

X: Gus

from P. Camejo
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Report on South America Trip (Jan-Feb 1979)

VENEZUELA : Had a talk with Antonio and Pablo. They have formed or tried to form a tendency inside the PST. The PST insists that Antonio is not a member of the PST because he has been expelled or sanctioned. Some of the other members of what is called the "Pro-Congress" tendency are also ex-PST members outside of the PST. The Pro-Congress tendency numbers about 10 people.

The main request of the Pro-Congress tendency is that the PST hold a convention and discuss a balance sheet of their activity over the last period, especially their recent entry into the MAS. Since they left (were expelled) from the MAS they have not held a convention, do not have an elected Central Committee and have not set dates for one.

Antonio has written a rather excellent balance sheet on the whole history of the PST. The balance sheet shows how Moreno's party building methods destroyed the PST by destroying the central leadership team that was developing through their own experiences. It also explains Moreno's chasing after tactical victories by putting principles aside. It has one very good section explaining the correct useage of elections and of critical support as opposed to Moreno's adaptations.

This document by Antonio should be submitted to the International discussion bulletin as part of the discussion on the Latin American resolution. I plan to write to Antonio this week urging him to submit the document and to spell out each place he uses initials in the document, as well as some other minor changes that will improve the document for

international useage.

Antonio seems to have developed some what from his experiences with Morenismo and his stay in Spain. Certainly his document shows a higher political level then he had at the time of the last world congress.

The Lambretist in Venezuela control the MIR in Valencia. According to Napuri (Antonio did not know this) one of the newly elected MIR congressmen is a trotskyist. I encouraged Antonio to talk to the lambretist. He believes they have suffered a split recently but does not know why. He also informed me that one ex-PSTer has established his own group in Caracas. He does not know what the ex-PST anti-Morenoite has done in Barquesimeto. I encouraged him to continue as a tendency of the PST while making contact with all other trotskyist formations, especially the lambretist to see if we can achieve a recruitment and unificati n of some of these scattered groups.

Antonio and Pablo said the PST numbers about 50 from the one time high of 400.

PANAMA : Talked to Bernal and a few other members of the MSR. Bernal's group (MSR) has about 15 members. They recently recruited 3. They have set themselves modest goals and have been making their goals. Their moral seemed OK. They said the PST suffered a split but they knew little about it.

The PST has been receiving a lot of publicity because according to Bernal they are going along with the new electoral laws and playing around with the new government. Apparantly it is true that the two members of the PST electe.

to Congress voted for the bourgeois presidential candidate. This seems to be true not only because Bernal ~~says~~ so but because the vote for president (the congress elected the president) was unanimous.

Bernal's wife Mirna finally succeeded in getting a job and Bernal himself is now able to work a part time job. This has relieved the terrible personal pressure Bernal and his wife were under ~~xxx~~ from the black listing of Bernal.

ECUADOR: I asked Mike Kelly to stop in Ecuador to find out how the MRT is doing. He informed me in Bogota where we ~~met~~ met up and where Mike plans to stay for a while, that the MRT has postponed their national convention until April or May. They have a minority that opposes entering the Fourth. But the leadership group based in Guayaquil seems determined to go ahead with the affiliation at their next convention and to try and unify with the MST of Quito.

The MRT leadership apparently did not let their minority know of their correspondence with the 4th International. The MST Guayaquil (Bolshevik Faction) published the correspondence in order to help the anti-Guayaquil wing of the MRT or at least that is how the Guayaquil MRT leaders see it. How the material was published I do not know.

PERU : I spent over two weeks attempting to get the unification process underway between the PRT and the POMR. I succeeded in part but there are still problems, primarily on the side of the PRT which could block the unification although the process is underway and it will be heard to stop it.

