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December 8, 1978

To National Committee Members and Organizers Attending the Plenum

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are three documents that should be read as background material for the report on Mexico at the upcoming National Committee plenum.

1. An editorial that appeared in the October 7, 1978 issue of the Mexican PRT's newspaper Bandera Socialista. This issue announces the joint election campaign in the Valley of Mexico between the PRT and the CP of Mexico.
2. The joint PRT-CP election platform being distributed. A first draft of this platform was also published in the October 7, 1978 issue of Bandera Socialista.
3. The resolution, "First Theses on Our Policy in the 1979 Elections," approved by the PRT Central Committee in September, 1978.

Comradely,

Gus Horowitz

Gus Horowitz
SWP National Office

[TRANSLATION]

Editorial from Bandera Socialista, October 7, 1978

JOINT PRT-PCM CAMPAIGN

Finally, after many discussions and negotiations, the regional delegations of the PRT and PCM in the Valley of Mexico have agreed on a joint electoral platform, which will serve as the basis for a common election campaign for the municipal elections in the state of Mexico. For some time--practically since the end of the last electoral campaign for local deputies--we have insisted in these pages on the need for presenting a united left alternative in the municipal elections. We have said that this was needed even more urgently since the workers and urban poor [colonos] pay much more attention to the election of municipal presidents [mayors] than to the past legislative elections and, therefore, a single electoral campaign by the left has more possibilities of crystallizing the workers discontent against the PRI [Partido Revolucionario Institucional--Institutional Revolutionary Party] and its government.

Today, given that it has been made possible to have a single electoral campaign, the agreement between the PCM and the PRT must be considered as an important step forward for the left in its electoral work. Not only because of the repercussions at the local level, which as we noted above might surprise some disoriented people, but also because of the importance ascribed by the workers and urban poor to the municipal elections. Not only because in that regional arena the left is showing that it is capable of offering a unified alternative to the traditional forces, supporters of the government, represented by the PRI and other puppets. Not only because the united electoral campaign of the left offers the possibility of giving political expression to the daily struggles of the workers in the unions and in the neighborhoods in the important industrial zones of the state of Mexico. The platform and the future united electoral campaign is also a significant step forward because of what it means in terms of the federal elections in 1979; that is, it is an example at the regional level of the road to follow nationally in the coming year and, in this sense, is a clear demonstration that the left--while maintaining its disagreements--can act together in concrete practice, which confirms that the electoral alliance of the left in 1976 was not a one-time occurrence. The PCM-PRT electoral agreement in the state of Mexico is, in a word, the expression in practice that the pro-unity policy advocated by the PRT, and expressed in its open letter to the PCM-PSR-PPM [Communist Party of Mexico, Partido Socialista Revolucionaria--Revolutionary Socialist Party, Partido Popular Mexicano--Mexican Peoples Party] coalition, has not remained a mere declaration.

We must acknowledge that the electoral platform for the state of Mexico is not a complete political program, in that it does not contain a precise formulation of the type of government being proposed. It does reflect the points of agreement of both parties on the most urgent problems of the working people in the region, and the joint solutions that are put forward to solve them. Both the PCM and the PRT remain free to raise their respective formulations on workers power which, in the case of the PRT, is summed up in our slogan of a workers and peasants government. Nevertheless, despite this limitation, the electoral agreement and the platform do fulfill their role in presenting

a class alternative different from that of the PRI, the PAN and the PARM [Partido Acción Nacional--National Action Party; Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana--Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution; two bourgeois parties]. Furthermore it is a sufficient political basis for developing a joint electoral campaign that will present as candidates workers and urban poor who have distinguished themselves in union and mass struggles.

And although the campaign opens formally this Sunday the eighth, that should be no obstacle to other left parties joining in on the basis of the joint platform. In particular, it would be very important for the other two parties of the national coalition, the PSR and the PPM, to agree to united participation with the PCM and the PRT in this regional campaign.

