

Gus

May 26, 1978

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed for your information is an exchange of correspondence between comrades of the Chilean Liga Comunista now living in Europe and the United Secretariat Bureau dealing with disciplinary measures taken by the LC of Chile against several of its members. As indicated in the United Secretariat Bureau letter, this information is for internal circulation only.

Comradely,
Pola, for the United Secretariat Bureau

1. Letter from comrades Lucía, Luisa, Marcelo and Laura, members of the Liga Comunista of Chile who are outside the country, to the United Secretariat

Sweden, March 28, 1978

To the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

Dear Comrades,

As you know from the January issue of Combate, central organ of the Communist League of Chile, we have announced the expulsion of Alejandro Gabriel Rojas Figueroa (Manuel) and of Ana Rita Cárcamo Pavéz (Antonietta) from our organization for the crime of having betrayed the party and the cause of the proletarian revolution.

They are charged with betrayal because they gave information to the Central Nacional de Inteligencia, the CNI (ex-DINA), which not only put and still puts in danger the lives of party militants, but also endangered all the structures of the organization (which is clear from the reports of Lucía, Laura, and Marcelo). The situation was even worse because of the responsibilities Manuel had as a member of the Central Committee and as the comrade responsible for the Organization Commission, which gave him access to complete information about the organization of our party.

We have to take into account what Manuel says in writing:

"Surely you will be interested in knowing what I think about what happened and how I see my behavior. In the first place I must say that what I did ~~is~~ absolutely unjustifiable and unacceptable. This had made me feel a deep and bitter guilt. You have to imagine what it feels like to know that you have failed, that long years of work have been destroyed and that you have put in danger the lives of many people -- including you, above all you. Thus I agree with and accept the decision that the organization has taken in regard to me, which was to expel me for the charge of 'betrayal.' It is a harsh measure, but one that corresponds to the situation. Without trying to justify myself, I can only say that the knowledge and grief from knowing that Ana was also in their hands was a very strong, even irresistible, pressure; after a certain point (there were four days of "the grill," sand bread, electric shocks, beatings, hangings) they made me speak, perhaps more than any other reason because I knew that Ana was in the next room listening to my screams, since it is absolutely impossible not to scream. This is why I spoke, even though I was totally conscious of the consequences it would have." (1)

Because of all the above, we ask you to inform all of our sister organizations in the different countries of the declaration of expulsion published in the above-mentioned issue of Combate.

We think this should be done as soon as possible, so that in the solidarity campaigns being carried out by the various sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International concerning our comrades who are presently in prison, there should be no mention of these two people, who are not presently members of our organization or of the Fourth International.

Fraternal greetings,
Lucía, Luisa, Marcelo, and Laura, members of the Liga Comunista of Chile who are outside the country

(1) Letter written by Manuel on May 3, 1978, from prison in Santiago de Chile, which is in our hands.

2. Reply of the United Secretariat Bureau

June 10, 1978

Lucía, Luisa, Marcelo, and Laura
Sweden

Dear Comrades,

This is in reply to your letter of March 28, which was given to us by Comrade Sandor when he returned from his trip to Sweden.

We did in fact read in the January 1978 issue of Combate, publication of the Liga Comunista of Chile, a declaration announcing the expulsion of two members of your organization, Alejandro Gabriel Rojas Figueroa (Manuel) and Ana Rita Cárcamo Pavéz (Antonietta) "for the crime of having betrayed the party and the cause of the proletarian revolution."

You ask us to make this decision known to the whole International so that in the solidarity campaigns being carried out by the different organizations of the Fourth International concerning the prisoners, "there should be no mention of these two people, who at the present time are not members of our organization or of the Fourth International."

Events have intervened in a fortunate way: we have learned that all of our militants who were imprisoned because of this affair have been freed.

However, we think it is important to discuss your request from the point of view of our understanding. Probably there would be no dispute over the facts that led your organization to decide to expel comrades Manuel and Antonietta. From the quotations you cite from his own letter, written from prison in Santiago de Chile, Comrade Manuel admits these facts: that he gave to the political police, the CNI, elements of information that allowed them to arrest a number of comrades and to strike a hard blow against your organization. The comrade shares the estimation of the LC regarding the gravity of his behavior, saying that "long years of work have been destroyed," and that "many lives were placed in danger."

If we think that this letter from prison really reflects the thinking of Comrade Manuel -- and there appears to be no reason why this should not be so -- then the facts are established.

Nor has any question been raised about Manuel's account of the conditions which made him talk on the fourth day of interrogation, under torture and knowing that his companion Ana was also in the hands of his torturers.

We do not challenge the right of the leadership of your organization to take the disciplinary measures you considered necessary in such a situation, that is, the expulsion of Manuel and his companion. But we would like to raise for your consideration a more general question; that is, what are the measures which can best protect the organization from repression?

It is obvious that the members of an organization working under the conditions of a terrorist dictatorship must be educated in the spirit of withholding information from the police when arrested in order to protect the organization. One factor that can be of the greatest help to a comrade in sustaining torture is a high level of political consciousness and of involvement in proletarian struggles and in the revolutionary party, as well as confidence in the party and in the support that a comrade will receive from the organization; but this is not sufficient to guarantee that under any circumstances a comrade will not break under torture. If we therefore leave the terrain of individual moral force and look at the problem at the level of how to defend the party against repression, we think it is necessary to stress the following: the best way to prepare the party for such developments is through political education, the raising of the level of consciousness of the membership, specific preparation of comrades for facing repression, and security measures which can assure the maximum safeguards for the party in the event that comrades fall into the hands of the police, taking into account that under torture a person can always tell everything they know. These elements were weak or lacking in your organization.

But we do not think that the inability to withstand torture under any and all conditions should imply automatic expulsion from the party.

In this case, however, what disturbs us is not so much the disciplinary action taken against comrades Manuel and Ana, but the accusation that it was taken for "having betrayed the party and the cause of the proletarian revolution."

Thus, it is presented as not only a matter of very grave action, but of a betrayal. Your argumentation would indicate that you believe Manuel and Ana have crossed class lines, collaborating with the enemy, and that they can no longer be treated as "comrades."

We do not understand what could justify your opinion. Even from the content of the quotations you give from Manuel's letter, one would draw the opposite conclusion: in this letter he does not speak as a collaborator of the CNI, or as a class enemy, but as a revolutionary militant who recognizes the gravity of his own behavior. We think that our efforts should go in the direction of reintegration of this comrade into our struggle and organization, and not toward his definitive separation from the Fourth International.

For these reasons it does not seem appropriate to us to urge publication in the press of the International of the information that appeared in Combate concerning the expulsion of Manuel and Antonieta. Nor does it appear justified for us to say that these two comrades should not have been included in the campaign that was launched around these arrests, demanding immediate freedom for all the prisoners.

On the other hand, we think it is necessary to inform the organizations of the Fourth International, on an internal level, of the decisions made by the leadership of the LC(Chile) concerning these comrades. Therefore we have decided to circulate to all the sections your letter and this reply.

We also hope to be able to discuss these questions with the leadership of your organization in the relatively near future.

Trotskyist greetings,

s/ Sylvain, for the United Secretariat Bureau