antonio was subjected to a process designed to destroy his good name and accused of setting up a faction against his own party. We lament Antonio's decision to leave the Fourth and we will try to get him to return to its ranks; but this does not prevent us from pointing out -- on the contrary it makes it obligatory -- that the causes of the situation in which Antonio found himself were rooted in the deep deformations in method employed by Comrade Moreno in relation to the construction of a party and the treatment of national leaderships. Antonio states in his letter of resignation: "Through this letter I want to make known that I have broken with the BT. The fundamental reason for this decision is the liquidationist work carried out by Nahuel Moreno in the Venezuelan section of the Fourth International."

The leadership of the BT has not been guided by an effective collective leadership but has been exercised by Comrade Moreno in a personal way and with a paternalistic character. Changes in decisions, orientation of line, disposition of resources -- all of this is done outside of the leadership bodies, or with merely formal consultation. This dynamic leads to a practice of splitting national sections and an ultra-factionalist and sectarian conception of constructing the world party.

The third important event concerns the Colombian Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores which has undergone a significant growth. In addition a process of fusion has been opened on the basis of a political agreement that makes the fusion possible within the framework of a united electoral campaign. Despite this, the intervention of Comrade Moreno and a sector of the leadership of the Argentine PST in the Colombian PST by means of bureaucratic and administrative methods has created a situation that has come close to splitting the party and in fact threatens to liquidate the party. A systematic campaign has been opened designed to destroy leaders of the party through mechanically transposing the class struggle into the party and by administrative means artificially suppressing the ideological differences, characterizing these leaders permanently as petty bourgeois, making them appear to be ingrained factionalists, and promoting a campaign of monstrous personal slanders against them. On this aspect we would like to point out at least two scandalous cases: the effort to destroy the political character of Comrade Socorro Ramirez, promoted personally by Comrade Moreno, as was amply demonstrated before hundreds of participants (more than 300) at the recent congress of the PST. Comrade Moreno publicly branded the most important Trotskyist leader in our country and the indisputable symbol of the mass movement as a petty-bourgeois student type; he resorted in addition to threats and blackmail of all kinds and accused her of forming part of a secret faction against which he had organized a "pro-Bolshevization" faction. In addition he resorted desperately to trying to promote alternatives for the presidential candidate by means of flattering other figures. This attempt was roundly defeated by the spectacular reply of thousands of workers who came to hear Comrade Socorro and to speak with her as the presidential candidate, and by the adherence of the LCR (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria), the OCR (Organización Comunista Ruptura), and the URS (Unión Revolucionaria Socialista) to the campaign. Moreno even carried on this campaign of detraction internationally as has been confirmed by all the Colombian comrades who are members of our party in Europe. At this Central Committee meeting an attempt is being made to prolong the penalty imposed on Socorro which if successful would amount to a genuine expulsion. The same goes for the attempt, personally promoted by Comrade Moreno, to politically destroy Comrade Ricardo Sanchez. In his immense mountain of slanders, Moreno has gone so far as to portray Ricardo as a racist. Behind the back of the party, Moreno promoted the actual expulsion of Comrade Ricardo from his duties in the leadership of the PST. Moreno even barred him from attending the party congress to reply to the "new" charges mounted with respect to the secret faction led by Ricardo. Moreno's letter of "accusations" and slanders against Ricardo, which was shown to a limited number of members, its circulation being restricted, reduced to excerpts; but we are going to bring it to the attention not only of the whole party and of Colombian Trotskyism but of our world movement. In the letter the singular method is employed of calling the slanders "provisional," part of a "first draft." Comrade Ricardo is ready to have his conduct judged by a tribunal named by the bodies of the International and to accept the verdict pronounced by it. The political and moral vindication of our leaders is for us a matter of principle, as the tradition of the Trotskyist movement teaches.

A conception of deformed democratic centralism is being advanced that comes close to bureaucratic centralism, a conception similar to the one held by Zinoviev, bordering on the worst justifications advanced by the Stalinists. The metaphor "the party acts like an army" has been made the guideline of this conception. It is forgotten that the party acts like an army in an absolutely energetic and centralized way -- but in relation to the class struggle. And nothing is more foreign to a Leninist and Trotskyist party than the use of army language within it, or the concept of a camarilla implicit in the military. The notions of hierarchy and authority residing in the leading bodies are based on the political

reality of recognition by the party ranks. The authority emanating from these bodies is that given by a commonly respected policy. The recognition of Lenin's revolutionary leadership was based on his capacity, knowledge, energy, and experience and not on the fact that he belonged to a directing apparatus.

