

"For the Fourth International"

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Vol. 1

SUPPLEMENTARY  
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*The  
"French  
Turn"  
Reaches  
Chile.*

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## REPORT ON THE CHILEAN SECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE

(Prepared by Comrade P. Eiffel and accepted unanimously by the Latin-American Committee of the Workers Party of the United States.)

(1) HISTORY: The Chilean section of the I.C.L. grew out of the independent Communist Party (The so-called Hidalgo Group) which had split from the official Communist Party (Stalinist) in 1930. In 1931 it affiliated with the International Communist League towards the political line of which it had developed in the meantime. In the summer of 1933 it came out for the formation of a new communist party and a new communist international.

(2) NAME AND CHARACTER: The official name of the organization is "Communist Left". It regards itself as the "embryo" of the future Communist Party of Chile, affiliated to the Fourth International. It acts in all respects as a party. The following report refers to it as "the party".

(3) MEMBERSHIP: The party numbers to-day nearly 1000 members - an extraordinarily high number for a country which has only a little over 1/30 of the population of the U.S.A., and whose economic development, as that of a semi-colony of world imperialism, is very much retarded. The comparatively high degree of class-consciousness of the Chilean proletariat and its revolutionary traditions in part explain this high membership figure of the organization of the revolutionary vanguard.

(4) REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS AND SENATE: The political importance of the party is demonstrated amongst other things by the fact that it has one representative (out of 143) in the lower house, and one (out of 45) in the senate. (In Chile electors are only those males over 21 who can read and write, - a condition which naturally restricts the number of proletarian voters.)

(5) PRESS: Until July 1934 the party published only about every two months a theoretical magazine. Since that time a popular weekly has been published. Its regular appearance (except when confiscated); its make-up (four pages of a size a little larger than the New Militant; special numbers of eight pages on special occasions, as for the National Convention and in commemoration of the October Revolution); and the high political level and consistent internationalism of its contents are a credit to the party. The publication of the theoretical magazine has been discontinued, and the theoretical articles and theses are published in the weekly. No internal bulletin seems to be published. The party has brought out several popular pamphlets, including reprints of classical Marxian literature.

The weekly (IZQUIERDA, "Left") reaches a circulation of several thousand. 40,000 copies were printed of the eight-page issue in commemoration of the October Revolution.

(6) SECOND NATIONAL CONVENTION: The Second National Convention of the party was held in September 1934. It adopted theses on the following questions:

An analysis of the economic and political situation in Chile and the tasks of the party.

The road to the Fourth International.

Towards the formation of a new communist party.

The agrarian problem.

The war in Chaco.

All five were published in the weekly paper.

(7) TRADE UNION INFLUENCE: The party has good influence in the trade unions, especially in the building trades and amongst the bakers. Detailed data are not known here. The same holds true of the party's work amongst the unemployed. The party has played a leading role in the struggle for trade union unity.

(8) ANTI-FASCIST ACTIVITIES: The party has played a prominent role in the struggle of the workers of Chile against the growing fascist organizations (street demonstrations, etc.). The first victim of fascist murderers in Chile was a member of the party.

(9) GOVERNMENT PERSECUTION: The party has all along been subject to severe persecution, - arrests of its leading members and rank and filers, attempts to curtail the constitutional rights of the two representatives in Congress and Senate, confiscation of the press.

(10) WORK AMONG THE PEASANTS: The party has been active in its work in the peasant areas. It has sent its agitators there. It has published one of the congress speeches of comrade Zapata on this question, and some of Lenin's writings on the agrarian question, in pamphlet form. Comrade Zapata has been arrested and maltreated by the police in the course of his work in the peasant areas. The greater part of the National Committee of the party were arrested in July 1934 when together with other working-class organizations they prepared a general strike in support of the peasant uprising in Southern Chile.

Until recently the party had been severely handicapped in its work among the agricultural workers and peasants by its lack of a full agrarian program. The Second National Conference held in September 1934 finally adopted an agrarian platform.

(11) WORK IN THE ARMED FORCES: The party has recently put forward a program of democratic demands for the armed forces: full citizen rights for all members of the armed forces, including the right to participate in all parliamentary elections during time of active service; election of the officers by the soldiers and sailors; better pay and living conditions. In view of the highly important role of the armed forces in a country like Chile in the revolutionary struggle (witness the role of the Navy and the air-force in the revolution of 1932) this program is of great importance.

(12) WORK AMONGST YOUNG WORKERS AND STUDENTS: Although a number of

youth groups, especially split-offs from the Stalinists, have at different periods joined the party, and in spite of the influence the party has amongst the revolutionary students, no special youth organization seems to exist.

(13) BASIC SLOGANS: The basic slogans found in the party press are: United Front! Workers' militia! Trade Union unity! The land for those who till it! Confiscation of imperialist property! Democratization of the army! A new communist party! A new communist international!

(14) UNITED FRONT: During a period of months in 1933-34 the party was part of a united front that embraced most of the important working-class organizations of Chile, including the Stalinists.

Lack of concrete agreements, to be submitted to the masses of the followers of all parties concerned for their control, was the key-note of this "united front" exclusively from above from its very inception. In fact it began with a general workers' alliance as a more or less permanent institution, waiting for concrete issues to arise, instead of beginning with specific and therefore controllable agreements. Being exclusively an affair of the leaders, it never became rooted in the masses. In the early part of 1934 the Stalinists were expelled from this united front on the charge of sabotaging the work of the committee and, in addition, of using physical violence against other members of the committee. Their expulsion was handled without sufficient participation of the members of the parties concerned. Since then the united front has completely broken up.

(15) THE SLOGAN OF "ALL POWER TO THE SOCIALIST PARTY": In the summer of 1934 the party began to use the slogan "All power to the Socialist Party". This was a return to the party's policy in the early days of the existence of the organization, at the time of the overthrow of Ibanez and of Grove's short-lived revolutionary petty-bourgeois government. At that time the slogan of the organization was: "All power to Grove!". Since then Grove has become the leader of the Socialist Party.

From the following quotation from "Izquierda" it appears that the party is itself under certain illusions as to what Grove or the Socialist Party in power could and would achieve for the proletariat: "The advent to power of the Socialist Party will permit it the rapid realization of its bourgeois-democratic slogans, and the outgrowing of this stage for the revolutionary proletariat."

(16) RELATIONS WITH SOCIALIST PARTY: The second National Convention of the Communist Left in September 1934 adopted the following position on the future of the united front and the road to the new party: "Unity of action between Socialist Party and Communist Left in the economic and political field, will assure the regroupment of forces and establish new positions in the struggle. The work for a united front has to proceed from an agreement of these two organizations. Such a united front will be the basis upon which the regroupment of the forces for a new party will take place". The thesis does not mention the organized left Socialists (the "Revolutionary Socialist Opposition").

(17) THE LEFT PARLIAMENTARIAN BLOCK: Shortly after the second National Convention the Communist Left entered into a Parliamentarian Block, (composed of two bourgeois opposition parties) with a large petty bourgeois following, viz. the Democratic Party and the Radical Socialist Party, and the Socialist Party, now led by Grove, and the Communist Left itself. The Stalinists are not in the Block.

The following lengthy quotations from "Izquierda" show the evolution of the Communist Left's perspectives regarding the Parliamentarian Block: At the beginning of the Block was presented as an agreement exclusively for the coordination of the four parties' activities in Parliament; extra-parliamentarian activities of the Communist Left were to be kept strictly separate from the activities of the Block. Shortly the logic of the first step led to the second: "the Block has been carried into the street", in a mass demonstration organized by the four parties, at which leaders of these parties (amongst others Grove for the Socialist Party, and Hidalgo and Levin for the Communist Left) addressed 40,000 workers. The Block is now conceived of as a means of preparing for a genuine united front and even as a means of preparing for a genuine regrouping of the proletarian forces in a new revolutionary party. The elements of this position were already contained in the resolution of the second National Convention, as quoted under section 16 of this report.

The following quotations on the question of the Left Parliamentarian Block are arranged in chronological order as an appendix to this report:

October 17, 1934  
 October 24, 1934  
 October 31, 1934  
 December 5, 1934  
 December 12, 1934  
 January 2, 1935

From the last of these articles which bears the sub-title "Workers, let's understand each other!", it appears, that the Block policy of the Communist Left has met with a certain amount of disapproval on the part of the radical workers. We have unfortunately no recent communications from the Communist Left which would show how far the new policy has met with the approval of the members of the organization.

#### Communist

(18) THE CHACO WAR: The Chilean/Left has been the main driving force in the attempt to create a group standing for the Fourth International in BOLIVIA. It has recently issued an appeal to all the other parties and groups on the American continent to assist in this task. A small Bolivian Communist Left has actually been created and has begun to work among the soldiers of the Bolivian army. Thousands of copies of a manifesto, calling for immediate peace and the creation of soldiers', workers' and peasants' soviets, have been distributed at the front. The Chilean Communist Left was the first, and remains to this day the only organization which has taken a position on the problems arising before the international proletariat in connection with the war in Chaco. For this reason the Theses on the Chaco war, adopted by the second National Convention of the party, are (in spite of their shortcomings in important respects) attached to this report.

(19) The Chilean Communist Left has consistently pressed for an international conference of the parties and groups standing for the Fourth International, either on a world scale or for the American Continent, and has even offered to organize such a continental conference in Chile.

EXTRACT FROM EDITORIAL IN "IZQUIERDA"

October 17, 1934.

.....