The central PRT leadership discussed the question and all agreed with the exception of Andres (ex-FIR IV trade ~~xxx~~ union leader) that a unification should be carried out. The main question of debate was when and how. Andres fears from his experiences in the Unions that the POMR is too sectarian. He and Martine (ex-FIR ~~IB~~ leader) feel there will be strong opposition from the workers in the PRT against unity with the POMR. This maybe true in the metal workers union but I believe exaggerated because of their own hesitations. I found a very positive response from all PRT rank and filers for unification.

The Moraveco plant is a very important ~~xxx~~ auto plant where the POMR won the recent elections (in a bloc with centrists) against the FIR IV comrades ^{who were also} in a bloc with ~~other~~ centrists. Andres indicated to me that he was willing to try to work with the POMR people and had noticed a change in their attitude since the talk of unification has been circulating. There are discussions now underway to run a joint PRT-POMR slate in the Moraveco plant - possibly in other ^{plants} also. Such a unified slate will guarantee Trotskyist control of Moraveco.

Pepo drew up an 11 point programmatic type statement ~~xx~~ as the basis for unification and as our answer to the POMR letter. I went over it with him - quite good! This was past unanimously by the PRT Executive Committee with Andres absent. The proposal includes forming a parity committee to bring in a plan for fusion between the two groups. The plan is to be ready within one month of the creation of the commission. The POMR is prepared to fuse right away. The PRT wants to proceed by steps in order **L**

bring along their ranks.

The POMR held a five day central committee meeting to go over a balance sheet of the general strike and project an orientation for the next period. This central committee voted unanimously to accept the 11 points* (includes Cuba is a workers state by the way) and to start the bilateral commission for unity. The POMR expressed reservation on point #11 which was over international affiliation. It was simply poorly worded which gave the impression the new organization would only belong to the U.Sec. ^(only) and members as individuals to CORSI.

This problem was settled at the first meeting of the new commission. The POMR insist the unification cannot be consummated without the "participation" of the U.Sec & Corsi. Representing the PRT are Vargas, Jorge and Andres. I do not know who represents the POMR.

A few general comments on the political situation of the PRT and POMR. The POMR has a sovietist element in its politics which led it into an ultraleftist posture during the general strike. The PRT really has no clear line. It followed the POMR's policies during the general strike and thus got burned. This did not help the unification process. The PRT has made a sharp correction of its leftist error a welcomed development in general. The POMR has made adjustments in its line but remains in a confused sovietist line.

I discussed this question with Napuri. He assures me they are not on a sovietist line. It is hard to tell how serious the leftist error is. But it seems to me they are open to discuss it. A unification with the PRT would be helpful

* Despite several efforts I was unable to obtain a copy of either the 11 pt. statement or POMR answer - both will hopefully be mailed to us.

in this regard.

The great advantage the POMR has over the PRT is that it sets a line for the party goes on campaigns and is thus present in a powerful way politically while the PRT drifts. Internally the PRT has been unable to get its members to pay dues, to publish its paper and to function regularly in general. This is a direct product of how the leadership functions. There is no one acting as general secretary of the leadership. Initiatives come at random from various leaders.

An important unifying factor is that all agree that a Blanco for president campaign is the indicated line and task of the moment. The PRT has ~~begun~~ ^{begun} discussions to promote such a campaign. The POMR has also although their approaches do not jibe completely. They could if there was more good will on the part of the PRT (ex-FIR IV) leaders.

This brings ^{us} to another element in the situation today in Peru. Two important groups who want to support Blanco for President also want to unify with the PRT. They are the MRS which is led by an ex-Trotskyist and includes Anibal and the OPR Quijano. Quijano himself personally wants to help out on the Blanco for president campaign. In Peruvian politics this is a big coup for us that will bring many of the centrist behind the Blanco campaign.

The MRS and OPR have important workers bases in them. For instance the secretary general of the teachers union SUTEP is a member of the MRS. The MRS also controls an important slum area in Lima. Both the MRS and OPR are less excited over the POMR.