[TRANSLATION]

JOINT PRT-PCM ELECTION PLATFORM

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MEXICO:

The PCM [Mexican Communist Party] and the PRT [Revolutionary Workers Party], while maintaining their own political programs, are participating in the election campaign through the Independent Electoral Coalition with a joint action platform and one slate of candidates.

As the Independent Electoral Coalition, they propose to promote united action by the masses for immediate demands in defense of their economic and political interests; to make progress in unifying the forces of the working class and its allies with the purpose of increasing their political weight and mass influence; to strengthen the struggle of the people of the state of Mexico against the policy of the government, which is oriented toward guaranteeing the interests of the monopolies, of the political bosses, and of the corrupt politicians; and to fight the repressive and intimidating political climate created by the current methods of government.

Despite the differences between them, none of the organizations that have joined to act in this electoral process hide their objectives, which are based on scientific socialism and on the need for a revolutionary method to reach said objectives.

When we propose demands that speak to the most deeply felt needs of the working class, of the peasants, the students, and all manual and intellectual workers, we do so with the idea that the working masses, through their independent action, should go through their own experiences and thereby share the need for deep and radical changes in Mexican society carried out through a revolution.

We call on the exploited and oppressed people to join the struggle for better living and working conditions, to win political independence, by voting next November 26 for the candidates of the Independent Electoral Coalition.

[Continued]

Common Action Program of the Independent Electoral Coalition
(Revolutionary Workers Party-Mexican Communist Party)

Against austerity and the high cost of living. The "austerity plan" imposed by the Mexican state has meant a wage freeze, while prices have risen enormously; it has meant worsening of working conditions, more layoffs and "personnel adjustments," and an alarming rise in unemployment. This situation has brought innumerable responses from the workers and the people in the form of strikes and mobilizations. The PCM and the PRT unconditionally support these struggles against austerity and for the elementary right to a job. But these struggles have been dispersed and therefore have not had great success. The workers must fight for an across-the-board emergency wage increase that would really compensate for the loss in purchasing power of wages, against speed-up and the lengthening of the working day, and against layoffs and the readjustment of personnel; regular work for all the part-time workers; fight for a forty-hour week with fifty-six hours pay, to provide jobs for the unemployed; and fight for a sliding scale of wages, that is, that for every rise in prices there be an equal rise in wages.

For better housing and transportation. Miserable living conditions are particularly evident in the state of Mexico. The poor neighborhoods lack the most basic services, such as water, light, and sewer systems, and the job of providing these services is left to these communities themselves, while better-off residential neighborhoods and businesses enjoy all the advantages of the city, with ridiculously low taxes and with all kinds of subsidies for the businesses. The government keeps people insecure as to whether they have a right to the land they live on, and transportation for working people and their families is insufficient, poor in quality, and has very high fares. We support the struggles waged by these communities and their democratic organizations for regularization of land ownership, installation of public services, and against the high cost of transportation.

We must extend, unite, and deepen these struggles until we force the municipalities to use the taxes paid by the population to provide all public services free for the poor neighborhoods and for regularization of land ownership, for a reduction of taxes on the poor neighborhoods and a proportional increase in the better-off residential neighborhoods and for businesses, and for municipalization of transportation, with guaranteed low fares and adequate service for workers and their families.

Let's implement our right to health care. The health conditions of the people of the state of Mexico are alarming. The lack of elementary services in the poor communities and the factory pollution have much to do with causing this situation. But the indispensable medical services and medicines are out of reach for the majority of the population; meanwhile, hundreds of doctors are unemployed. The workers who have access to health care receive extremely poor services and the majority of the population does not enjoy their right to rest and recreation.

The unions must fight for: improvement of health-care services and the guaranteed right of workers to rest and recreation, they must fight for the creation of people's cultural and sports centers; for the extension of social security to the whole population through IMSS, I.S.S.S.T.E., and SSA [government health agencies]; against environmental pollution.