With an air of journalistic mystery, sufficiently mediocre as a political trick, "El Mercurio" has "discovered" certain secret meetings in which parliamentarians of various parties met for the formation of a United Front of the Left in opposition to the Government.

Parliamentary representatives of the Communist Left, who had agreed to enter this block, signing a manifesto already drawn up, had attended these meetings.

There could be nothing more absurd than this information. The United Front is being created around diverse sectors of the working class and not by basing itself on isolated individuals who have no connection with or influence among the proletariat. The meetings of parliamentary representatives to which "El Mercurio" refers, have had no other purpose than that of maintaining joint activity in Parliament in defense of the democratic liberties of press, speech, assemblage, organization, strike, etc. The importance which the bourgeoisie pretends to give to these meetings, has therefore no other purpose than that of sowing panic among the reactionary forces, justifying thereby their "Constitutionalists" parades.

The working class has no, and can have no connection with the "leftist" chiefs of the bourgeois opposition. The Communist Left will never lead the working class on the road to capitulation to these leaders with whom they have nothing in common. The meetings held have no other purpose than that which we have here stated, nor will they ever pass over to the stage of organizational fusion.

Class against class means proletariat against bourgeois, exploited against exploiters, working class parties against bourgeois parties, and not a sentimental alliance with one bourgeois group against the others in order to fall victims of the same or even worse exploitation.

EDITORIAL IN "IZQUIERDA"

October 24, 1934.

The political situation points to the need of organizing the struggle for a greater independence on the part of the labor movement, from all influence of other classes.

We have recently had occasion to point to the lack of vitality in the proletarian organizations. To a great extent this organic weakness is due to the great divergence between the interests of the organizations themselves, as parts of the class, and the interests of their leading bodies. The existence of a trade union bureaucracy is just as real as is the existence of a national and international political bureaucracy. This determines the growing control by the exploiting classes over the leadership of the labor movement, that is to say the practical nullification of the latter

.....

On the political field the need of coordinating precise action to orient the toiling classes towards the strengthening of their independence of action of the ruling oligarchy and the bourgeoisie in power, becomes evident.

We know - and the proletariat also knows - that a revolutionary class party sufficiently strong enough to orient and at the same time enable the proletariat to overcome its deficiencies in the conquest of its immediate demands does not exist.

On the other hand there are political organizations that are trying to capture a dangerous influence over the proletariat. The Democratic Conventionalist Party, the Radical Socialist Party, and the Left of Chile, can within the present situation, gather a concrete following around themselves and draw behind their proposals, a great mass of those who are discontented with the present policy of the government: this is something we must prevent, inasmuch as we are able. For the moment, the establishment of a parliamentary block permits us to direct the parliamentary action of the leftist forces into a position of solid opposition to the Government. The advantage - without for this losing sight of the dangers - are to be seen clearly. The great discontented mass, which places the stability of the Government in doubt, will draw from the work of the block the conclusion that it is not only the government that is bad, but the regime itself, the system; and this will be progress. In case, however, our work were to concretize itself exclusively in this, the danger would increase rather than diminish; but at the same time the Communist Left maintains its own parliamentary position within the parliamentary block, now being formed, it will develop all of the immense energy required by its position of responsibility as the central nucleus for the new party. Our press - ever subject to all manners of attacks - can and must be replaced in part at least, by the parliamentary tribunal which today more than ever before should be placed at the disposal of the proletarian revolution.

LEADING ARTICLE FROM "IZQUIERDA" - October 31, 1934, entitled THE LEFT PARLIAMENTARIAN BLOCK - Its true extent - The position of the Working Class must be fortified - Out of the defensive the offensive will grow.

.....

The Left Parliamnetarian Block is an exclusively parliamentar-



ian front consecrated to the struggle within the bourgeois parliament for the defense of the democratic liberties that are being torn away, shred by shred, and piece by piece, by the reactionary forces that seek and prepare the Fascist coup with which they hope to sweep away the last remnants of bourgeois democracy and replace it with the most bloody of class dictatorships that the working class has ever known.

In this sense - with the activities of the Block limited to the parliamentary field alone - the representatives of the Communist Left in both houses, enter the block in order to reinforce the struggle for the defense of the democratic liberties of press, speech, assembly, organization and strike.

Reaction attempts to tear away from the working class those means still left it, under the present regime, for the defense of its rights and standard of living, call upon the working class to strengthen and extend the struggle for the defense of its rights. Out of the defensive the offensive will grow!

#### Parliamentarianism and Mass Action

But at the same time, we communists cannot fail to tell the masses that such defense of democratic liberties as can be made in the bourgeois parliament can not substitute - not even for a single moment - the independent struggle of the working class, carried forward with unyielding will for the strengthening of its organizations and for the creation of its own instruments of action: The United Front, coordinating the action of the diverse sections of the labor movement, and a new revolutionary party to guide its struggles for the triumph of the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

While the Communist Left, taking into account the correlation of the contending forces, participates in the Left Parliamentary Block, it calls upon the working class not to have confidence in parliamentary illusions, but only in its own independent strength. Class against class!

#### THE TRUE EXTENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARIAN BLOCK

The block is not a front of parties. The United Front of the working class can only be effected and consolidated with the participation of the diverse parties and tendencies of the labor movement. The United Front becomes a base on which the working class mobilizes its forces against reaction. But the Left Parliamentary Block is a purely parliamentary front, disconnected from the parties that send their representatives into it. It cannot extend beyond that which we have here specified nor can its projections be interpreted to mean that the proletariat should confide in the action of the Block as an expression of its class interests and historical course.

Before all else, it is necessary to strengthen the labor movement and create the organs of proletarian defense. Let us ourselves, defend our liberties. Let us surround our meeting halls with the



cordon of our defenses. Let us protect our print shops and our press. Not a step backward in the face of reaction! In the field of unity of action of the proletariat, all yet remains to be done. But this cannot mean that everything is lost.

Not to retreat, means to defend ourselves from the ever more ferocious exploitation to which we are subjected. So once more we repeat: Out of the active defense the offensive will grow!!

EXTRACTS FROM AN ARTICLE IN "IZQUIERDA" Dec. 5, 1934, entitled "There was only one perspective in the Democratic Convention" by Santo s Zambrano.

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The Democratic Party was the first working class party in Chile, having been born to struggle for the interests of the toiling masses..... At the present time it represents only the most backward forms of struggle against the bourgeoisie and feudal classes of the country and is destined to play a role foreign to the proletariat's interests in every decisive moment. But its membership (base), made up principally of artisans, some proletarian elements (secttres), urban and rural petty bourgeois, employees and peasants, subjected constantly to the experience of economic exploitation and political oppression, cannot fail to acquire consciousness, even now through the defeats of the proletariat..... This tendency (towards more militant action) was manifested although in an uncertain and weak manner, in their last convention and found its expression in the 6th proposition presented by the Political Commission:- "6a. - Empower the E.C. to be designated in this Convention, to study a formula for fusion with the other political entities of the left and with the organized working class elements - .....". This was without doubt the most important motion ..... To bring into being a great single party through the joint efforts of all the existing parties with a working class membership (base) would undoubtedly signify having assimilated the great experiences of the daily blows dealt by armed united reaction, it would mean the creation of the means whereby the advance of Fascism could be stopped and the instrument capable of liquidating capitalism. True, its effectiveness as the party of the proletariat, sole guide and leader of the popular masses, would depend fundamentally on the firmness of its principles, on its strategy, on the correctness of its clarity of its program: but it is precisely for this reason that the Communist Left, guardian of incalculable international experience, having already attained the most precise ideological clarity should not in any way turn down the responsibility of contributing its ideological clarity to the building of the united party (Partido Unico).....

This was the perspective that was lost in the Temuco Convention (of the Democratic Party)..... the presidium prevented discussion on the matter..... Threatening to split, and making pathetic calls for the unity of the party, its withdrawal from the discussion was managed..... But the workers of

the Democratic Party should not lose this hope.

So long as our class remains divided into diverse tendencies and we have not even united trade union organization, we shall unite our common action through a united front of all the organizations. The united front will stop fascism and within it all of the workers will learn their class strength and there they will forge their party.

EXTRACT FROM ARTICLE IN "IZQUIERDA" Dec. 12, 1935 entitled "the New Party, Facts and Perspectives" by Jorge Levin

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The Left Parliamentarian Block. - The most fitting subtitle to this chapter dealing with the initiatives for a more effective, more concentrated more active struggle, would be FROM THE PARLIAMENT TO THE STREET and which already being an immediate perspective, has now become a reality as an agreement.

Apparently (to appearances?) there is no connection of any sort between the necessary revolutionary work for the NEW PARTY and this circumstantial parliamentarian (?) FRONT. Within the Communist dogma, the militant, with all the fervor of a fanatic, sees this turn (curve) in the new party's road, as either a simple renunciation or a dangerous concession. It does contain a little of both. It would be stupid not to give up a part in order to assure the whole just as it would be a hidden betrayal, to cover up the danger involved in any action taken together with allies who but yesterday were our enemies. But the greatest importance that all of this can have is in order the better to verify a new experience and make clear to all, the needs of the class.

As a bond between the parties FROM ABOVE, THE LEFT PARLIAMENTARIAN BLOCK contains within itself the immediate effective possibility of a BOND FROM BELOW also. The fact that it is called parliamentarian shows better than anything else, how weak this pact really is; but at the present time it brings pressure to bear on us - for the same reason - to strengthen it outside of parliament.

