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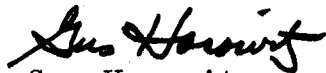
February 20, 1978

To National Committee Members and Organizers Attending the Plenum

Dear Comrades,

As part of the background material for the plenum world movement report, enclosed is a copy of the January 29, 1978 report to the United Secretariat on the situation in the Colombian PST, by Jean-Pierre Riel. The report, together with appendices A-V, has been approved for publication in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin, which is in preparation. Some of these appendices were already sent to you on February 14.

Comradely,



Gus Horowitz
SWP National Office

Report to the United Secretariat, January 29, 1978
On the Situation in the Colombian PST
By Jean-Pierre Riel

Gestation of the Crisis

In the report I gave at the October 1977 meeting of the United Secretariat on the September convention of the Colombian Socialist Workers Party (PST--Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores), I said that a crisis within the organization was reflected at the convention. At that time, it was not clear how this crisis would develop. By the time of the PST Central Committee meeting in December, however, the question was settled. In fact, the convention represented the beginning of what has become a major crisis in the Colombian PST. The development of this crisis can be illustrated by the following:

* In May 1977 Comrade Ricardo Sánchez, a founding leader of the PST, was suspended from the PST for six months.

* At the Central Committee meeting in early December, Comrade Sánchez and four other leading comrades--Jaime Galarza, Gladys Jiménez, Gustavo Vivas, and Ciro Roldan--were expelled.

* Immediately following the Central Committee meeting, Comrade Socorro Ramírez, also a PST leader and the party's presidential candidate, was expelled.

* Today, at the end of January 1978, more than 315 comrades (full members and candidates) have either been expelled or are in the process of being expelled. This represents a large portion if not the majority of the organization.

Two questions took up more than two-thirds of the time of the September 1977 convention--the case of Comrade Sánchez and the charge that Comrade Sánchez and others had formed a secret faction whose aim was the destruction of the party.

When I reported on the convention at the October United Secretariat meeting, I was unable to give you all the details of the accusations against Comrade Sánchez, because the documentation was not available. At the time of the convention, Comrade Sánchez had already been suspended for four months--with two more months to serve. The convention, which was open to sympathizers, discussed for at least four hours whether Comrade Sánchez could enter the hall and listen to the debates. The convention was never informed of the precise charges against him. At that time, I asked for documentation on his case. But the written material was made available to me only at the December Central Committee meeting; and so I will first say a few things about the Sánchez case, because it underlies the subsequent developments.

The accusations against Comrade Ricardo Sánchez were first made by Comrade Nahuel Moreno in a 13-page letter (undated-Appendix A). The charges themselves are flimsy, but I want to concentrate on the method used.

First, the charges are based on opinions that Comrade Sánchez allegedly expressed in private discussions with Comrade Moreno and in private letters to Comrade Gladys Jiménez.

Comrade Moreno--as a long-standing leader in Argentina, a country where there is a dictatorship--asks that his word be given greater weight than that of Comrade Sánchez.

At the end of his letter Comrade Moreno says:

"I want to confess to the Executive Committee and the Central Committee of the Colombian PST that I suffered two very deep subjective crises as a result of my relations with Comrade Ricardo, and these subjective crises may have left their mark on me. One of these subjective crises I have already mentioned; it relates to my disgust in relation to what he said at the June Central Committee meeting. The other was grave, although subjective. Since it is known to various members of the leadership and since I believe this could have predisposed me against Comrade Ricardo, I want to relate it, in relation to me personally and only as it concerns me. I expressly prohibit its being published for the rank and file and utilized against the comrade, because it could provoke reactions of an emotionally charged rather than political character. I authorize only that it be borne in mind in relation to me and for this sole reason I'm telling it."

In the mimeographed version of this letter circulated in the PST, a blank space follows this explanation. In the name of seeking objectivity, of calling attention to possible subjectivity on his part, Comrade Moreno launches what he says is an accusation so grave against Comrade Sánchez that it can't even be written down. Thus the worst suspicions about Comrade Sánchez are created in the minds of comrades who read the letter.

