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Dec. 23, 1976

Dear Jack & Co.,

I'm writing to you to save money. If I call we'll sit on the phone for a long time. I was able to spend 3½ days in Barcelona. I met with the LC & the LCR. I was supposed to meet with Felipe of the T.O. (Workers Tendency) but something went wrong and we didn't meet.

The only thing that is really "new" is that Roberto has just decided to openly break with Marxism. He announced at a secretariat (LC) meeting that the USSR is not a workers state and that the Leninist concept of the party is part of the problem not the solution. He said he came to these conclusions trying to figure out why orthodox Trotskyism (SWP) had been unable to defeat Stalinism or more concretely adaptations to Stalinism (Pablo, etc.).

After making this announcement he proposed to the secretariat that this tidbit be kept only among themselves; that he favored completing the process of orthodoxing in Trotskyism the LC before opening the new discussions. He acted "reasonable" in not opening up an immediate fight (Carmen's words).

All this I got secondhand. First from Carmen & Gabriele and later in a slightly different tone from Raul. I was unable to talk directly with Roberto because he was "too busy" to meet with me and when I asked permission to attend their secretariat Roberto asked that I not be allowed to attend. The others agreed.

Gabriele & Carmen believe he is adapting to anarchist and ultraleft pressures.

The reports from those I spoke to--mainly Raul, Carmen, Gabriele, Charlie & the 2 Basques on the secretariat--was that most other things are going poorly. When I met a couple of rank and file members in a bar before a meeting they responded likewise, "everything going poorly" to my question of how are they.

The first day we spoke on the Roberto matter Carmen and Gabriele were very pessimistic believing that Roberto would take many members with him. They are also demoralized because the T.O. (Felipe) will probably take 45, almost all workers, with him, after they expel him for breaking discipline, and will probably join the LCR. And they are also worried about how to fight the Lambertists doing entry work.

In passing Carmen mentioned that Felipe and the T.O. which is "Mandelista" is requesting to join the L.T.F. This is passed off as a maneuver.

On my arrival Sunday the 19th Roberto had just made his latest pronouncements. A rapid evolution set in so that by Tuesday night a special meeting of the "hard" anti-Roberto secretariat members was organized to meet with me. That was Raul, Charlie, Gabriele, Carmen & the 2 Basques Unai & Imanol. Carmen is by far the weakest on Roberto. Raul the hardest. None yet understand the why, what or how of what's happening. But the open abandonment of Marxism by their central political leader has made them open to listen. They have lost some of the purity arrogance they always have when talking with SWPers.

They let me talk for quite a while. In summary I explained:

1. That in my opinion Roberto had never really understood dialectical materialism. That he was a formal logician--always wanting to put things in categories--this is what he liked to call principles. And that he was always a little removed from reality.
2. That he was sectarian and ultraleft politically & so was the LC as a whole.
3. That it was totally intolerable that Roberto could continue passing himself off as a member of the L.T.F.
4. That I thought they had underestimated the meaning of Roberto's party-wrecking methods in the last period.
5. That it would be good if they saw in this situation the opportunity to grow politically and start acting as leaders --to form a much healthier collective leadership and not to worry about how many Roberto will take. I thought he wouldn't take so much if they fought back etc.
6. I told them I disagreed on their opposition to unity with the L.C.R. I told them I favored unity.
7. I told them I didn't know whether their political line towards youth, women & other work was right or wrong but that what I heard on the coming elections sounded sectarian.
8. Almost forgot, I explained the connection between our differences in the L.T.F. and Roberto's political errors.

They then proceeded to discuss tactics of how to handle Roberto. Not one word on any of the points I had raised. I did not take it to mean they disagreed but that they were overwhelmed. And I think, some like Raul & Charlie are a little embarrassed yet to openly express agreement with the SWP.

What I would like to try & do is stop by Jan. 2, 3, 4 and continue this discussion with them--especially with Gabriele, Charlie & Raul--plus to get to meet the two Basques. Carmen is obviously suffering personally. They are having a plenum the

6, 7, 8 & 9. It would be good for me to stay for it except it conflicts with our plenum. If you all think it would be worth it I'll stay there (this would also mean money--about \$300 more for ticket; the 21 days would expire, plus food etc.). (I'll call Jan. 2 or 3.)

The decision of Roberto to break with Trotskyism has lifted his direct pressure on them against the SWP. Thus they can now evolve quickly towards a better understanding of our politics. But unfortunately none of them seem ready to act like leaders. They seem hell-bent on missing the crucial electoral opening coming this spring.

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I met with 2 leaders of the LCR for about 2½ hours.

I told them I thought unity between the LCR and LC would be good; that we wanted to learn more about their line & activity. They seemed genuinely friendly and factionally pleased.

Their line seems less sectarian. They are preparing to imitate the Italian D.P. [Proletarian Democracy slate] experience if the centrists & Maoists will permit them.

Their P.C. is in Madrid. They urged us to send someone in Feb. or March to get to meet them and talk to them. They urged me to go to Madrid & talk with their central leadership etc. I urged them to send someone to YSA & party plenum. They seem to know almost nothing of the international discussion--had only heard of Latin American new balance sheet. Have, of course, never heard of Barry's report on Italian elections, Portugal etc.

Everyone--both LC & LCR asks about Perspectiva Mundial.

I'll try Jan. 2-4 to talk to Felipe & the T.O.

/s/Peter