The struggle for the United Front already has a tradition and somewhat of a history in Chile. But this bit of history is one of one failure after the other. There are various causes for this and among the fundamental ones is the SOLID OPPOSITION OF THE LEADERSHIP to all joint work with other organizations. It now appears that this cause is eliminated. It is our duty to place every incident and every fact in its proper place within the development of the class struggle: but the abominable pressure of the political and trade union bureaucracy has no place here and does not interest the toiling classes excepting inasmuch as there is need to destroy it. And the leadership pact (pacto de directiva) contained in the block is as positive as any other proletarian stronghold, its importance is in direct relation with its class bonds, with its great desire to struggle within the proletariat.

The new party must be born out of an experience, a class experience emerging from the actions and struggles against exploitation. If we are able through the (parliamentary) block to reach a joint struggle by the democrats, socialists, radical-socialists and communists against the bosses, against the exploiters, then we will have laid the foundations of the new party, because we will have clearly ~~shown~~ demonstrated the enormous advantages of the united front of the class. The proletariat cannot learn this lesson excepting through its class interpreter, that is to say, its vanguard, and the vanguard can be none other than that which emerges from the joint effort of the workers of all parties, tendencies and beliefs in the camp of those who struggle against exploitation, that is to say, in the camp of the revolution which is a conscious fact to the majority of the exploited. The dynamics of the struggle will determine objectively before the masses, wherein the true leadership of the class lies. The Communist Left, like a lighthouse on the rocky granite coast will light the way with the clarity of its doctrines, with the honesty and sincerity of its action towards the class, as well as towards sections of the class - the working class parties. To be within the proletariat is to be within communism, to be outside of which, no matter under what name is to be just so much rubbish. (last sentence translated literally)

The Socialist Party Congress - This is indubitably of great importance. The Socialist Party itself cannot fail to recognize the need for a new party - section of the Fourth International. The comrades must understand that it is not a matter of organizing another party with pretensions of leading the toiling masses. This would be but one more stupidity and under the present circumstances could only constitute another political crime. The new party must grow out of the experience of the class itself: but in order to achieve this, certain factors must be prepared at once, which can make this experience more easily acquired and accumulated. At the present moment, neither the Communist Left nor the Socialist Party, nor any other party can say honestly that it leads more than a very small portion of the masses, and this only in an electoral sense. But, if the Socialist Party makes decisions favorable for a policy of joint action; the progressive tightening-up of relations and extensions of activities; if this work is systematized, clarified and explained to the masses of their party as well as to the toiling masses in general, we then can say that there already exists a concrete base for the new party, which will arise out of the common experience of militant masses of the parties, of the joint work of the parties which have worked together within the proletariat against capitalism.

The Communist Left requests, and will ask the Executive Committee that the Socialist Party decide to allow us to have two delegates at their Congress for the discussion of the thesis on the new party.

(All emphasis as in original)

EXTRACT FROM ITEM IN "IZQUIERDA" Dec. 12, 1934.

The (Santiago) Regional Committee of the Communist Left was re-

presented by a "fraternal delegation" in the (regional) Socialist Congress. The reading of the credential of our comrades, provoked an intense explosion of enthusiasm among the workers present, who cheered the Communist Left and the revolutionary unity of the proletariat, for a long while.

EDITORIAL IN "IZQUIERDA" Dec. 12, 1934

The Left Parliamentarian Block now becoming a reality already demands of the parties the sincere contribution of concrete action on the fundamental questions for which it is built.

On the parliamentary field, political intransigence is closely and inseparably bound up with a strict interpretation of the immediate needs of the toiling masses. To attempt through somewhat casual joint action to fulfill a strictly parliamentary task interests only the governing classes which would be only too glad to see a strengthening of the parliamentary opposition without any external repercussion.

The Communist Left as the embryo of the new party, as an integral part of the proletariat, interprets in a positive manner, by entering the block, the urgent necessity of hastening the joint action of the toiling masses which follow diverse political leaderships. But for this very reason it will insist on and struggle for proletarian action - by means of the action of the pacting parties - in the street, in the factory, in the very places of exploitation and hunger. Thus far, there is no differences on this matter and we are confident that none will arise. We will struggle without any hesitation in order to make the block an effective instrument of the proletariat. The work of the Block itself will destroy all remnants of parliamentary illusions now that the development of its action will bring it into direct conflict with the bosses in the places of work, where from moment to moment, class clashes with class, the worker with the boss, the proletarian and peasant with the capitalist and landlord.

The decision reached, for a street demonstration to be held through a great labor concentration called by the four parties, is truly and vitally connected with the moment in which we are living. Besides being our central task, our most immediate perspective is to push the masses into action under their class leadership. The vitality of the joint work of the four parties - that is to say of the masses in them and sympathetic to them - arises as a concrete fact, that can be felt through the contact the struggle establishes among men of different ideologies, but who, being subjected to the same exploitation, possess the material background for understanding the advantages of joint work and above all, of work under a class-conscious, sincere, revolutionary leadership. We place in the block no illusions of any sort nor do we consider it a panacea; but we do attribute to it the value that the organizations themselves give to it. The content of the block is to be found in the bonds that the parties integrating it have with the toiling masses.

As a simple parliamentary matter the block lacks importance, constituting but an unimportant opposition. The dynamics of the struggle of the toiling masses for their liberation, demands the concurrence of all the factors which may broaden it (acrecentarla); direct the parliamentary tribune in the same direction as the revolutionary, agitation, organization and propaganda demand, is to create an advantage where a danger exists today. The Block may be the beginning of an efficient struggle, by means of which the leaderships will make it easier for their followings to draw closer together; this is what we hope for and it is one of the central points for which we struggle.

EDITORIAL IN "IZQUIERDA" - (extract) Jan. 2, 1935

.....

It is precisely we, the Communists, who are the most interested in the joint development of the common actions of the whole working class, finding a powerful expression in the struggle against poverty, hunger, epidemics, war and capitalism. For this action we do not believe that what is needed is a policy of petty bickerings and hidden maneuvers. That which is needed is an immovable will and an unbreakable decision to carry forward the battle already begun.

No! It is not we who will attempt to solve the problem of leadership and orientation of the revolutionary proletariat behind the backs of the mass struggles, nor have we any intention of posing as the leaders of these masses without first having won their confidence and their support. Let us take a proletarian reality for our starting point; the working class, the popular masses, are under the influence of diverse parties which fluctuate between an open recognition of the class struggle and a latent illusion in bourgeois democracy and its legislative myths. But the working class, the workers of city and country feel that they are being despoiled and pose concrete demands for the betterment of their conditions.

This fact demands of us as Marxists a correct posing of the question that is not limited to the impotent screamings of corrupt Stalinism that has now reached a stage of complete ideological putrefaction. And this posing of the question can be no other than that of giving impetus to joint action against capitalist reaction and for common concrete objectives. In the course of this action the masses will find the road to their economic and political emancipation. We can and must demand the maximum loyalty and the maximum discipline for this struggle without giving up our right to bring forward our own points of view with regard to it.

It is thus that we Communists interpret the proletarian reality; it is only thus that the struggle of the exploited against their oppressors can be carried on progressively. Nothing is gained by sterile statements of one's principles, unless this is accompanied by a real and unpostponable struggle against reaction. The Democratic, Socialist and Communist workers suffer capitalist exploita-

tion equally with all others and want to struggle against this exploitation although their ideas are not at all similar. We must, then, forge the United Front, everywhere, in the places of work, in the mines, by decision of the political leaderships, and in every other form. The United Front must be formed, it must be attained. On the road thereto the Parliamentarian Block has appeared and the latter also must be pressed into the service of this struggle in which the appeal of Marx and Engels find a new formula of expression: WORKERS OF ALL TENDENCIES UNITE!!

EXTRACTS FROM AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "WHY WE COMMUNISTS ARE IN THE BLOCK" Printed in the January 2, 1935 issue of "IZQUIERDA" (signed by Ismeal Suarez) - Workers, let's Understand each other!-----

.....There are still many workers who do not evaluate as well, (as does the bourgeoisie), the real significance of the Left Block, why we communists are in it and where we are going.....

The Left Block has been created and we have pushed it forward in order to create an obstacle against the capitalist landlord reaction that dominates in the country.....

If the unity of action of the masses has been bound up in parliament, with a clear program of defense of the fundamental rights and liberties of the proletariat, this is due to the failure of the former UNITED FRONT attempts, to the necessity of uniting in joint ~~xxxxx~~ struggle all of the political sectors that are today opposed to the Nazi and Militia reaction, to the facility of using the Parliament as a foothold, as a "democratic" citadel in the path of the forward march of all-absorbing "presidentialism", of the "strong Executive Power", of the personalist "dictatorship" of Fascism.....

But this is not all; in order to give the masses under the leadership of the Left Block a revolutionary spirit, the block has been carried into the street, and into the popular demonstrations, and will continue to be carried into the sharpest proletarian struggles, even into strikes and the insurrection. In order to arm the proletariat with the revolutionary party that it requires, we present our principles and our slogans before the workers calling them into combat for the regrouping of their forces into a new Communist Party, which should come to fill the vacancy left by the shameful bankruptcy of the Third International.

.....

If the pseudo - "socialist" and "democratic" program of these parties (Radical-Socialist Party, Democratic Party), rests on their predominantly petty bourgeois class composition, "and" socialist" ideology and basic proletarian composition of the Socialist Party this is then, what makes it possible for us to enter into pacts with them against the forces of the anti-democratic Fascist reaction, that grows and prospers in the shade of the divisions and dispersion of the proletariat. None of the parties adhering to the pact loses its individuality and independence to criticize or in matters of doctrine. Neither they nor we.....