With the agreement of Comrade Sánchez, I'll tell you what has been left out. Comrade Sánchez, who was formerly the "political secretary" of the Bolshevik Tendency, a founder and central leader of the Bloque Socialista (the organization which became the PST) and its representative to the United Secretariat, was accused of being a "racist."

Since this figures among the accusations made against Comrade Sánchez, it's interesting to read the transcript of the May 10-11, 1977 discussion in the Executive Committee of the PST on his case, which was published by the PST (Appendix B), with a restricted circulation.

At least one-third of the transcript turns around one question-- whether or not to postpone the discussion on his case. Part of Comrade Moreno's letter of accusation was handed to Comrade Sánchez the evening before the discussion was scheduled to take place, and the remainder was given to him an hour and a half before. On the basis that he had never before heard many of the accusations contained in the letter submitted by Comrade Moreno, he asked for a few days to study the charges and prepare a written reply.

In response to this request, Comrade Moreno asked Comrade Sánchez where he thought he was. The following is an excerpt from the transcript:

"RS: I need to study the evidence...
"H: Why evidence, we're not in a trial...
"RS: Obviously!
"H: It's not a bourgeois trial.
"RS: It's not a bourgeois trial; it's the beginning of the truth.
"H: It's a proletarian trial...
"H: Proletarian means reading and then saying 'I agree or 'I disagree.'"

Thus, Comrade Sánchez didn't need more time. According to "proletarian justice," as laid down by Comrade Moreno, the defendant was limited to reading the charges and saying whether he agreed or disagreed with them.

In this discussion, Comrade Moreno returned to his assessment of Comrade Sánchez: "You're a great leader with some weak points, like those that all the leaders of the Bloque had here." The accusation of racism, previously a "grave" charge, now becomes merely a weak point in a "great leader."

The transcript also includes a discussion on how to avoid giving the rank and file all the facts.

The May meeting of the Executive Committee had decided to suspend Comrade Sánchez for six months. However, he was granted a special status: he remained in the leadership of the Bolshevik Tendency, and was considered to be a "collaborator" with the central leadership of the PST and with the editorial board of the PST newspaper, Revolución Socialista.

At the September convention, there was a four-hour discussion among the delegates on whether to allow Comrade Sánchez to attend. A vote was taken to bar him from attending the convention, even though it was open to sympathizers.

As I said before, the bulk of the time of the September convention was taken up with this discussion about Comrade Sánchez, and the related point of the alleged existence of a secret faction that supposedly included Comrade Sánchez. It was Comrade Moreno who first raised the allegation concerning a secret faction in an Executive Committee meeting just prior to the convention. He charged Executive Committee members Comrades Socorro Ramírez and Gladys Jiménez with being part of it.

Following the point about Comrade Sánchez at the convention, Comrade Moreno raised this charge again at the convention. He called for the formation of the "Pro-Bolshevization Tendency" to fight against comrades who were characterized as comrades who "refused to change themselves, for class reasons or inertia...." (Appendix C.) [See Item A-2 in National Committee mailing.]

The evidence presented at the convention concerning a "secret faction" was based on the testimony of one witness, Comrade Olga Cienfuegos. This witness has written a letter explaining how, as a very new member of the organization, she had been pushed to present testimony at a meeting of the Pro-Bolshevization Tendency. In her letter, Comrade Cienfuegos denounces the methods used and denies the interpretation made by the leadership that her testimony proved the existence of a secret faction. (Appendix D.)

Comrade Camilo González, Political Secretary of the PST, was the comrade who, at the convention, presented the testimony of Comrade Cienfuegos as proof of the existence of a secret faction. Later, Comrade González made a self-criticism in the PST internal bulletin. (Appendix E.) He explains that he acted in a "light-minded and irresponsible way." He had "interpreted her remarks without having seriously discussed them with her."

Thus, the charge that a secret faction existed was proven to be unfounded.

Nevertheless, the campaign against comrades who had resisted the measures taken against Comrade Sánchez continued. The emphasis now was placed on their alleged petty-bourgeois class character. This is supposedly proved by their "denial of the basic principles of democratic centralism," by their "individualism" in relation to political work, and by their "conception of the party," which is different from that of the leadership. (Appendix F.)