Land for those who till it. After forty years of agrarian reform, the land continues to be in the hands of the large landowners, openly or covertly. The peasants do not have the means to make the land produce, while the middle and large landowners are well protected. Therefore, we support and will encourage the peasants' struggle for an end to the large landholdings [latifundios]; for the abrogation of landowners' agrarian protection rights; for a genuine distribution of the land among all peasants respecting their forms of production; for a guarantee that the implements necessary for agriculture and livestock raising will be provided; and for the independent organization of the peasants.

Struggle for women's rights. In this society, women--more than half the population--are discriminated against on the job. Besides being exploited as workers, they are slaves in the home and they are denied the right to control their own bodies. To put an end to this situation, which benefits only the capitalists, women must mobilize, with the support of all workers, for equal pay for equal work, for free twenty-four-hour child-care centers, for a constitutional guarantee of the right to free, legal abortions for women who want them and against forced sterilization.

For the right to education and the democratization of education. A large proportion of the population of the state of Mexico is illiterate. Thousands of children and young people go without education every year. The appointment of officials in the middle and upper schools has been undemocratic, and we have already seen major student struggles in the state for better studying conditions and democratization of the schools. We must demand construction of the necessary schools at all levels so that no one will miss out on an education. The highest authority over the middle and upper schools should be democratic bodies composed of students, teachers, and workers.

For full democratic rights. The state of Mexico has a particularly anti-democratic administration. Political persecution and imprisonment, savage torture, such as that which came to light in the case of the Acermex worker in Naucalpan, are a daily occurrence. The state of Mexico is even one of the three states of the country where the death penalty and the ley fuga [prisoners being shot in "attempted escapes"] have been kept in force. The workers and mass movements and political organizations have suffered repression for mobilizing in support of their demands, and dozens of strikes have been broken by the police. The State Election Law is anti-democratic--it does not go even as far as the federal law--and new parties are not allowed to register [to become legal]. The high abstention in the last elections is one result of these anti-democratic practices. The absolute subordination of the municipalities to the state government persists.

The PCM and the PRT support and encourage the struggle for:

- a) general amnesty for all political prisoners and victims of political persecution and trials, and the bringing before the public of the disappeared. End the torture and mistreatment of political prisoners; punish those responsible.
- b) Absolute respect for the rights of assembly and association and the right to demonstrate and strike.
- c) Disband all unconstitutional repressive bodies such as BARAPEM [State of Mexico Radio Patrol Battalion]; no more secret jails.
- d) Repeal the undemocratic State Election Law. For legalization of all working-class political organizations and a truly democratic election law.
- e) For the independence and the democratization of the municipal councils.
- f) For the right of the Indian communities to independently control their territory, culture and language; end the discrimination of which they are victims as members of ethnic minorities.

For trade-union democracy and independence. A big obstacle to the victory of workers' struggles is that their instruments of struggle, the unions, are dominated by the "charros," union bureaucrats who do not represent the interests of the workers. The "charros" have sacrificed the political independence of the workers and tied them to the bosses' party. There have been major struggles in this state in the last few years to democratize the unions and win their independence. The government has directly opposed these struggles, intervening with the use of legal means and with violence on the side of the employers. It is necessary to extend and deepen these struggles for democratic election of union representatives, to end the state's intervention in the internal life of the unions and in labor conflicts and against forcing workers or unions to affiliate to the PRI in order to belong to a union or federation. The right of workers to organize themselves in the party that best meets their interests, or no party, as they decide, must be respected.

[TRANSLATION]

FIRST THESES ON OUR POLICY IN THE 1979 ELECTIONS

In the elaboration of our electoral policy for 1979, we must distinguish several moments in which it has been developed. Therefore, we want to single out here at least three moments that are important for better understanding the proposal and having all the information on the question. In the first place, we will develop some of the central theses on the policy for the 1979 elections that the Political Bureau agreed to present to the Central Committee on September 1-3. Next, the points of agreement approved by the CC for proposal to the Communist Party [PCM--Communist Party of Mexico] in line with the discussions held up to that moment. Finally, we present information on the progress since the meeting of the CC.