Moreno proceeded then to eliminate political discussion, branding it as swamp-like and studentist in character. Necessary information on the contradictions among the leaders was hidden from the party. Centralism was carried to unheard of lengths. The step was clearly taken of constituting a faction against the party. To this is to be added the fact that the Argentine members responded to their own leadership and in actuality constituted a parallel leadership above the leadership bodies and appearing as superimposed on the party. The party congress itself lost all political authenticity when it was declared to be "sui generis" (???), that is, abnormal. Abnormal because it was not proceeded by a normal democratic debate -- three months -- and because the documents themselves were presented, as in the case of the statutes and the Political Report, a week before the congress, and even on the opening day of the deliberations. Democracy was cut down still further when the congress was prevented from acting as a sovereign body and priority was given to the interests of a group that demanded absolute loyalty to these interests. With this objective, the phantasm of a secret faction was created and various comrades were manipulated, being fed all kinds of false information that converted them into sectarians. A political and organizational crisis was thus precipitated, and in face of a new avalanche of persecution against worker leaders and cadres of the leadership of the party the crisis acquired mounting dimensions.

It was forgotten that democratic centralism is defined as a dynamic reality dependent on the relation of the party to the class struggle. Likewise forgotten was the excellent teaching of Trotsky:

"The regime of a party does not fall ready-made from the sky but is formed gradually in the struggle. A political line predominates over the regime. First of all, it is necessary to define strategic problems and tactical methods correctly in order to solve them. The organizational forms should correspond to the strategy and tactic. Only a correct policy can guarantee a healthy party regime. This, it is understood, does not mean that the development of the party does not raise organizational problems as such. But it means that the formula for democratic centralism must inevitably find a different expression in the parties of different countries and in different stages of development of one and the same party.

"Democracy and centralism do not at all find themselves at an invariable ratio to one another. Everything depends on the concrete circumstances, on the political situation in the country, on the strength of the party and its experience, on the general level of its members, on the authority the leadership has succeeded in winning. Before a conference, when the problem is one of formulating a political line for the next period, democracy triumphs over centralism. When the problem is political action, centralism subordinates democracy to itself. Democracy again asserts its rights when the party feels the need to examine critically its own actions." ("On Democratic Centralism -- A Few Words About the Party Regime." Writings of Leon Trotsky (1937-38), page 90. Emphasis added.)

The concept of party practice fostered by Comrade Moreno deviates far from this precise methodological orientation. Hence a regime of administrative penalties and political persecution has become primary today in the PST.

But in addition a propagandistic and apparatus concept of the party has been fostered. Under the pretext of "Bolshevizing it" the apparatus

has been placed above the party. The party has been converted practically into a business agency, having been subjected to three financial campaigns in one year, an unusual occurrence in a political party. One of Moreno's favorite phrases is "Finances are the thermometer of the situation in the party." Not the political line as Trotsky said, nor the party's rooting itself in the working class, nor recruiting new cadres ...but finances; such a conception of centralism, such apparatus deformations have also brought deformations in the application of the party's policies and the erroneous formulation of new policies for the mass movement. Today it is perfectly clear that vacillation and inconsistency were shown in the struggle against the reactionary politics of López, especially against the little constituent assembly which required, as it still does, systematic denunciation in the working-class movement. Today it is perfectly clear how totally mistaken was the characterization of the Civil Strike of September 14 as superstructural, and how mistaken was the failure to mobilize the party for broad and audacious engagement in the strike. Today it is perfectly clear that the dynamics of the mass movement were underestimated and opportunities like the national mobilization of November 18 were not grasped. If a balance-sheet is drawn of the main strike struggles in the past six months, we find ourselves facing the very unfortunate fact of the party's failure to participate in them. The case of the oil workers strike constitutes a direct accusation, since this strike represented a unique opportunity in the workers movement in recent years.

In face of these facts of political reality, we have presented alternatives that have been rejected and hidden from the party or misrepresented. The regime has even reached the point of censoring from the press political positions on national policies in the mass movement.

There is an extremely grave fact that involves the moral standing of Trotskyism itself. A campaign was launched in the name of the party to collect funds to aid in setting up the Pluma publishing house in Bogotá. In the leading bodies of the PST, Comrade Moreno held the ambiguous and contradictory position of saying that the publishing house was a party institution when it was a matter of collecting funds and saying that it was a commercial outfit when financial reports were demanded. At the moment Pluma has been subjected to various financial and juridical actions in which the management of the enterprise, irresponsible to say the least, has come under scrutiny. In face of a recent action freezing operations, the Executive Committee of the party has been called on to support the publishing house unconditionally. Such a demand is completely unacceptable. What corresponds to Trotsky's method is the total independence of the party from any kind of financial apparatus, since the party cannot run the risk of engaging in financial enterprises. The party can only intervene indirectly through agents. The identification of Pluma with the PST has been converted into a dead weight on the prestige of the party; it is obvious that we do not approve either morally or politically of the adventurous management of Comrade Moreno in financial questions. On this, in addition, we are asking that detailed accounts be made available to the party in relation to the funds of the PST both as to what was turned over to the publishing house and what the funds were used for.