The assertion that the opposition is "petty-bourgeois" became a major aspect of the subsequent campaign against them, in spite of the fact that no programmatic differences have arisen or even been alleged. The term "petty bourgeois" is used as an epithet, and substituted for concrete charges.

While the leadership presented its version of the convention in a bulletin to the membership, including the above charges, the accused were not allowed to present their analysis of the convention or to reply to the charges levelled against them. They were prevented from publishing a counterreport in the bulletin. In addition, they were denied their right to present their position in party meetings held to discuss the balance sheet of the congress.

This is the product of a wrong conception of democratic centralism, a conception which is defended by the majority of the PST leadership and which is clearly expressed in a letter sent by the PST Executive Committee to the leadership of the Bogotá central zone on the case of

Comrade Gladys Jiménez. This letter says:

"To say that the Executive Committee and other leadership bodies of the party function as a team and not as a sum of tendencies, factions or brilliant personalities means that within this leadership team all the comrades have the right to discuss, to dissent, etc., but once a decision has been made by the majority this is the position of the leadership team, and in all the party bodies and in all the areas of the party where the leadership members have to carry out their tasks this is the position that they are going to express, that they are going to defend." (Quoted in the Activities Report by E. Barragan, Appendix G.)

A member of the leadership must defend the positions of the majority of the leadership in the internal debates inside the party. In this specific case, this meant that the accused comrades had to attack themselves instead of defending themselves in front of the party. Through this device, a de facto minority in the party can win a formal majority of the votes. This conception is alien to the principles of the Fourth International.

The December Central Committee Meeting

The Bureau of the United Secretariat decided to send me, Comrade Hansen, and Comrade Jaime to attend the December meeting of the Central Committee.

Two key reports were given at the Central Committee meeting: a report on activities by Comrade E. Barragan, the organizational secretary of the PST, and a report by Comrade Greco, a member of the leadership of the Argentine PST and a central leader of the Bolshevik Tendency. (Appendices G and H.) [Item B-1 in N.C. mailing.]

Let us first consider Comrade Greco's report, since in many ways it set the tone and political framework for the CC meeting. He began to develop the thesis that the dissolution of the IMT and the LTF is just a fake. It's not a dissolution, according to him, but a fusion between two factions seeking to maintain the leadership of the international and to hide each other's political bankruptcy. The aim of this unprincipled bloc is to destroy the real Trotskyist alternative leadership offered by the Bolshevik Tendency. The first target of this bloc is the Colombian PST. According to Comrade Greco, this was why a United Secretariat delegation had been sent to observe the Central Committee meeting.

In fact, Greco's report offered an explanation for the deepening of the crisis in the PST. In addition, it was designed to sow doubts about the reports made by me and Comrade Hansen concerning

the situation in the international, since many of the facts given in our reports had not previously been known to the Central Committee as a whole, even though some its members are members of the international leadership of the Bolshevik Tendency. For example, they had never before heard that the Portuguese PRT was facing a serious crisis, and that its members were discussing unification with the Portuguese LCI. They had thought that the Spanish LCR was a small group in crisis which had been reduced to a few hundred members, while the Bolshevik Tendency in Spain had prospects of quickly building a party of more than 1,500, and already had influence over thousands of activists.

The Greco report had another purpose. It sought to restore cohesion to the badly shaken majority leadership of the PST. Comrade Greco called for tight discipline in face of the alleged attack from the outside by the "IMT-ITF bloc." In fact, he tried to make out that a war was on between this supposed bloc and the Colombian PST, a war that justified the most exceptional internal measures.

Greco held that the criticisms made by us on the concept of democratic centralism held by the PST leadership and the practices it engaged in as a party regime were incorrect. He claimed that the concepts and practices of the United Secretariat were deviations introduced by the IMT-ITF unprincipled bloc.