THESIS ON THE CHACO WAR.

(Presented to the New International for publication and . . . . . rejected).  
At the second National Congress of the Chilean Communist Left, the following thesis, submitted by Comrade M. Fernandez of the Bolivian Left, was adopted. It constitutes the first fundamental analysis of the war in Chaco, to be adopted in thesis form by any of the Fourth Internationalist parties or groups.

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1....The Chaco war is very close to us, and affects Argentina and Chile very directly. The application of our general thesis and theories to this case is, therefore, of primary and immediate importance. In essence, the Chaco war is an adventure on the part of the dominating feudal-bourgeois classes of two bankrupt semi-colonies (Bolivia and Paraguay), carrying within itself - half visibly, half hidden - definite imperialist motive forces. The world crisis, the fall of prices (since 1929), prepared the internal causes of the conflict, undermining the stability of the social classes, depriving the governing political factions of the necessary administrative resources. Imperialist pretensions for their part, made possible the conflict on a large scale and gave the war its decisive impetus. Chile and Argentina are especially involved in this situation.

2....On the eve of the war, the economic conditions of Bolivia and Paraguay were posed as follows: Tin constituted 78 percent of the total exports of Bolivia and over 50 percent of its budgetary income, but its market price was cut two-thirds, producing a proportional reduction in the national budget. As to Paraguay, 63 percent of its economic life depends on the export of quebracho (tannin), mate (Paraguay tea) and meats; but the demand for quebracho fell off 70 percent, while its market price fell from 23 to 10 pounds sterling. The general internal situation of both countries had become catastrophic. It became impossible for governments to maintain their rule by ordinary means. Further complicating the economic problem, were the petroleum concessions in the Chaco territory, where Bolivia had given concessions to the Standard Oil Company (although without any route for export via the Paraguay River or Argentina) and Paraguay had given concessions to the Royal Dutch Shell (British company).

3....Oil deposits are being worked in Argentina territory, and the latter feels the absolute necessity of protecting this industry and impeding the infant petroleum industry of Bolivia. Thus, in 1926, Argentinian refused to allow an oil line of the Standard Oil Company to pass through its territory. Large amounts of Argentine industrial capital (Sastre, Casado, etc.), are tied up in Paraguay, and Argentine banks have raised loans for the preparation of the war itself. Consistent with this, mercenaries for the war have been recruited in Argentine territory; desperately hopeless unemployed workers have been taken into the struggle in the Paraguayan trenches; the diplomatic attitudes of the Argentine foreign office incline in Paraguay's favor and the government is ever watchfully waiting.

4....Chilean participation in Bolivian mining enterprises is ever increasing; numerous economically weakened companies, try to bolster



themselves up with Chilean capital (this applies to Oploca, Ocuri, Morococala and even Patino), in exchange for the free penetration of Chilean commerce into Bolivia. Already in 1927, twenty percent of all foreign capital invested in Bolivian mines, belonged to Chilean industrialists. Of all the South American countries, Bolivia has been Chile's best commercial customer. Out of these fundamental economic grounds - (the deals entered into by Chile in favor of Bolivia; contracting of unemployed Chileans for the war, and of Chilean workers for the Bolivian mines as well as officials for the Bolivian army, and finally the diplomatic friction with Paraguay which, in spite of outward appearances, continues and will remain) - of necessity grow by themselves.

5.... This, clearly and indisputably, is the true significance and extension of the feudal-bourgeois-imperialist Chaco war. The lines of trenches reach Chile and Argentina, and these two latter become ever more involved, the longer the slaughter is prolonged and deepened. In their turn, Chile and Argentina will be called upon to shed even more blood, to solve the problems of imperialism. Paraguay and Bolivia are worn out, but continue fighting; fresh cannon fodder in greater quantities is needed, in order to bring the struggle to a definite conclusion. Never has the danger of intervention by Chile and Argentina been so imminent as it is today. The wearing down of the belligerents, the scant and half-hearted battles, far from giving us pacifist illusions, should cause us to redouble our campaign. The energetic action of the Chilean and Argentine proletariat, in aid of their comrades of Paraguay and Bolivia, could put an end to the slaughter. But how is one to struggle against the Chaco war? We have stated and proved a hundred times over, in the Marxian analysis of war's significance to the proletariat, that there can be but one means of struggle against it: to hinder the bourgeoisie, and prepare to answer the international maneuvers of the exploiters with the proletarian revolution. The struggle against war is not posed as a deluge of printed matter or in "social-pacifist" circles: it is formulated by the political vanguard of the proletariat (the communist Left), and is fulfilled on the base of the progressive victories of the working class against its eternal and obstinate enemy -- capitalism. Our perspectives will be the greater in the measure that the regime is menaced by our vigorous action: when we triumph, wars will disappear from history forever. In the concrete case of the Chaco war, the pressure of the Chilean and Argentine working classes over their respective bourgeoisie will weaken the battle fronts. The struggle in Chile and Argentina, far from being abstract is now more concrete than ever before; the proletariat must choose between massacre in the service of its masters or the fight for its own demands, for the united front, for the defense of its positions, and for carrying the struggle over to the offensive. Every blow dealt the capitalists of Argentina and Chile will be translated not only into a blow against the Chaco war, but also into support of the workers of Bolivia and Paraguay, who should turn the present struggle into a WAR AGAINST THEIR OWN BOURGEOISIE.

7.... This problem must be posed firmly and in the only manner possible, the class struggle must be deepened in Chile and Argentina. Secondly, the fraternal, international preparation of our actions, with an understanding of our common problems, must be carried out.

Thirdly, the revolutionary agitation and propaganda at the battle front, among the prisoners, and peoples in struggle in our respective countries must be coordinated, in Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia. Towards iron-clad unity of the workers of the four countries involved! Towards a broader, more complete preparation of the struggle!

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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY LATIN-AMERICAN DEPT.

Vote 3-3 - March 8, 1935

NEVER TAKEN UP IN P. C.

The Latin-American Committee of the Workers Party of the U.S. views the situation in the COMMUNIST LEFT OF CHILE, one of the largest organizations standing for the Fourth International, with grave concern.

A block in parliament, as concluded by the Communist Left in October 1934, "for the defense of democratic rights in parliament", can but increase parliamentary illusions among the masses. In such a block the reformist and petty bourgeois parties are bound to lead, and to profit by the block.

No specific conditions have been put to the other parties in the block, at any rate publicly, and even then their execution could, in the case of parliamentary activities, not be controlled by the masses. Without such specific and publicly known points of agreement it is impossible for the communists to influence the masses against their reformist and petty bourgeois leaders.

Mass demonstrations are, of course, part of ~~the~~ united front of workers' organizations. Mass demonstrations organized by the parliamentary block do not provide the communists with a mass basis that could be utilised by them in order to win the masses away from these leaders, but on the contrary gives the latter the foothold outside of parliament; the communists serve as a left covering to the reformist and petty bourgeois leaders. The block policy of the Communist Left, instead of accelerating the radicalization of the masses, retards it. The main task of a united front, to force the allied groups into actions of defense of democratic rights, and in this process to win the masses away from their present leaders, is completely frustrated by this fake united front, which effectively blocks the way to a genuine united front of workers' organizations (including the trade unions and the Stalinists), based on specific and public agreements.

The communists must immediately end the block in parliament and publicly confront the three other parties at present in the block with proposals for specific and concrete fighting agreements. Only upon

their public acceptance and with the open declaration on the part of the communists that even this united front will not be able to lead the insurrection, can the present collaboration with the other three parties be continued, in this new and correct form. In that case attempts must immediately be made to draw in the trade unions and the Stalinists.

The perspective of organic fusion with the other parties in the block, even in this ambiguous formulation of "upon the basis of regroupment of forces", must be repudiated. The correct policy would appear to be to force the Revolutionary Socialist Opposition and other left groups within the parties of the block and within the Stalinist party, wherever such groups exist, further to the left, and to attempt, first close collaboration, then, if possible, fusion with them on a principled Marxian program or program of action. This is the only way to bring about the desired "regroupment of forces" within the parties of the block, in a revolutionary and not an opportunist sense, i.e. through the emergence of revolutionary left wings within these parties, opening up the perspective of further splits, and fusion with them on the same basis as with the Revolutionary Socialist Opposition.

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THE "FRENCH TURN" REACHES CHILE.  
(An estimate of the Parliamentary Block - By P. Eiffel)

The effects of major victories or defeats of the proletariat of the leading countries are as decisive for the development of the working-class movement in the semi-colonial countries of Latin America as they are in any other part of the world. The catastrophe of the German proletariat in January 1933 weakened and disoriented the Latin American proletariat and strengthened and encouraged the Latin American henchmen of American and English imperialism. Fascism for the first time raised its head in some of the Latin American countries, above all in Chile.