1. The peculiarity of our electoral policy starts from the acknowledgement of the fact that until now there exists no qualitative difference between the PCM's and the PRT's implantation in the masses.

2. However, the 1979 elections will be the fertile terrain which could permit the PCM to attain a much greater influence among the masses than it now has. Independent of concrete advantages, such as being the party with conditional registration [i.e., ballot status], the above consideration stems from the fact that the electoral arena is not the natural battleground for revolutionaries. In this arena, the reformists always have greater possibilities insofar as they offer the masses immediate solutions to their problems, solutions that appear more realistic even though they are not historical solutions or ones that go to the roots. In this sense, the social composition and implantation of the PCM, which has not yet changed radically despite their having registration, has great opportunities in the elections.

3. The 1979 federal elections and specifically the campaign of the left have all the possibilities of becoming an important pole of reference; at least if the campaign of the left raises the problems that most affect the masses today. To say that the workers' struggles are on the offensive is now not sufficient if one does not take into account the ever growing involvement of new sectors of workers in the struggle. The campaign of the left in 1979 will have to increase this participation of the masses in the struggle.

4. From the above it is clear that the PRT cannot be indifferent to participation in the 1979 elections insofar as the pole of reference of the left's campaign will be concretely embodied by the slates and candidates of the left. Therefore, the fact that the PRT would remain cut off from the possibility of presenting some candidates on the left slates, and, worse yet, that the PRT could not count on having a single deputy out of the entire left wing bloc in the next legislature, are objectively elements that would favor a great widening or decisive increase in the gap between the PCM and the PRT with respect to their

implantation and influence among the masses. At least it would be difficult to return to a situation of equal opportunities in the short run.

5. For various reasons the PCM would prefer to enter into negotiations with us about an eventual joint electoral participation at the last moment. In the first place, because they know that they have possibilities of drawing the PPM [Partido Popular Mexicano--Mexican Peoples Party] and the PSR [Partido Socialista Revolucionaria--Revolutionary Socialist Party] around and incorporating them in a single party. Therefore, they must maintain a preferential policy towards them. Also, this would permit them to put the PRT between a rock and a hard place, seeking to force us to sign a collaborationist program. With this policy, they would be guaranteed of coming to negotiate with the PRT with fait accompli and a relationship of forces that is totally favorable for them.

6. At the same time, the PCM nonetheless requires an alliance with the PRT for the next elections. In the sectors of the masses that maintain a certain combativity and level of consciousness and where some ultraleft currents are also present, the other important national tendency besides the PCM is usually the PRT, which would make the PCM face a much more difficult situation if it does not present itself allied with the PRT. The PCM knows that in the medium term the PRT is its principal adversary on the left. It is afraid that the PRT intends to draw together a whole current in opposition to the PCM. An additional pressure is that there are sectors both in its rank and file and even in its leadership that favor [give priority to] an alliance with the PRT. Last but not least, the registration [ballot status] of the PCM is conditional upon obtaining a certain percentage of votes which requires achieving the broadest unity among the left behind the registered candidates to guarantee that registration.

7. The above considerations make it imperative that the PRT get the discussions started with the PCM as soon as possible. Of the various alternatives for negotiation with the PCM, what stands out as the main point is the fact that in an eventual programmatic agreement with the PCM, the PRT would not give in to any governmental slogan that was not that of a workers and peasants government.

POINTS OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PCM

Shortly before the meeting of the Central Committee, discussions began between commissions from the Political Bureau of the PRT and the Executive Committee of the PCM. These discussions raised the following proposals which could lead to an agreement, and which were ratified by the Central Committee of the PRT.