Comrade Greco identified the PST itself with the Bolshevik Tendency, thus identifying a faction with the party. This point of view was expressed repeatedly at the Central Committee meeting. Linked with a call to "Bolshevize" the party, it provided the "theoretical" basis for the disciplinary measures to which Comrade Barragan devoted the main part of his report.

Comrade Barragan's report was entitled "activities report." He talked briefly about the election campaign and how the policy that the PST had been following was basically correct. He mentioned other aspects of the PST's work, and then underlined some of the problems which the party had been confronted in the course of the election campaign. He said that the party faced two types of problems. First, there was a difficulty in carrying out both the electoral campaign and a financial campaign that had been decided on. Second, there was a lack of understanding among the rank and file on how to integrate their daily mass work with the electoral campaign.

He then charged that certain comrades--Comrades Sánchez, Gladys Jiménez, Gustavo Vivas, and Ciro Roldan--were responsible for these difficulties.

This brings us to the main part of his report--charges against these comrades for their supposed factional activity, and the necessity of applying "Bolshevik" norms along the lines I have mentioned.

First on Ricardo Sánchez. His suspension for six months had come to an end. A decision had to be taken on the case. The behavior of Sánchez during his suspension was analyzed by Comrade Barragan. According to "memorandums written by various rank-and-file comrades, middle cadres," and another "from a CC member," things were clear: "The comrade has maintained his factional attitude and his disloyal behavior to the party." While suspended, "the comrade has continued to hide his real political positions from the party, although in private conversations he developed a systematic campaign against the leadership of the BT."

Comrade Sánchez is thus charged with being opposed to the leadership of the Bolshevik Tendency, which is once again equated with the PST.

Sánchez was also charged with not having built a support committee for the campaign, with not having convinced anyone to join the electoral slate, not having paid dues or participated in the financial campaign while under suspension. "The position of the comrade is a liquidationist one," concluded Comrade Barragan. Comrade Barragan also charged that Comrade Sánchez had participated in conferences and given speeches during the time he was under suspension without consulting the party leadership and asking its authorization. The positions Sánchez defended on the constituent assembly and on the "citizens strike" ("paro civico") were, according to Barragan, not those of the party. Consequently, Sánchez had placed himself outside the party. The measure recommended was the transformation of the six-month suspension into an "indefinite suspension." This is a fancy formulation for expulsion.

It should be noted that Comrade Gladys Jiménez had signed the original resolution against Comrade Sánchez in May 1977. She presented the Executive Committee with a letter which repudiated her original support to this resolution. She asked that this letter be circulated inside the party, but this request was refused. (Appendix I.) This letter itself was not taken into consideration by the Central Committee when it considered the case.

Initially the leadership did not plan to allow Comrade Sánchez any opportunity to defend himself. It was only after a rather lengthy discussion involving the delegation of the United Secretariat that he was granted this right. As with the other comrades put on trial, he was allowed a few minutes to present his case.

Comrade Sánchez demonstrated that all the speeches he had given were in accordance with party rules, with the participation or sponsorship of the party organizations in all the towns in which he had spoken. He stressed the fact that at the time most of his speeches were given on the question of the constituent assembly, the party leadership had recognized that the party had no official, clearly crystallized position on this tactical question.

These arguments were not taken into consideration. On the contrary, a new charge was leveled against him during the Central Committee meeting, that he had signed the platform of a new tendency, the Proletarian Democracy Tendency. His indefinite suspension was voted by a large majority of the Central Committee.

Another case was that of Comrade Gustavo Vivas, a member of the PST Executive Committee. This comrade was a "delegate" of the Bolshevik Tendency in Central America. His theater of action was Costa Rica and Panamá. At the Central Committee meeting immediately following the September convention, at which Comrade Alfonso Ríos of Mexico and I were present, Comrade Vivas said that after what he had seen at the convention he had lost moral confidence in the leadership of the PST. In view of this, he would prefer to remain in Bogotá and not return to Central America. The CC said that, although Vivas was a member of the Central Committee, it was impossible for the committee to make this decision; the matter had to be referred to the leadership of the Bolshevik Tendency, which would decide.