While thus intimately bound up with the fate of the international proletariat as a whole, the proletariat of the semi-colonial countries of Latin America is faced with a situation which has to a certain extent a rhythm of its own. The utterly unstable economy of these "single-product" countries, absolutely dependent upon the needs and the mercy of the great imperialist powers, has since the world war, thrown these countries into a never-ending series of violent social convulsions which as a result of the rachitic weakness of the native ruling classes again and again put the question of the seizure of power by the president upon the order of the day. While the proletariat of the more advanced countries has matured in a slower process of class struggles, passing in most cases through decades of more elementary battles, before being faced with the problem of power, the young and weak proletariat of these semi-colonial countries

countries is almost from the very beginning confronted with tasks which seem almost too big for it. Typical for this state of affairs is the fact that the two groups which now constitute the Chilean and Cuban sections respectively of the I.C.L. were born, or at any rate made their first independent steps, at a moment when their countries were in the throes of open war, with British and American war-ships lying in waiting for military intervention. This situation of open civil war was, in fact, the decisive factor which forced these two groups to take upon themselves the task of independent leadership of the proletariat and all the toiling masses.

The combination of these contradictory factors makes the organizations of the revolutionary proletariat of the Latin American countries dependent upon international help and an international leadership to the very highest degree. The existence of an effective international center will decide the victory or failure of the revolutionary movement in Latin America. The extraordinary growth of the movement for a new communist international in the Latin American Countries during the last two years emphasized the immediate urgency for the creation for such an international center. The International Secretariat of the I.C.L. admittedly did not yet represent this political leadership. Attempts were made during the summer of 1934 to give leadership to some of the sections in Latin America. On the whole, however, there was as yet little political lead given as far as the special problems of these sections are concerned. The international role of the I.S. was directly felt only in one or two European countries. The other sections, including those of both North and South America, were more or less left to their own resources; all they could do was to try to apply the policies evolved by the I.S. for France and some other European section to the situation in their own countries.

The two political steps taken by the I.S. and its leading European sections which have profoundly influenced the growth and development of the movement for a new communist international in the Latin American countries were the pact of Four, and the entry of the majority of the French section into the SFIO. Both represented in their way the reaction of the most advanced group in the international revolutionary proletariat to the world situation created by the defeat of the German proletariat and the collapse of the C.I. The failure of the first of these two steps, the Pact of the Four, to bring the expected rapid results, was largely responsible for the step taken one year later, the entry of the French section into the SFIO. During this year the disintegration of the world revolutionary movement, only in its initial stages at the time of the Pact of Four, had gone on apace, and had reached unheard-of depths. Yet the leftward counter-currents to this general stream of disintegration and disorientation had during this year by no means decreased, but on the contrary rather increased: the movement for a new international, which at the time of the Pact of Four had got hold only of one German and two Dutch parties, had by now spread to other countries. In addition there were in a good many countries, strong left wings developing within the parties of the Second International. All these more or less temporary counter-currents demanded clear international leadership. Otherwise there was the danger that they would fall back into the general stream of disorientation and disintegration.

The reaction of the international leadership of the ICL to this situation demonstrated, however, that the latter itself had been unable to withstand the effects of the disintegrating forces which the defeat of the German proletariat had set loose. Instead of adopting a policy which would force the left socialists still further to the left, it capitulated to them, and thereby to the Second International as such. This capitulation, politically and organizationally in the key country, France, and politically on an international scale, was presented as a progressive step, by means of a false analysis of the situation in the international Social Democracy. This analysis presented the temporary leftward counter currents in certain countries as the decisive and general direction of present-day Social Democracy, requiring a fundamental change in the policy of the revolutionary vanguard towards it. Thus the policy of the Pact of Four was, instead of being adapted to new needs, and modified upon the experience of initial errors in its application, completely reversed.

The Pact of Four had far-reaching effects upon the movement for a new communist international in the countries of Latin America. The development of groups like those in Chile and Cuba, e.g., was largely due to the inspiration which the Pact of Four had brought to the revolutionary proletariat of these countries. They threw off the yoke of the Stalinist leadership which had been such a dismal failure in face of the problems confronting the Latin American proletariat, and boldly struck out towards the new goal: the creation of new communist parties and a new communist international. A new period in the history of Latin America seemed to begin: that of independent leadership of the revolutionary proletariat,

With five sections in the Latin American countries, not to speak of nuclei in others, the American continent during 1934 actually represented almost half of all the sections of the ICL. The demand grew for an international conference of all the sections in North, Central, and South America, as a prelude to a world conference. With correct leadership coming from the I.S. and assistance from the section in the USA the future of the movement for a new communist international seemed in the Latin American countries brighter than almost anywhere else.

The new international line of the IS, concretized in the demand for the entry of the French section into the SFIO, put an end to all this. Itself an opportunist and adventurist answer to the situation created by the disintegration of the world revolutionary movement after the German defeat, it opened the door to and encouraged all corresponding tendencies in the Latin American sections. Such tendencies of opportunism and adventurism are lying dormant in the revolutionary vanguard of colonial and semi-colonial countries no less than in the more advanced countries, though differing in their concrete character. In fact they are here probably greater on account of the numerical isolation of the proletariat in these predominantly agrarian countries.

An attempt of the IS and the French section to find a short-cut to the masses and to the task of building the new party and international found very shortly an echo in a number of Latin American countries.

The Cuban section tries to end its isolation from the masses by an adventurous step which, if carried out, will not only isolate it still further from the masses but in all probability even mean its end as an independent political tendency: it has been considering a block with the petty bourgeois revolutionary party "Young Cuba", to prepare for insurrection. Our Cuban comrades realize themselves that such a block policy would carry the petty bourgeoisie into power. The participation in such a block would burden our comrades with the direct responsibility for another, still more disastrous defeat of the Cuban revolution.

In Mexico a part of the section is preparing its entry into the "Socialist Party of the Left" (Tejeda), a petty bourgeois party in both political program and social composition. Here no attempt is being made, as was done in France, to present this party as "left-centrist". Yet the step into Tejeda's party is explicitly represented as an application of the policy of the French comrades to Mexican conditions. The Marxist Leninist Study Circle has already been dissolved and its members sent into Tejeda's party.

The Chilean section of the ICL, one of the biggest sections internationally, and the biggest on the American continent (ca 1000 members, with two deputies in parliament and a regularly published 4-page weekly), in October, 1934, following the break-up of the united front, formed a parliamentarian block with the Socialist Party, the Democratic Party, and the Radical Socialist Party. Originally this block was presented to the Chilean proletariat as an exclusively parliamentarian block, which would carry on no other activities than the defense of democratic liberties in parliament, and which would "never" lead to organic fusion of the parties forming the block. Such a parliamentary block will not only sow parliamentary illusions, - in spite of the simultaneous warnings of our Chilean comrades, to the workers against such illusions, but it will effectively militate against the creation of a genuine united front of organizations, based on concrete agreements and controlled by the masses. For concrete agreements controlled by the masses run counter to the very essence of parliamentary politics. A block of this type is bound to be under the control of the non-communist parties in it (three out of four) which will utilize it to create for themselves an extra-parliamentary mass basis. For this the participation of the communists (i.e. our comrades, - the Stalinists not being in the block) is indispensable for the other parties. The block has, in fact, already organized a mass demonstration in which about 40,000 workers and small townspeople participated. This is hailed by our comrades as a victory for them, - "The block has been forced to come out into the street". Completely reversing their original position on the purpose of the block, they now regard it as a short-cut towards the creation of a united front of organizations (without the Stalinists and without the trade unions??), which otherwise

seems unattainable to them at the present moment. In reality it is a fake united front which will effectively block the road towards a real united front, and in which the communists serve as a left covering to the Socialist Party and the two parties still further to the right of it. No concrete agreements between the four parties for definite goals of joint struggle have been made public. There can, therefore, be no question of the communists fighting to gain influence amongst the followers of the other parties on the basis of this "united front". The present extra-parliamentarian mass basis of the Block serves only the interests of the Socialists, Democrats, and Radical Socialists.

The "concrete situation" in Chile allegedly demands such a "new" road to the United Front. It is not said in what this concrete situation differs from that of other countries for which the Leninist united front policy has been worked out on the basis of living experiences. All hopes of our Chilean comrades are now pinned on "out-maneuvering" (in which the Socialists, etc., are certainly greater masters than the communists) for a flexible application of Leninist principles is to-day the key-note in the process of the disintegration of the world revolutionary movement. It will inevitably lead to the communists being out-maneuvered by the socialist and other leaders. The strength of the communists lies in the combination of certain political and organizational principles with a constant appeal to the initiative of the masses. Neglect of the latter leads to sectarianism, neglect of the former to opportunism. Neither of them alone will lead to a revolutionary party rooted in the masses. It is precisely the question of how to build this party which most clearly reveals the dangerous road our Chilean comrades are traveling.

The present Block is clearly conceived of as more or less permanent. We quote from "Izquierda" of January 2nd, 1935: "In order to give the masses under the leadership of the Left Block a revolutionary spirit, this block has been carried into the street and into popular demonstrations, and will continue to be carried into the sharpest proletarian struggles, even into strikes and the insurrection". This political line, unless abandoned without delay, will in itself lead to the complete submerging of the communists in the "leadership of the Left Block" and to another defeat of the Chilean revolution, this time with the direct participation of the communists in its strangulation.