We consider ourselves to be main promoters of the effort to make our party a detachment of the International -- without this implying any demerit to other comrades who were radically opposed to this -- we make this declaration after having consciously thought out all the implications, of having waited for a change and a rectification of the positions we have criticized. The struggle for the unity of our party, placed in danger by the divisionism of Comrade Moreno, is an objective to which we have committed ourselves. The method that we propose to overcome the

contradictions is the one that makes our tradition Trotskyist. We seek a democratic discussion leading up to a special congress of the PST in the first week of March. We ask for the immediate repeal of all penalties and the reinstatement of Comrades Ricardo, Gustavo, Gladys, and Socorro in their posts on the Executive Committee.

For this we appeal for the formation of the Tendencia Democracia Proletaria (Proletarian Democracy Tendency), which will undertake the obligation of struggling for the following points as an alternative to the present crisis within the party:

1. We resign from participating in the Bolshevik Tendency.
2. We greet the process of dissolving the factions and tendencies within the International.
3. We support the process of fusion between the PST-C and the LCR and call for a fusion congress to be held in the last week of March.
4. We assert the right of our party to enter into and maintain relations independently with the world bodies in accordance with the statutes of the International. Within the framework of a general policy on an international level, we assert the right of our party to apply national tactics and forge its own leadership on the basis of its own direct experience and without a substitute of any kind. Internationalism does not mean substituting for national leaderships and liquidating them.
5. We hold that the method of resolving the contradictions in the PST-C and guaranteeing unity lies in the calling of a special congress with the following agenda: a. Internal Party Regime. b. Relations between the PST-C and the BT.
6. To struggle for the lifting of the sanctions.

Bogotá, December 9, 1977.

Signed:

Socorro Ramirez
Ricardo Sanchez
Gustavo Vivas
Gladys Jimeno
Ciro Roldan
Jaime Galarza

RESOLUTION ON THE EXISTENCE OF THE TENDENCY AND SANCTIONS

1. The party's growth and unity is being threatened as a result of the faction fight promoted by a group that intends to destroy the method of party building and the internal regime adopted unanimously by our founding convention.

2. The immediate and future prospects for our party depend fundamentally on our ability to adopt a correct policy for the class struggle and apply it in a consistent way, on our moving forward in building a capable leadership team, and -- and this is intimately linked to the other -- on our membership orienting itself toward the masses and our internal life developing in a disciplined way in the framework of democratic centralist criteria.

3. The stepped-up faction fight against the decisions adopted by the convention and against the leadership of the party has been pushed through by violating the adopted resolutions concerning dissolution of tendencies, which prohibit the formation of new tendencies or factions until the next pre-convention period.

4. The factional practice of the comrades has harmed activities in the development of the election campaign, the promotion of mass mobilizations, and the financial campaign, which has resulted in a decrease in the party's capacity for militancy.

5. Since the convention, this group of comrades has been engaged in various factional activities. It has held its own factional meetings with rank-and-file members, once with one comrade suspended from the party (Ricardo Sanchez); without the agreement of any leadership body, it has organized the distribution among the membership of internal material of the Executive Committee, the Central Committee, and the United Secretariat in order to further its factional goals. In this, they went so far as to allow the circulation of this material outside the party, as occurred with the distribution of Antonio's letter and other documents (balance-sheet of the convention, report on the activity of Ricardo Sanchez in Europe, letter from Gustavo Vivas to the Executive Committee, letter from Jaime Galarza to the Executive Committee and the Central Committee) at the door of the Jorge Eliécar theater during the national electoral convention. This chain of facts includes on the part of some Executive Committee members fostering their tendency in rank-and-file structures, bypassing the disciplinary rules of the bodies of which they are members, and culminates in the formation of the so-called Proletarian Democracy Tendency, which later presented itself to the Central Committee on the basis of a document announcing its formation and signed by comrades Socorro Ramirez (member of the Executive Committee), Gladis Jimeno (suspended from the party by an Executive Committee decision not yet ratified by the Central Committee), Gustavo Vivas (whose resignation from the Executive Committee was accepted a few days ago), Jaime Galarza (member of the Central Committee), Cirilo Roldan (member of the Bogota city leadership), and Ricardo Sanchez (suspended from the party).