Later the BT leadership apparently agreed that he should remain in Bogotá. He was put in charge of coordinating the PST electoral campaign--not a small responsibility. But at the same time, a campaign was launched against him; it was said that he was just a petty-bourgeois nationalist. He was charged with having abandoned his post, abandoned internationalism. The charge was openly raised in an assembly of the Bogotá membership.

Just before the Central Committee meeting, in face of all these attacks, this comrade asked to resign from the Executive Committee. This was used as further proof against him.

After having asked the Executive Committee to accept his resignation, and while waiting for a response, he informed his cell of his request and explained his reasons. This move was considered to be a serious break with the norms of democratic centralism, according to the conception developed by the PST leadership. (Appendix J.)

In this same document, another accusation is made against Comrade Vivas. In his cell, he had expressed some disagreements with the official balance sheet drawn up by the leadership on the party's participation in the November 18 mobilization. It was said that as a member of the leadership, he should have defended the official party line in this rank-and-file body, reserving his criticisms only for the leading bodies.

The case of Comrade Gladys Jiménez was basically the same. She was also a member of the PST Executive Committee. Through a referendum of the Central Committee, taken a few weeks before the December Central Committee meeting, all her political rights were suspended and she was "separated" from the EC. This was done because she advanced a balance sheet of the September convention different from that of the official version. The same charge was made against Comrade Ciro.

During the CC meeting, two other comrades were disciplined: Socorro Ramírez and Jaime Galarza. Comrade Socorro Ramírez is

the party's presidential candidate and the main public figure of the PST and Trotskyism in Colombia. In the text of the Barragan report, distributed just before the CC meeting, Comrade Socorro's name did not appear. The decision to discipline Comrade Socorro was taken the same day as the report was given. She was chairing that session of the CC meeting, and was informed of the case against her when Comrade Barragan added her to the list during his oral report. The formal implementation of the decision to expel her was made by the Executive Committee shortly after the Central Committee meeting.

No specific charges were made against her. She was merely associated with the other comrades because she signed the call for a new tendency. (Appendix K.) [Item A-5 in NC mailing.]

The case of Comrade Jaime, a member of the PST Central Committee and of the delegation sent by the United Secretariat, was not even mentioned in Comrade Barragan's oral report. Comrade Jaime learned that he was under charges during the final session of the CC, when the vote was taken on the disciplinary measures. Since he had just arrived in Colombia the day before the CC, having come from Europe, it was difficult to make a case against him. However, at the opening of the CC meeting, he added his name to the declaration of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency. (Appendix L.) [Item A-4 in NC mailing.] The only basis for his "suspension" was the fact that he signed this tendency declaration. It should be added that he was informed of the charges only a few minutes before he was granted five or ten minutes to present his case. (Appendix M.) [Item A-5 in NC mailing.]

The first four of these six cases constituted the main points of the Barragan report, the "activities" report to the PST CC. Together with the last two cases, they constituted the central point of discussion and debate at this Central Committee meeting.

These six comrades have addressed an appeal to the United Secretariat, which is in your hands. (Appendix N.) [Item A-10 in NC mailing.]

The Central Committee passed a motion prohibiting the formation of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency and any other tendency or faction at this time. (Appendix O.) [Item A-5 in NC mailing.] As we have seen, one of the charges against Comrade Jaime was that he signed the call for the formation of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency. In giving reasons for "separating" the six comrades from the PST, the majority of the CC included the charge of their having called for the formation of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency.

The motion itself banning the formation of tendencies or factions is in violation of the statutes of the Fourth International. While the leadership has the right to regulate the internal life of the party, including the form and course of the internal debate, the right to form tendencies or factions is unconditional.

At the September convention of the PST, comrades were charged with having formed a secret faction. At the December meeting of the Central Committee they and others were finally condemned and expelled because they had written and openly presented the plat-

form of a tendency.

One of the key points made by the comrades of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency was that the organization is confronted with a crisis. The majority of the CC now recognizes that this is so. The comrades of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency presented the only possible way to resolve this crisis, especially since it relates to the internal regime of the party. They said that the crisis could be resolved only by a special convention preceded by a democratic discussion.