The execution of such a political line will inevitably sooner or later lead to the organic fusion of the parties forming this block. A block, in fact, is by its very character but the prelude to organic fusion. It has helped our Chilean comrades little to "promise" that the Parliamentarian Block would confine its activities exclusively to the parliamentarian field. The logic of the first step led them within less than two months to the second, that of helping the Socialist, Democratic, and Radical Socialist leaders to find an extra-parliamentarian mass base. It will help our Chilean comrades equally little to have promised that the negotiations will never "pass over to the stage of organizational fusion". (Izquierda Oct. 17, 1934). By the middle of December the activities of the Block are already linked up with the task of building the new party: "The new party must be born out of an experience, a class ex-



perience emerging from the actions and struggles against exploitation. If we are able through the block to reach a joint struggle by the democrats, socialists, radical-socialists, and communists against the bosses, against the exploiters, then we will have laid the foundations of the new party, because we will have clearly demonstrated the enormous advantages of the united front of the class". ("through the block" - which will even lead to the insurrection!) Addressing itself to the Socialist Party on the eve of their convention, our comrades go on to say (same article, "Izquierda", December 13, 1934): "If this work is systematized, clarified and explained to the masses of their party as well as to the toiling masses in general, we then can say that there already exists a concrete base for the new party." (emphasis in the original). The obvious meaning of this is that the Socialist Party of Chile, certainly even less a "left-centrist" party than the SFIO., can be won over to the task of creating a new party, together with the other parties in the present block (for similar attitudes towards the Democrats see "Izquierda", Dec. 5th, 1934). The fact that our Chilean comrades intend to carry this policy through by "calling the workers into combat for the regrouping of their forces in a new communist party, which should come to fill the vacancy left by the shameful bankruptcy of the Third International", shows only their high revolutionary ideal, but in no way does away with the fact that their present block policy will have the very opposite effect, that of leading the revolutionary proletariat of Chile, including their own members, into the swamp of a united party of a centrist or even reformist character. The desire for unity at all costs, one of the main effects of the German defeat upon the world proletariat, has to give way to the attempt of arriving at organic unity with the revolutionary elements and groups, in Chile probably above all with the "Revolutionary Socialist Opposition" (which our comrades, now that they are striving towards organic unity based on the parties forming the Block, are strangely neglecting in recent months). This can only be done by a policy which is not designed to cover up their vacillations, but which continuously pushed them further to the left.

With the Socialist Party as such and with the two other parties, only an actual united front can be considered. Our comrades must openly admit their mistake before the whole working class, and correct it immediately. The Socialist Party, the Democratic Party, and the Radical Socialist Party must immediately be approached for a number of concrete agreements of united front struggle, and the same proposals must be made to the trade unions and the Stalinists. (If the Revolutionary Socialist Opposition is at the present moment outside of the Socialist Party, it must be included among those approached.)

The Parliamentary Block must immediately be ended. The whole turn must be carried out with the fullest possible participation of the masses, not only explaining to them the reasons for the turn, but trying to utilize them at this important juncture in order to bring pressure upon the leaders of the other parties, to accept the united front proposals. In other words, our comrades must attempt to use the existence of the present block for the creation of a genuine united front, but not by further developing the block (as the leader

of even the insurrection, and as the basis for the regroupment of forces for a new party), but by ending it. If this is done immediately, and not in a bureaucratic fashion, but with the fullest possible participation of the masses, harm done may still be undone.

There is, however, not much hope that our Chilean comrades will effect this turn, and thereby save their organization and the Chilean revolution from dire disaster, as long as the new international orientation, which has guided our Chilean comrades, is not being changed. It is a high credit to the "Nueva Etapa" group in Argentina, that notwithstanding the fact that the new orientation was proposed by the I.S., and endorsed by an international plenum, they opposed it as a departure from communist principle. But on the whole, such cases are bound to remain exceptions. There is little reason to expect that very many sections in semi-colonial countries, all of them faced with especially great odds in their struggle for a clear Marxist line, will take a correct position on fundamental problems so long as the I.S. and sections like the North American by majority vote declare for an incorrect one. The responsibility for the grave danger in which our Chilean comrades find themselves now, together with the Cubans and Mexicans, lies with the I.S. and the leading sections in the imperialist countries. It is not the Chilean comrades so much who are to blame for their yielding to the forces of disintegration that weaken the world proletariat, but those who had been entrusted with the international leadership. And we must add here: it will not be enough for them to explain to the Chilean and other comrades that they are wrong in applying the new international line to Chile, the line itself must be changed.

In this situation let us hope all the more that the comrades of the Chilean section will not follow the road which has led to the break-up of important sections of the I.C.L. -- first France, Germany, Poland, and now Belgium.

APRIL, 1935.

#### A LETTER FROM COMRADE EIFFEL TO THE CHILEAN SECTION OF THE ICL

Dear Comrades:

As a collaborator of the I.S. for Latin American questions I had an opportunity of studying the problems confronting your organization. Some of my observations and recommendations I put down in a number of letters which were sent out as official communications from the I.S. Since then the new international orientation of the ICL (attitude towards the Second International) which I regard as a departure from communist principles, has made any further collaboration on my part with the I.S. impossible. As a member of the Latin American Committee of the Workers Party USA, which I joined after my emigration to this country, I have now once more an opportunity of devoting part of my time to Latin American problems.

I have just prepared a lengthy report on the recent policy and activities of your organization, which has been accepted by the Latin American Committee. I hold a very serious view of the situation in which your organization now finds itself as the result of your new political line. This view is shared by the majority of the Latin American Committee, but no official position has been taken as yet by the Committee as such. In view of the urgency of the situation I take therefore the liberty of sending you the enclosed statement of my personal opinion on the matter, as shared by two other members of the Committee, comrades Oehler and Negrete. I regard the fate of your organization, which has always been the source of just pride on the part of the whole ICL, as of the very greatest importance for the future of the movement for a new communist international, above all on the American continent. In view of this I am sending copies of the enclosed statement to comrade Trotsky and the I.S., asking them to express their opinion in this matter. I am enclosing copies of these letters.

With most sincere wishes for the future of your organization,

Yours for the revolution,

P. EIFFEL

APRIL, 1935.

#### A LETTER FROM COMRADE EIFFEL TO COMRADE TROTSKY

Dear Comrade Trotsky:

In view of the serious situation in which the Chilean section of the I.C.L., one of the biggest internationally, and the biggest on the American continent, finds itself as the result of its new political line, adopted in September/October of last year, I take the liberty of submitting to you a copy of a statement on this question which I just sent to the Chilean comrades. The Secretary of the Latin American Committee of the Workers Party USA has probably sent you already a copy of the factual report on the situation in the Chilean section which I prepared for the Committee.

I am convinced that without a complete reversal of the present political line of the ICL which has discredited it in the eyes of the revolutionary workers of all countries, and which has split and destroyed one section after the other, it will be impossible to combat the tendencies of opportunism and adventurism which find their expression in the new policy of our Chilean comrades, since these tendencies derive their strength not only from the general disorientation and disintegration of the revolutionary world movement since Hitler, but directly from the opportunist and adventurist step taken by the majority of the French comrades upon your advice. The situation of the Chilean section seems, however, such a grave one that I feel it would already be of value if you could be induced to express yourself against the Chilean way of applying the so-called "French" turn, even though you still defend

this turn and the new international orientation that accompanied it. Your word might momentarily bring our Chilean comrades back from their present fatal course, and they would thus be given an opportunity of reviewing once more their present situation and their perspectives.

It is with this limited purpose in mind that I am writing you this letter.

Yours comradely,

P. EIFFEL

Copy to I.S.

APRIL, 1935

#### THE FRENCH TURN AND ITS REPERCUSSION IN CHILE

Reply of the C.C. of the Communist Left (Chilean Section of the I.C.L.) to Comrade P. Eiffel

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Esteemed Comrade:

We have just received your letter dated April of this year, which you have also sent to the I.S., to Comrade Trotsky and to other sections of the I.C.L.

We must begin by thanking you for the interest that you show in the problems affecting our section. But we consider it necessary to clear up some errors in concept contained in your report, especially as this appears to have been accepted by the Latin American Committee of the Workers' Party. In the first place, it is necessary to point out that in essence your document is a criticism of the general policy adopted by our international leadership, especially in France and other European countries. The Chilean Section of the I.C.L. can feel proud of having seriously and calmly faced such an important perspective. We consider that the step taken by the French Comrades was entirely correct, and, in no event, we believe can the final balance sheet be closed on an experience which has just commenced. Cut off, as they were from an effective link with the masses, condemned to sterile and empty doctrinaire speech-making, when this latter could not be incorporated into the living experience of the class, our comrades were obliged to find means of incorporating themselves into practical revolutionary activity, if they were not to be doomed to degeneration and to disintegration. Only through an extreme superficiality of Marxist analysis can it be ignored that the conjuncture of the regroupment of the working class requires an audacious and rapid policy on our part, unless we wish to remain on the sidelines during this process;

especially is this the case when we are an infinitesimal minority, and almost non-existent from the numerical point of view, as we were in France.

The reply of the Argentine Comrades of the "Nueva Etapa" group, to the I.S. proposal can only be judged as a thoughtless act based on the lack of a serious study of the question, something easily explained in comrades who have not had the opportunity of real and profoundly revolutionary experience in mass struggles. To consider this attitude as theoretically correct is to develop the point to absurd extremes.

But, in reality, the policy followed by our (Chilean) section, and which has given rise to your report, (Reference is to the article, "The French Turn Reaches Chile" - translated) has but a very remote similarity to the French Turn, the influence of which in the Chilean situation we consider highly problematical.

In general, your report errs because of lack of information, the cause for which is evident, and because of an excess of highly dangerous generalizations. You begin with an entirely erroneous idea of our party when you say that it was born at a time when the country was plunged in civil war, with the English and Yankee warships ready to intervene, and that in large part it developed under the inspiration created by the Pact of Four.