7. In view of the situation in the party, which is threatened by a crisis that includes a possible split, we reaffirm our position that the unity of the PST requires the strictest and increasing development of the internal regime and the growing proletarianization of the party.

The best chances for these comrades' overcoming their factional attitude and for ensuring that they return to party building activity as it has been defined by our founding convention are linked primarily to their social status. Only a closer link with the workers movement

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in the organization of their lives and in their political activity will create the conditions for overcoming their factional attitude and for enabling them to again find a place in party-building activity on the bases defined by our convention.

RESOLVED:

1. Immediate sanctions against comrades G.V., G.J., and C.R., who are suspended from the party at least until after the election campaign. The comrades will maintain relations with the party through the Executive Committee. Those comrades who have been full-timers will receive two months wages. Before the lifting of the adopted sanctions can be discussed, it is an indispensable condition that the comrades fulfill the following requirements:

- a) get a fulltime job in a factory or enterprise;
- b) develop political activity at their place of work according to the party line;
- c) form at least one committee of supporters of the party and accomplish every task required of any rank-and-file militant, including payment of regular dues according to the dues scale; accomplish the requirements linked to the financial campaign as have been established for every party member;
- d) win a minimum of five workers during the next six months.

2. According to the charges that have been presented, Comrade Socorro Ramirez would merit the same sanction as the other comrades cited above. Taking into account the fact that the comrade did not attend the Central Committee session to present her case and defend herself, the Executive Committee will have to listen to her and take its own decision to be ratified by the next Central Committee meeting.

In accordance with the decisions taken by this meeting of the Central Committee, Comrade Socorro Ramirez will have as her militant task and fundamental responsibility the presidential candidacy.

(After the CC, comrade S.R. did not come to the Executive Committee to present her case, at the same time as she said during a plenary session of the Bogota city membership that she would not respect party discipline. For this reason, the Executive Committee decided to separate Comrade S.R. from the party.)

PLATFORM OF THE TENDENCY FORMED AT THE PST CONVENTION

The undersigned, members of the PST Executive Committee, consider:

1) that in the past period, especially during recent weeks, it began to become apparent that there were comrades in the party who manifest their dissatisfaction with the PST's course and make accusations against the leadership, calling it bureaucratic, Stalinist, antidemocratic, disloyal, and functioning as a clique;

2) that the person who has most inspired and organized these criticisms has been Comrade Ricardo Sanchez, who has already been sanctioned for previous factional activities;

3) that the attacks made by these comrades reflect a phenomenon which is developing inside the organization: sectors of the organization reject any change and, because of their inertia or for class reasons, yearn for the old Bloque Socialista, a student and teacher organization that discussed a lot and intervened very little, a disorganized party in which an elite of leaders and members were doing whatever they liked;

4) that it is no accident that it is Comrade Ricardo who most inspires and organizes this kind of attack, and also no accident that, four months after having voted his sanction, he has yet to take a step along the basic line that would allow its reconsideration: to give up his past social milieu of café and bohemian intelligentsia and root himself both socially and politically in a milieu more favorable to his political and methodological development.

We decide:

to constitute ourselves as a tendency for the defense and the continuity of the Bolshevization of the party and to invite all delegates present at the convention to support the following points:

1. For the ratification of the general line of the policy adopted by the leadership of the party.

2. For the election of a totally homogeneous leadership in which the minority will not be proportionally represented, in accordance with the traditional statutory norms of the Fourth International.

3. In the event that we receive a majority at the convention, for the election of the comrades chosen by the tendency as the exclusive leadership of the party. If we don't win a majority, for the refusal to take any responsibility in the leadership in order that the full responsibility for leading the party falls completely on the shoulders of the new leadership.

4. All members of the tendency have full autonomy on the subjects to be dealt with at the convention, except for the "report on activities" and "election of leadership," points on which they pledge themselves to apply tendency discipline.

Members of the tendency reserve the right to admit new members. The tendency reserves its right to present new documents. This is a first draft which can be modified or supplemented in the framework of its general line.

5. It is possible, if not inevitable, that some comrades may reflect positions which tend to draw the party backward to an already bypassed stage, since they cannot or will not adapt themselves to a party which is recruiting a lot of workers, in which the leadership is selected fundamentally on the basis of its militant commitment

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and not its polemical abilities, in which discussion is a tool for intervention and not a goal in itself, and in which there is genuine centralization and Leninist discipline.

6. It is necessary that the convention culminate the present stage of Bolshevization of the party and discuss in a sincere and fraternal way the criticisms made to the leadership by unsatisfied comrades; in order that our highest body categorically confirm its full and unconditional support to the present leadership's Bolshevization policy so that it can be further deepened after the convention.