The majority of the CC recognized that a crisis existed, but argued that calling such a convention would cut across the election campaign. Using this kind of reasoning, the tendency's request was presented as further proof that these comrades wanted to destroy the party, not only by violating democratic centralism, but also by destroying the election campaign. So the request for the special convention was refused.

The arguments developed by the tendency, and by the United Secretariat delegation, since we took the floor on this question, were the reverse. There is a deep crisis in the party, we said, which you now acknowledge. It revolves around the key issue of the party's internal regime. The only way to ensure that such a crisis does the least possible harm to the electoral campaign is to open a debate in the party leading to a special convention in early March, immediately following the first stage of the campaign (after the local parliamentary elections, when a break of a few weeks occurs before the presidential campaign begins). That was the "plot" mounted against the PST by the Proletarian Democracy Tendency in alliance with the representatives of the United Secretariat.

Following the Central Committee meeting, supporters of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency requested that the leadership take a poll of the membership on whether or not to convene a special convention of the PST in March. (Appendix P.) [Item A-6 in NC mailing.] This was done in accordance with the statutes of the PST, which state: "A special convention of the party can be called at any time by one-third (1/3) of the rank and file members or cells, by one-third of the Central Committee (1/3), or by a majority of the Executive Committee. It cannot be held less than one (1) month after the time it is called."

When it became evident that a growing number of rank-and-file comrades supported the holding of a special convention, the PST Executive Committee violated the PST statutes. In a resolution dated January 5, 1978 (Appendix Q) [Item A-8 in NC mailing], the leadership claimed that the September 1977 PST convention had already called for a special convention for August 1978, just after the presidential elections. Since a special convention had already been called, this call for a March convention was rejected.

The aim of the January 5, 1978, Executive Committee resolution is indicated by the following section:

"c. that there is no provision for any referendum with respect to the date of a special congress, as cited above, in any body of

the party.

"d. That all full and probationary members must uphold this resolution, beginning to engage immediately in the electoral activities of their region and in the tasks associated with it.

"e. That whoever does not uphold it places himself outside the PST and his separation from the party will be made official immediately."

The purpose of this resolution was clear: to justify the expulsion of any comrade who took a stand in favor of a special convention. This in fact is what has happened.

The United Secretariat has received a petition signed by more than 315 comrades--full and probationary members--calling for a special convention. (Appendix R.) [Item A-11 in NC mailing.] The comrades who signed this appeal have already been expelled, or are in process of being expelled. All indications are that they constitute a majority of the party. (At the September convention, the delegates represented 385 full members, according to the credentials committee report approved by the convention. The number of probationary members was not clearly stated in that report.) They certainly constitute more than one-third of the party membership.

With the exception of Bogotá, the tendency supporters are in the majority in every city where the party is located. The majority of members in these units have therefore been expelled.

The January 25, 1978, letter from the PST leadership to the United Secretariat (Appendix S) [February 14, 1978, addition to NC mailing], which has been mimeographed and which you have, raises points about two individuals, Umberto Valverde and Jorge Posada. The case of Jorge Posada involves the question of Editorial Pluma. This publishing house is a strictly commercial enterprise, which has nothing to do with the Fourth International. The United Secretariat should make this clear; there is a motion before you to this effect. (Appendix T.) [Item A-1 in NC mailing.] Umberto Valverde is a writer and columnist in Colombia. He is not a member of the PST or the Fourth International. He had a relation with the top leadership of the Bolshevik Tendency for a time, and worked on Revista de América. The materials relating to this affair are not available at this meeting of the United Secretariat, and therefore we cannot take a position at this time.

Grave consequences

Just prior to the Central Committee meeting, the United Secretariat delegation observed the very successful national "Workers and Socialist Convention" which nominated Comrade Socorro as its presidential candidate.