Our party came out of a split in the official Communist Party in 1931 due to the bureaucratic methods of the leadership; it existed for some time as a dissident communist party, and as such took part in the daily struggle and in organizational work. The ideas of the Left Opposition penetrated our party rapidly, especially with the collaboration of the Spanish comrades and their excellent theoretical organ, "Communismo", as our positions coincided (reactions against identical causes) with those of the International Left Opposition. On March 19th, 1933 we officially adhered to the I.L.O. We had not only already taken our "first independent steps" but we had played an important role in such important events as the naval insurrection in 1931, and the revolutionary effort of June 4th, 1932. Not knowing of the new course that inspired the international organization, we proposed prior to the "new orientation" the abandonment of the policy of fraction in order to assume the responsibility corresponding to us in the revolutionary leadership: to the thesis of the pre-conference "fraction, not party", "party not fraction", which was published in 1933 in the internal bulletin published by the I.S.

Because of the vagueness of its terminology, and a lack of knowledge among the Chilean comrades of the importance of the parties signing it, the Pact of Four did not, in truth exercise more than a circumstantial influence, almost none at all. We mention this because it is necessary to point out that our political activity was nourished by our own daily experience, supplemented by our observation and assimilation of the world experiences. We must admit, in agreement with your article that the international leadership has given us almost no aid. Far from losing hope because of

this neglect, we point it out, confident that it will be remedied. We know the difficulties in which our whole world organization develops and we aim to overcome them.

These preliminary observations explain the reasons which induced us to participate in the so-called "Left-Parliamentary Bloc". The growth of reaction, in our country, as well as in others, placed on the order of the day the defense of democratic liberties. For this task we were obliged to consider the actual forces in struggle, commencing with a correct analysis of the relationship of forces. This is the fundamental secret of a correct proletarian policy. We do not believe it necessary to repeat this lesson, which can be concretized from all of the recent world revolutionary experiences.

The United Front pushed forward by us has failed, due in part to the intransigence of the Stalinists, and in part because the need for unity had not yet ripened in the consciousness of the masses. It was then that the Parliamentary Bloc was organized, with a program of utilization of the parliamentary tribune for the defense of the public liberties threatened by a reactionary government. Completely divorced from intransigent sectarianism, we realized the need for some such pact with three parties having broad popular influence (Democratic, Radical-Socialist and Socialist). This pact did not originate with us, but, not to accept given reality, sharpening it, in order to get useful results from it, would be to act like conscience-stricken petty bourgeoisie, and not firm revolutionists. We do not believe that the "opportunist and adventurist tendencies which so easily arise in backward countries" were the cause of our decision, but rather that this was the correct application of a correct general strategy.

When we were able to pull the bloc into the street, withdraw it from parliament, parade it up and down the country, and concentrate thousands upon thousands of workers in all of the cities of Chile, then, far from repudiating our previous policy we applied it consistently. We agreed, first, to enter a bloc which was only Parliamentarian, because we could do nothing else. We were the weakest, and were obliged to make concessions. When we succeeded in getting the bloc into the street, we did not in any way contradict our previous policy, because, if we had been able to bring it into the street at the beginning, we should not have hesitated to do so.

How can it be maintained then, that by creating an extra-parliamentary mass base for the bloc - the interests of the Democrats Socialists and Radical-Socialists, alone, are served? These three parties have a broader popular influence than ours, at least the first two have. The calls of the bloc have been sufficient to bring together thousands of workers which we, ourselves, would never have been able to mobilize. In these demonstrations we have brought forward our program; the masses have heard us; several times the press run of our newspaper has exceeded 10,000 copies, it being the only periodical of the four parties which appears regularly. How then, with any semblance of logic, can it be said that we cannot have "the

possibility of struggle for the winning of influence among the adherents of the other parties"? Further, to say that such a situation only benefits the other parties is to underestimate the capacity of comprehension of the masses. Far from our creating for the bloc a mass basis, which we ourselves lack, we acquire, through it, influence over the masses of the whole country, even in places where we did not have any influence.

The Bloc is not a false United Front which will impede the formation of the United Front, but it is a road towards this end. At present provincial assemblies are being set up in which the unions and labor organizations participate. Far from being utilized as a leftist screen, it is we, the communists, who utilized the bloc. And it must be noted that we have succeeded in opposing to the advance of reaction, an effective force. We have checked it, opposing to it real forces, not slogans without a base; we have defended the democratic liberties and labor organizations. How? By utilizing popularly influential democratic parties and working class parties whose principles are at variance with ours. To have done anything else would have been "sectarianism"; is it "opportunism" to have done what we did? We have not reneged from our ideas, but we have brought them forward extensively before the masses. We have kept and still keep our hands free from all fetters.

It is indubitable that the Bloc is but a road towards the United Front, and that it cannot be considered as a road towards fusion, for the new party. The article in "IZQUIERDA" to which you refer is erroneous, because it is not very clear; we have repeatedly explained, in the newspaper, our position in this respect. The article referred to was for the benefits of extensive sections of the Socialist Party (the Revolutionary Socialist Opposition broke up, a good number of them joining our ranks.) The Socialist Party of Chile is not less left-centrist than the S.F.I.O., but more so. It has never been affiliated to the Second International and is in favor of revolutionary methods for the conquest of power. Through an experience in struggle and an intensive discussion it can be made to move even further to the left. Inside of the Bloc it maintains an alliance with us which alters the perspective that you present, (three against one). Its composition is predominantly proletarian, and we cannot discount, but rather must expect a radicalization which will bring it close to our platform.

We are not dominated by "the desire for unity at any cost"; we believe that the attitude of the comrades in France was not based on this consideration, but that this attitude may have predominated in the Belgian group which joined the Social-Democratic party. But, it is precisely opportune to point out once again that the present policy of our section has but a distant similarity with the policy of the Bolshevik-Leninist Group in France. It can be said that both orientations coincide in their purpose: to find a road to the masses; but this has always been the invariable position of the communists.

The concluding proposal given in your document that the Bloc be declared dissolved and substituted by a real United Front



would not even be understood by the other parties in the Bloc. Such action would favor no one but the Stalinists who are now trying to enter the Bloc, after having used the grossest epithets against it for months. In order to develop a correct policy one must commence with concrete realities and not with abstract formulas. We cannot demagogically "create" a national situation different from that of other countries, but must base ourselves on concrete points of reference in order to correctly apply the general orientation towards the United Front and the new party.

We are far from considering our political activity as unimpeachable; we ourselves have criticized our own errors and continue to do so. But we are just as far from accepting what we consider your deeply erroneous conclusions.

We are grateful for your interest and hope that it continues, for it must be recognized that we Bolshevik-Leninists, as the center of the movement for the Fourth International need a close international tie-up, in order to prevent the dangers of the scattering of our cadres to which dangers we attribute less gravity than you do.

Fraternal Communist Greetings.

The Central Committee of the  
Communist Left.

(Chilean Section of the I.C.L.)

June, 1935.

OUR REPLY TO THE CHILEAN COMRADES

New York, Sept. 8, 1935.

To the Central Committee  
of the Communist Left,  
Chile.

Dear Comrades:

In the absence of Comrade Eiffel, and as members of the Latin-American Department of the Workers Party, which adopted the resolution criticizing the Left Parliamentary Bloc in which your organization participates, we are answering your reply of June to the position adopted by us and which was expressed in Comrade Eiffel's document. We were certainly glad to receive your letter and hope that our organizations can continue to cooperate and discuss the problems confronting each country.

Your letter recognized that our criticism was primarily a criticism of the new turn of the ICL, the so-called French Turn, and what we consider its application in Chile through the four party Left Parliamentary Bloc. Likewise, your letter clearly confirms this analysis, when you say: "It can be said that both orientations coincide in their purpose: to find a road to the masses." However, this is not to us, a matter of two different orientations, that coincide in their purpose. We have here, due to the different national conditions, two concrete applications of the new turn of the ICL; the French application and the Chilean application. There are several other national applications of this new turn besides the French and the Chilean. Take for example the Belgian application of entrance into the POB (Belgian S.P.) without even fraction rights, or the Cuban variety -- the proposed bloc with Young Cuba and the "External road" theory, which has fortunately been overcome by the new leadership. Or take for example, the S.P. orientation in the Workers Party of the United States presented by Cannon and Shachtman as the application of the new turn for American conditions. Other examples might also be cited.

The attempt "to find the road to the masses" is not new in the revolutionary movement. There are opportunist roads, and adventurist roads to the masses, and there is also the Marxian road to the masses. We have ample proof, since the application of the new turn of the ICL in France and several other countries - in Chile it assumes the character of a two class bloc similar in some respects to the Kuomintang experiment - that this new turn in all of its forms is an opportunist attempt to find a road to the masses.

Your letter says that we lack concrete information and from this statement you leave the impression that because of this we are not criticizing your parliamentary bloc on firm ground. However, according to your letter, our errors consist in mis-statements of secondary points of fact, i.e.: that the Chilean Communist Left was not organized at a time when the country was plunged into Civil War, and that the Pact of Four had very little influence on your development; and you correct us, with the information saying that instead, you split from the CI in 1931 and joined the ILO in March 1933. Even if our dates were not entirely accurate this does not in any way alter the essence of the criticism that we made against the new turn of the ICL and its application in Chile by your organization through the Left Parliamentary Bloc.

In reference to the Parliamentary Bloc, you state in your letter: "We agreed first, to enter a bloc which was only Parliamentarian, because we could do nothing else. We were the weakest, and were obliged to make concessions."

