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P.O. Box 314
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January 18, 1978

Brenda Brdar
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Dear Brenda,

I had not written sooner because I'd hoped to send you a report about the meeting of the U.S. Committee to Free the Five Puerto Rican Nationalists. They met last Thursday night but as yet our person there has not talked to me about the results of the meeting. We've also postponed answering the request for support for the March 4th demonstration on the basis that we wanted to know how other members of the U.S. Committee would react.

On your question about "how we should approach winning people who are still PSP members to the party." The best answer I've heard came from members of the SWP who were former members of the P.S.P. They recalled that comrades approached them on political questions and proposals. The SWP comrades were quite open and non-sectarian. Instead of proceeding to attack the positions of the P.S.P. on which we disagree comrades would convince them of the political correctness of the issues, e.g. on gay rights, on the danger of Popular Front politics in Chile, on the necessity to intervene in the Boston struggle of the Black community, etc.

The comrades urged the P.S.P. members to take these ideas before their own organization and attempt to convince them to adopt these positions. Over a period of time, when these militants began to realize that the P.S.P. would not change they drew the correct conclusion that they belonged in the organization that had the positions they agreed with.

In addition to winning people over to our ideas and organization from this type of group we must be careful not to mis-educate them on the question of loyalty to their party. We expect our comrades to be loyal to the party. However, if potential members got the impression that it was alright to switch allegiance, without any regard for the integrity of their previous organization, they could carry that notion into the SWP. Therefore we want PSP members to understand our politics first and to understand we expect them to be loyal to the SWP.

Once they understand our politics and agree with our ideas then it appears to them they should get their organization to adopt those positions. When their organization refuses or postpones acting on correct political ideas serious people have to confront the question of what to do.

I've not heard of a better way to win over P.S.P. militants. If they were a counter-revolutionary tendency within the movement we might act differently, but that is not the case. Another advantage to this approach is that it enables us to continue to work fraternally with the organization in actions where we agree while making our ideas clear to anyone who wishes to discuss or learn about us.

The meeting between two members of the Comisión Política of the P.S.P., Victor Marciano Santiago and Andres Torres and two members of our P.C., Linda Jenness and myself went well, we thought. It is the first time in a long time that national leaders of their party and leaders of ours have met formally.

The questions we discussed were defense of the nationalist prisoners, support for the strike of UTIER in P.R., the Bakke case and support for Hector Marroquín.

From the Militant you can see they endorse our fight for Hector. They are sponsoring the March 4th demonstration in D.C. called by the Chicago groups. They don't think the focus is quite accurate. Because of their planned convention (April or May) they won't be able to do much work on any activity. However, their correct position on Bakke will enable us to work with them wherever we both have forces.

On the UTIER strike, we pointed out that we were preparing an article for Perspectiva Mundial which would be picked up by the Militant. We suggested we would do more depending on what measures the P.R. government took.

They were very interested in knowing how we were structured and we explained it to them. One question they were concerned with was that they were speaking to the leadership of the party and not merely a Puerto Rican commission. By implication that means we should have no qualms about English speaking comrades dealing with them.

Although nothing of substance was new the talks indicated by tone and by the very fact that it was held with the knowledge of their P.C. that we can look to a better relationship with their leadership. Our next meeting will take place the first week in March.

Your talk with Blaut indicates that they are beginning to face up to the fact that we are a force to be taken into account.

Nelson G., our representative on the U.S. Committee to Free the Five Nationalists just talked to me and reported that the March 4th D.C. action was not taken up. In informal talks with PRSC people they have expressed reservations about committing forces to the action.

Comradely
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Jan. 10, 1978

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Dear Catarino,

One very important question I forgot to ask you at the YSA convention is: how should we approach winning people who are still PSP members to the Party? These are people who are definitely checking out various political groups and ideas, but are still actual members of the PSP. Of course, several of the members of Sigfrido's study group are in this category, as are a few other Puerto Ricans who have come around our bookstore for literature on the Party and Trotskyism. This question becomes especially important now because it looks like we have some opportunities in Chicago to increase our collaboration with the PSP.

I remember what you reported concerning our attitude toward this question in Puerto Rico itself. But of course the situation here is so different.

As far as working with the PSP goes, Bobbie, Manuel, and I recently had an informal meeting with Jim Blaut. Although he's not Puerto Rican, he's very influential in the PSP here. He attended the forum we held for you and spoke during the discussion period. We discussed the Marroquin case, the Blanco tour, and activity around the Bakke decision. Blaut endorsed Hector's right to political asylum, suggested placing a Blanco leaflet in each copy of Claridad they distribute before the Blanco meeting, and was very interested in organizing a planning meeting of various groups to put together an educational meeting on Bakke in the Puerto Rican community. He felt that the PSP would not be able to mobilize for April 15 due to meager resources and congresses coming up in April and May. However, he indicated that the Chicago PSP had criticized itself for not taking up the issue of Bakke strongly enough, and thought that they would be very willing to do some educational work around this issue.

Flaut also indicated that the PSP here is concentrating on community organizing activities as opposed to mass meeting type work. They believe that this is the best way to firm up their base and supporters.

I hope the meeting between the PSP and P.C. representatives in New York was productive. We're looking forward to hearing a report on it. Also, thanks so much for introducing us to the comrades from Puerto Rico at the YSA convention. Our discussions with them were very helpful.

The only new developments with the MLN -- March 4 demonstration is that they seem to be having reservations about going ahead with a national demonstration with so little financial and other support. Also, the Grand Jury victims here will have to remain in jail until the Grand Jury term expires at the end of January.

Comradely,

Brenda

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