This national "Workers and Socialist Convention" was of great political significance to Colombian Trotskyism, and this should be taken into account in estimating the extent of the damage done by the actions of the PST leadership. The convention marked the culmination of the first stage of the electoral campaign. Here are some figures from the initial balance sheet of that first

stage. About 60,000 people participated in the previous six weeks in meetings that featured Comrade Socorro Ramírez and other candidates. These rallies were attended by as many as 2,000 or 3,000 people, and in one case 5,000. At the convention the main centrist organization of Colombia, the Unión Revolucionaria Socialista (URS--Revolutionary Socialist Union), joined the campaign.

One conclusion was clear to everyone. The electoral campaign launched by the PST, which was backed by the LCR (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria--Revolutionary Communist League--the other Fourth International group in Colombia) after its October convention and later by the Organización Comunista Ruptura, a centrist organization moving towards Trotskyism, and finally by the URS, had succeeded in bringing together all the significant Trotskyist and centrist forces in Colombia, basically along the lines and framework established by the Trotskyists.

At this point, we thought that a major political victory of this kind could bring about a change in the relationship of forces in the left by the end of the campaign. But the letter addressed to the United Secretariat by Comrade Socorro Ramírez, the "suspended" presidential candidate, gives a clear picture of the damage that has now been done to this perspective. (Appendix U.) Not only has the campaign been harmed by the general paralysis of the PST caused by the expulsions; it has also been jeopardized by the maneuvers of the PST leadership, which is attempting to use the other participating organizations to settle accounts with its opponents within the PST. The document on the campaign sent to the United Secretariat by the Colombian LCR (Appendix V) also provides clear evidence of this and corroborates the letter from Comrade Socorro.

I want to stress one political aspect. The campaign until recently was projected as involving socialists and workers directly through assemblies such as the national "Workers and Socialist Convention."

For factional reasons and without a single word of discussion, the PST leadership has totally reversed this entire conception overnight. Because a majority of the candidates elected by the "Workers and Socialist Convention" belong to or support the opposition within the PST, the PST leadership now proposes that candidates be ratified or nominated by the party leadership on the basis of a discussion with the leaderships of the other organizations. The votes of the thousands of militants who had participated in this process are disregarded. The result can only be the repulsion of many militants originally attracted to the campaign.

The PST leadership's course of action also has negative repercussions on the process of unification of the Trotskyist forces in Colombia. The conception put forward at the Central Committee meeting of a party totally identified with a faction presents a clear obstacle to unification. In view of this conception and the way in which it has been put into practice, it is difficult to take at face value the resolutions adopted by the PST leadership stating that they still favor unification with the LCR.

The concerns of the LCR leadership about the future of the

unification process are expressed in their document mentioned above. However, they continue to see this process as a central part of their activity and are trying to maintain the national parity committee set up to implement the unification process. This parity committee has been virtually paralyzed by the PST's leadership's attempt to use it against the comrades of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency. The situation is even more confused at the regional level where, unlike in Bogotá, the majority of the PST members support the Proletarian Democracy Tendency. The PST leadership denies that these comrades are members of the party and consequently accuses the LCR comrades in the local areas of working with members of another party in a factional manner.

The totality of the undemocratic actions of the majority of the Central Committee plays into the hands of the opponents of Trotskyism in Colombia, who are utilizing them to discredit our position in defense of workers democracy, a position which correctly had been one of the themes of the PST election campaign.

Obviously the future of the PST as a unified organization is at stake. The comrades of the Proletarian Democracy Tendency have made defense of the party's unity a central plank of their platform and have called for a special convention preceded by a democratic discussion as the only way to maintain this unity. Through its refusal to organize such a convention, its factional attitudes, and the massive wave of suspensions and expulsions, the PST leadership is in fact destroying the unity of the party. If it is not brought to a halt, the consequences of such a course will be disastrous for the PST, for the unity and reputation of Colombian Trotskyism, and for the future growth of our forces in that country.

The resolution you have before you (Appendix T) [Item A-1 in NC mailing.] centers on the two questions which the United Secretariat should take a stand on at this time. The first is the violation of the statutes of the Fourth International committed by the majority of the Central Committee in its motion banning the formation of tendencies or factions. The second is the violation of the statutes of the Colombian PST in the leadership's rejection of the request by over one-third of the membership for a special convention.

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