We believe that this admission on your part confirms what we have stated in the previous letter to you. What kind of a concession do you call this? You take it very lightly, as though it is an ordinary matter for Marxists to agree to enter a parliamentary bloc with petty-bourgeois parties, and agree to limit it to PARLIAMENT. Later life itself drove this bloc into the streets. And developments since then, to the extent that our scanty information per-

mits us to judge, do not in our opinion indicate a more leftward development of the Bloc - a point to which we shall return to later. But even assuming that the organization of street demonstrations and the more recent withdrawal of the Bloc from Parliament were a leftward move, this in itself could not correct the error, because the theoretical motivation below this parliamentary bloc was neither changed nor repudiated. To agree to a theoretical position such as the new turn of the ICL, and to apply it to national conditions, which in a later stage includes a left zig-zag or a left tactical swing, does not mean that the left turn in itself is sufficient to correct the false position. Even though the left turn makes possible a momentary numerical gain. What is necessary is to correct the theoretical premise which made possible the agreement for such a bloc with petty bourgeois parties, and at that one at least nominally limited to Parliament.

On this point we quote from your organ "Izquierda", October 31, 1935: "The Left Parliamentary Bloc is an exclusively parliamentary united front which declares for the struggle within the bourgeois parliament for the defense of democratic liberties. . . . In this sense, with the activity of the bloc limited to the parliamentary field alone, the representatives of the Communist Left in both houses enter the bloc in order to re-enforce the struggle in defense of democratic liberties of press, speech, assembly, organization and strike."

As though these ends could be achieved by an exclusively parliamentary bloc! This could only sow illusions among the workers. To add the slogan "Class Against Class", which the C.I. under other circumstances used to cover up its betrayals, in no way corrects the false position in regard to the two class bloc in parliament.

The failure of the United Front to materialize due to the attitude of the Stalinists cannot be remedied by taking the opportunist step of a four party parliamentary bloc, any more than can the failure of the United Front in Europe be corrected by the opportunist step of the liquidation of our sections into the parties of the Second International.

We do not deny that a parliamentary bloc can or may lead to the united front in extra-parliamentary activity. This is not the crux of the problem. The decisive question is: what kind of a united front will it be and who has the lead, - the proletariat or the petty-bourgeoisie, the revolutionary Marxists or the reformists? That is the test of the transformation of the Parliamentarian Bloc into street actions, not the fact that it was dragged out into the street. And do not forget, that you yourselves admit that you were weak and could do nothing else than agree (with reluctance?) to a parliamentary bloc. The bloc was dragged into the streets when the petty-bourgeois were ready to take it there, and not as a fulfillment of your policy, as can be seen by the articles in your own press of the period.

Further, when Comrade Eiffel quoted your organ stating that you intended to develop this bloc toward fusion for a new party you replied stating: "The article in IZQUIERDA to which you refer is erro-

neous, because it is not very clear; we have repeatedly explained, in the newspaper, our position in this respect. The article referred to was for the benefit of extensive sections of the Socialist Party (the Revolutionary Socialist Opposition broke up, a good number of them joining our ranks)".

This explanation does not settle the matter, especially as it appears, you have never publicly repudiated said article which, you seemed to think, might fool the Socialist workers in some manner whereby we could benefit from it. However, the fact remains that on the basis of the adoption of the new opportunist turn of the ICL and the Parliamentary Bloc policy in your country, as the road to the masses, you were able to print a statement in your official organ to the effect that this bloc might lead to a fusion, out of which would be born the new party. On the basis of the new turn of the ICL and your application of it to Chile, you could agree to a bloc, EXCLUSIVELY parliamentary, that could lead to a fusion party and that might "lead the insurrection".

It may be well to mention the fact that the I.S. criticized the application of the new turn in Chile, denying any connection between it and the general new international orientation of the I.C.L.

The December 13, 1934 issue of Izquierda stated that this false road, the road to the new party through a fusion growing out of the bloc - not in a confused manner as you say in your letter; but in the clearest possible language. We quote: "The ~~new~~ party must be born out of an experience, a class experience emerging from the action and struggle against exploitation. If we are able through the (parliamentary) bloc to reach a joint struggle by democrats, socialists, radical socialists, and communists against the bosses, against the exploiters, then we will have laid the foundation of the new party." So -- this would be the foundation of the new party. What could be clearer?

In the same article, you further state, "The proletariat cannot learn this lesson excepting through its class interpreter, that is to say, its vanguard, and the vanguard can be none other than that which emerges from the joint efforts of the workers of all parties, tendencies and beliefs in the camp of those who struggle against exploitation, that is to say, in the camp of the revolution which is a conscious fact to the majority of the exploited." So -- the vanguard can be none other than that which emerges from the joint effort of all parties and tendencies. This theory of the vanguard fits into the Parliamentarian Bloc but it is not a Marxian concept. It is not strange that those who have accepted the "French turn" speak vaguely about the Vanguard, not only in the SFIO, not only in Chile, but also in all countries where they apply this turn. This confusion on the question of the vanguard flows from the new turn of the ICL.

Unfortunately we have been unable to follow closely the developments in Chile during the course of the present year 1935. We do not receive your press as certain comrades in our own party who do not agree with our criticism have been successful in keeping this material from us since the arbitrary dissolution of the Latin-Ameri-

can Department of the W.P.U.S. The sum total of our sources of information on more recent developments has been secured from three of the May, 1935 issues of Izquierda which we were fortunate enough to receive from another source, and certain reports in the bourgeois press dealing with the public activities of the Left Bloc since its withdrawal from Parliament. On the basis of the scant information however, we are more than ever convinced, in spite of certain very important practical achievements (Trade union unity movement, regular publication of "Izquierda") for which we give you full credit, that your organization, in its attempt to reach the masses through the Left Bloc, is penetrating ever deeper into the morass of opportunism. We shall therefore deal but briefly with certain of the more obvious points, hoping that you will bear in mind the faulty and incomplete sources of information at our command.

In your letter you say that the Left Parliamentary Bloc is the basis for a genuine united front movement which will include the Stalinists and the Trade Unions. In this regard we find entirely incorrect your attitude in the reply of the Bloc to the C.P. proposals for a united front on May Day. An article in "Izquierda", May 15th, expresses the complete agreement of the Communist Left with the reply of the general secretary of the Bloc\*. We quote from said article:

Is this the manner in which a real united front of all working class organizations is built? Certainly not! It is a repetition of the United Front from Below practiced by the Stalinists for years to the great detriment of the whole labor movement. For it to appear now in our own ranks is to say that least a very dangerous symptom.

Such an attitude towards the United Front can only sow confusion among the workers of Chile and all America. A united front "from above" - beginning in Parliament - with the Social Democratic and petty bourgeois parties; a united front with the Communist Party "only if you join our organization". And we are forced to inquire: How will the revolutionary movement judge an organization of the Fourth International that calls on the Communist Party to join it bag and baggage?

In the municipal elections of last spring the Left Bloc presented itself as a Bloc with its own slate. And now, according to recent press reports we learn that through the efforts of the Left Bloc, the support of the Radical Party was secured for the Bloc's senatorial candidate for Santiago, the Democratic editor, Sr. Luis Mery.

We still hold to our original opinion, that it is your duty to dissolve the Left Bloc and seek to replace it by a genuine united front of all labor organizations with a concrete program of action, maintaining the political independence of the proletariat and its political party - the Communist Left.

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\* This reply is given at the end of the bulletin.

With Communist greetings,

For the Left Wing of the  
Workers Party of the U.S.,

Hugo Oehler  
Rosalio Negrete

TEXT OF REPLY OF LEFT BLOCK TO C.P.  
(Referred to in our reply to Chilean Section)

Santiago, May 7, 1935.

Comrade General Secretary of the C.P.

I acknowledge receipt of your communication of April 30 and in the name of the Left Parliamentary Block I have the pleasure of communicating to you the following:

The Executive Committee of the Block with all good will and interest dealt with your note, in which you proposed the joint celebration of May 1 and decided unanimously to reject it without a single discordant vote and for the following reasons:

1) We desire - as do you according to your note - the unity of the toiling classes; the most obvious indication of this fact is the organization of the Left Block in which are represented the popular parties which have a labor following, and which at the time it was formed was the object of the most furious attacks on the part of the Communist Party in its periodicals and also on the part of Mr. Andres Escobar, your party's congress man in the chamber of deputies, when we were called hooks of the bourgeoisie and servants of international imperialism.

So long as the Communist Party which you lead does not publicly rectify the above-expressed concepts it will not be possible for us to accept your presence in our emancipatory action, because the working classes themselves would not find a rational explanation without the proper explanation on your part.

2) For the purposes of joining the Left Parliamentary Block by fractions of parties that are already members of our organization, the decision was made that they would first reach an understanding or fusion in advance, it being therefore indispensable that the Communist Party arrive at an understanding with the Communist Left.

We hope that your desires for unity expressed - according to your note - loyally, are shown openly by respect towards the elements that make up the Block and in this way you will have\*reacted against your whole erroneous past and that you are now prepared to collaborate with us as comrades in the preparation of the proletarian emancipation which will put an end to this dastardly capitalist regime.

Believing that I have complied with the decision of the executive committee of the Block in replying to your above-mentioned note, I greet you affectionately,

Maximo Venagas,  
General Secretary of the Block.

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\* the following words were unavoidably omitted: demonstrated sincerely and in deedsthat you have reacted against, etc.