

14 Charles Lane  
New York, NY 10014

March 28, 1978

TO ORGANIZERS AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed for your information are copies of correspondence concerning the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party and the PRT of Mexico.

Comradely,

*Larry Seigle* (KP)

Larry Seigle  
SWP National Office

MAR 11 1978

1250 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90017  
March 7, 1978

SWP NO

Dear Comrades,

This letter is a report on a request by the Socialist Union in Los Angeles to conduct joint work with us in support of the PRT of Mexico.

On February 21, we were contacted by Jesus Mena, representing the Socialist Union and the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party. He stated that his group had been in contact with leaders of the PRT and wanted to meet with us to discuss a joint campaign of solidarity with the PRT's efforts to achieve legal status. Mena indicated that his group would be represented by Milt Zaslou, Edith Zaslou and himself. At Peter Camejo's suggestion, I represented the party.

At the meeting Mena proposed two things - a public forum-type meeting in Los Angeles for a speaker from the PRT and a campaign to raise funds for the PRT. The public meeting would focus on the PRT's fight for legal status and its work among peasants and would be broadly sponsored. If successful, it would be repeated in other cities. The fundraising campaign would be launched at the public meeting and would be aimed at raising money to help the PRT obtain tape recorders, office machines and other equipment.

Mena claims that he and other leaders of his group have discussed this proposal with the leadership of the PRT in Mexico City and Tijuana. Mena told me that the discussions began when he visited Mexico City last December. He also claims that Comrade Javier of the PRT, who visited Los Angeles in January, stayed at his home and further discussed this proposal. Mena also claims to have met with Comrade Jorge of the PRT in Tijuana. Mena says his proposals have the support of the PRT leadership. We have not had the opportunity to meet with the comrades of the PRT.

I informed Mena that any joint activity of this sort would have to be discussed between the national leaderships of the SWP and PRT and that we would let the SU know after those discussions took place.

Comradely,

  
Bruce Marcus

cc. Peter C.  
Pearl C.

(Typed on National Office letterhead)

March 24, 1978

Bruce Marcus  
Los Angeles

Dear Bruce,

I want to give you the thinking of the comrades here on the points raised in your letter about your meeting with the members of the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party in Los Angeles.

Before taking up the specific proposals referred to in your letter, it would be helpful to review the work the party has already been able to do in collaboration with the PRT.

Comrades in San Diego, Phoenix, and Tucson have had regular political collaboration with the PRT in Sonora and Baja California for some time now. In the case of the San Diego branch, comrades have been working closely with our Mexican comrades since early 1974. We have been able to exchange speakers for public rallies, forums, educational activities and other events, as well as participating in demonstrations and picketlines on both sides of the border. We have also given greetings to and participate as observers at important gatherings of the PRT in these areas, and they have done the same.

As you are aware, our collaboration with the Mexican comrades took a giant leap forward with our joint efforts and collaboration in building and organizing participation in the national anti-deportation conference last October in San Antonio. There, Mexican comrades, including a member of the PRT's Political Committee, collaborated with our fraction and enhanced the overall impact of our forces at that conference. Since then, comrades in Arizona and San Diego have continued to work closely with the PRT on this important issue.

In addition to this, we have been able to work closely with the PRT in Baja on women's liberation activity, providing speakers on this topic as they request, and participating in educational activities they have organized on women's liberation work. Just this month, Virginia Garza and a woman from the Minority Task Force in NOW spoke, along with a PRT leader, at a very successful forum in Baja on International Women's Day.

A comrade from the PRT was invited to speak at a Minority Women's conference we helped to build in Phoenix recently. Another comrade from Nogales was able to speak at an important rally in Tucson in defense of Jesse López, a Chicano activist jailed on frame-up charges. The PRT in Baja, Sonora, and nationally have also worked closely with us in defense of our comrade, Héctor Marroquín. A relative relaxation of restrictions on visas by the Carter Administration has made it somewhat easier to carry out this work than in the past.

With the launching of the PRT's campaign to win legal status in Mexico, we have stepped up our collaboration with comrades in Sonora and Baja. A comrade from Arizona, for example, spoke at a recent rally of 200 in Nogales, organized by the PRT to urge support for the legalization effort. We have also helped to publicize this campaign on this side of the Rio Bravo through our press and public meetings organized in San Diego, where PRT leaders from Baja were able to speak. When comrades in Tijuana were harassed by local authorities while collecting signatures on their petitions, comrades in San Diego tried to get letters and telegrams from Chicano and other leaders and activists sent to the Tijuana police to protest this harassment.