1. Since in the course of the discussions within the PCM-PPM-PSR coalition they have not been able to reach an agreement favorable to the inclusion of the PRT in that coalition, the PCM and PRT will reach a bilateral agreement for joint participation in the 1979 federal elections.

2. Due to the political difficulties in reaching an agreement around a united programmatic political platform, such as that being developed by the PCM-PPM-PSR coalition, the political agreement between both parties will be limited to a series of common political points on which the common candidates will run.

3. Insofar as the PCM-PPM-PSR coalition raises a common national political program and has agreement to present common slates in the plurinominales, [multi-deputy districts: those that elect more than one deputy by form of proportional representation] the bilateral agreement between the PCM and the PRT will be limited to presenting common candidates in the uninominales [one-deputy districts: those that elect only one deputy by a majority vote]. The leadership commissions that are working together will establish where and how many of these common candidates will run.

4. Insofar as the agreement between both parties does not reach the level of a common, national programmatic electoral platform, each party remains free to propagandize separately for its own programmatic platform. On the programmatic points where both parties do not agree, they commit themselves not to attack each other, but to present their differences positively, that is, each one will advocate its own alternative.

5. In the areas where there are PCM-PRT candidates, they agree to base their interventions mainly on the points of agreement, leaving other members of the parties free to propagandize and agitate for their other positions.

6. The common candidates will act at all times in the name of the two parties.

7. In activities carried out autonomously, either of the parties will be able to agitate and propagandize for both the concrete agreements and their own programmatic platforms.

On the basis of the above considerations, the CC authorized the commission to continue negotiations with the PCM, and also agreed that the CC would meet again, no later than November, to find out the progress of the discussions, to specify more details of our policy of joint participation with the PCM or, if progress has not been made towards an agreement with the PCM, to modify the orientation. It was also agreed that the party regions should inform the national leadership as soon as possible of the possibilities for electoral participation in 1979, the difficulties they foresee for a good campaign and even of possible joint candidates. Without underestimating the gubernatorial elections which will coincide with the election of federal deputies in some states in 1979, the greatest interest of the party, given its present forces and needs, will have to center on the elections for federal deputies.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

The discussions with the PCM continued after the meeting of the CC. At the same time, a campaign directed at the PPM and PSR was started to show them that they were the ones who have stood in the way of a united agreement. As a result of this, especially right after an open letter to the PCM-PPM-PSR was published in Bandera Socialista, some changes have been noticed in the attitudes of the components of the coalition. Seeing the disadvantage that we would be faced with with an agreement with the PCM in the one-deputy districts only, being excluded from the multi-deputy districts, we are pressing ahead even more in relation to the PPM and PSR. Concretely, after publishing the open letter we held a meeting with the PSR's general secretary, Roberto Jaramillo Flores, to present our position in favor of a joint campaign. The opinion of this PSR leader has been favorable and we have learned of the agreement that the question of the relations with the PRT would be re-discussed at the next meeting of the executive commissions of the PCM-PPM-PSR. The question of the electoral coalition for 1979 is complicated especially for the more sectarian elements in this coalition, inasmuch as at the recent assembly of the MAUS [Movimiento de Acción Unificada Socialista--Unified Socialist Action Movement], the latter has started pulling away from the orbit of the PST and decided to ask for membership in the PCM-PPM-PSR coalition. This will re-raise the problem of alliances in many ways within the coalition, including alliances with forces that have not indicated their willingness to move towards a process of unification, which would be the case for both the PRT and the MAUS. The commission in charge of relations with these organizations has put forward the proposal of reaching an agreement with the coalition whereby the PRT could also present candidates in the multi-deputy districts and sign not a national programmatic platform but only points of political agreement such as those raised by the bilateral relation with the PCM. In the next few days, there will be an attempt to discuss this proposal with the PPM and the MAUS, before arriving at a possible meeting with the leaderships of the unity committee between the PCM-PPM-PSR.

[Approved by PRT Central Committee, September 1978.]

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