Now, as to the proposals from the CRSP. First, the idea of a public forum in Los Angeles to hear a speaker from the PRT seems to us to be an excellent one. A meeting where leaders of the PRT could explain their efforts to win legal status, as well as presenting the program and the perspectives of Mexican Trotskyists would be an attractive political event. Both the SWP and the PRT would benefit from such a meeting. There is a continuing and growing interest in Mexican politics in this country. One of the attractive powers the SWP has, especially among Chicanos, Mexicanos, and other Latinos, is its fraternal relations with revolutionists in Mexico and throughout Latin America. Here is a chance to organize a concrete expression of the internationalism of the SWP and of the Fourth International.

We believe this side of the proposal should be separated from two other questions: one, whether this should be a joint effort with CRSP; and two, whether the axis of the program should be to raise funds for the PRT.

The CRSP is a hardened and vociferous opponent of the SWP. It is made up of disparate elements who are held together by basically one thing, their hatred for the party and their goal of destroying it or at least weakening it. In order to advance their goal they masquerade as "supporters of the Fourth International." But this is pure fakery designed to confuse their true character.

For this reason, it wouldn't make much political sense from the standpoint of either the SWP or the PRT to have a "joint campaign" between the SWP and the CRSP. If we in Los Angeles are in a position to undertake a broadly sponsored meeting to hear the PRT speakers, we would be much more interested in getting cosponsorship from other more politically

significant groups and individuals. (Of course, we would not reject endorsement from CRSP for such a meeting.)

If the comrades there feel that we are not able to initiate such a broadly sponsored meeting, it seems to us that a big, city-wide Militant Forum would be a good idea anyway. We could invite contacts, publicize it widely, let the comrades in San Diego and Arizona know well in advance in case they wanted to send some people, and build it in a big way. It could be quite an important event for our movement.

Now, should the axis of this meeting or other activities along the same lines be to raise money for equipment for the PRT, as CRSP proposes? We don't think so. Our concept of internationalism does not revolve around sending money or equipment to help sections of the Fourth International.

It has always been our conception that raising money to finance a revolutionary party is part of the process of winning political support and establishing an organization. It is a key test in the process of building a party. This cannot be done in any real way through external sources of funds. For one thing, sources of funds from outside are always under the control of someone else, and there is never any guarantee they will continue. More importantly, if a party's activities are not based on its own political and financial resources, its activities can become artificially distorted, leading to serious political miscalculations. This, incidentally, is how many of the Stalinist parties operate, with various forms of subsidies from Moscow.

We see internationalism differently. We think the most important aid the SWP as part of the international Trotskyist movement can give a particular section is to share our opinion on politics, and whatever lessons we have learned in the course of building our party and making our contribution to the construction of the Fourth International. Second, we can collaborate with our cothinkers on specific international campaigns, as we have been doing with the PRT on a range of issues that affect politics on both sides of the border. Third, we can do the single thing that will be our biggest contribution to advancing the cause of the Mexican revolution: we can build a powerful Trotskyist party in this country, and mobilize working people in opposition to the American imperialist government.

Within this framework, there are specific occasions when the international does try to help sections with specific projects. There are also from time to time specific international appeals launched to raise funds for political prisoner defense work. But these are not and should not be decided on a party-to-party basis, but by the international. This is the only way that many different needs can be weighed politically, and decisions reached on a political basis.

Whenever any such international campaigns are undertaken, we in the SWP are, of course, bound by the specific laws of this country, including the Voorhis Act, and other laws that restrict or prohibit our participation as a party in some activities.

This brings me to a second reason why we should not get involved in a campaign to raise funds or buy equipment for the PRT, as the CRSP proposes. It would be illegal to do so without registering under the Foreign Agents Registration Act. Any fundraising efforts by the SWP, or any other organization, on behalf of the PRT, and any contribution of money or equipment to the PRT, would permit the government to require us to register. Under this particular piece of reactionary legislation, an "agent of a foreign principal" is defined to include any person who acts as an agent or representative, or in any other capacity at the request of any foreign political party, and who engages in the U.S. in soliciting, collecting, dispersing or dispensing money or other things of value for a political party in another country.

The registration requirements are sweeping, and include comprehensive and detailed statements and reports on the names and addresses of members as well as detailed descriptions of the activity that is being undertaken. There are also quite elaborate bookkeeping and financial reporting provisions, as well as other equally onerous provisions. Failure to comply is punishable by five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Thus it would be foolhardy to engage in any activity such as the fundraising campaign outlined by the CRSP for legal reasons.

You report that the CRSP claims that the PRT leadership is in accord with the CRSP proposal. However, we have not heard anything from the PRT on this, and don't know what their opinion is. We will send them copies of this correspondence, and ask for their opinions and any reactions they have to our approach to this.

By the way, you report that Mena says that when Comrade Javier from the PRT visited Los Angeles in January and stayed at Mena's home, they discussed the CRSP proposal. Did Comrade Javier mention anything about this to the comrades in the local when you met with him?

Comradely,

*Olga Rodríguez*

Olga Rodríguez  
for the Secretariat

Branches in the Southwest  
Political Bureau, PRT  
Peter Camejo  
Pearl Chertov