The OTR a split off from the POMR which supports ^{the} Argentinian

Political Obrera in the internal fight of the CORCI has asked the PRT for unity discussions also. The POMR is hard set against letting the OTR into the new unified trotskist party. My impression of the OTR is that it is highly sectarian and factional group. They abstained during the presidential elections and refuse to join FOCEP. They call for down with the Constituent Assembly equating it with the military dictatorship.

Martine is fighting to include the OTR in the unification. He is motivated for ^(to do so) ~~the wrong~~ reasons. The PRT leadership is really divided over the question of what kind of party the PRT-POMR will be after the unification. Martine ~~is~~ is the most articulate ~~one~~ seeking what amounts to a federation of factions. Others such as Blanco and Vargas want a new leadership team including the PRT-POMR leadership which over time could become homogeneous. The POMR leadership seems to want a new homogeneous leadership but doesn't believe all the elements from the PRT can be assimilated.

Martine thus wants the OTR as part of the balance of power situation in the new party. I argued with him till late the last night before I left. ^{I urged him to try and} ~~to do so~~ form a leadership team with the POMR and why the approach of a federation of factions was a dead end. I can't say I ~~conv~~ ^{conv}inced him but ~~Rex~~ Pepo was with us and he seems to be for a homogeneous leadership.

Now complicating the picture further but also offering a marvelous opportunity is the posture of the PST.

Once the word got around that the PRT and the POMR might unify the PST came under enormous pro-unity pressure. The PSTers, especially the Bolshevik Faction leaders are aware how strong a PRT-POMR party would be and the impact a Blanco for president campaign ~~■~~ by the newly unified party would have.

The PST is also reacting ^{to} two other important pressures. One is that they lost most of their barrio work to the PRT after they expelled Blanco. The other is that the Bolshevik Faction has been unable to recruit the FIR-POC leaders to its international faction. The result has been that even the rank and file members ~~of the~~ ^{who were} PST ^{are} prior to the fusion with the FIR-POC ~~was~~ and were not members of the Bolshevik Faction are now more ^{Resistant} ~~reluctant~~ to join. The B.F. has a majority 7 to 5 in the leadership but is a minority in the membership.

One of the executive committee members of the PST came to talk to me privately. He wants to open up a fight ^{for unity} against the Bolshevik Factions sectarianism ~~sectarianism~~ and for the positions of the majority in the Fourth International. But he says it is very hard because while the B.F. makes their material available the U. Sec. majority resolutions, world political resolution, etc. are still non-existent in Peru.

The B.F. realizing that the PRT-POMR unification is now imminent has suddenly proposed a rapid unification with the PRT and requests this be done prior to any other unification. I had a meeting with the PST leadership. I informed them the PRT & POMR were in the process of working out a unification, that both the POMR and PRT had indicated the ~~was~~ ^{PST was} welcome to also join the new Party, but that the PRT would ~~not~~ wait for them.

The B.F. leaders, especially Tuco, are off-the-wall. They insist it is the PRT that is opposed to unification, that they never expelled Blanco or criticized him publicly etc. Tuco tried several times to provoke a blow up at the meeting I had with their leadership which included only 5 of them - 4 members of the B.F. and Pedro the general secretary from ^{the} FIR-POC. Tuco, for instance, once again started calling me a cop etc.

I explained to the PST, based on discussions held with the PRT and PCMR leaderships, that if they entered the new party the B.F. would not be allowed to form a party within the party. I spelled out for them what this meant. In doing this I had the advantage of knowing from the PST leader who came to talk to me that the PST has ^(on going) an internal campaign by the FIR-POC people criticizing the arbitrary functioning of the B.F., their financial methods etc.

If the PRT-PCMR unification comes off the PST will be forced to join permitting the addition of the FIR-POC forces to the new leadership since they will no longer have any special relationship with the Bolshevik Faction. If the PST does not join it will probably undergo a split and most of the FIR-POC forces pass over to the new unified party.

Thus it is possible that a new Party will emerge including the PCMR-PRT-PST plus the MRS and CPR. Such a party would become a strong poll of attraction to the centrist groups which are now entering into a crisis of perspective. Given a Blanco for president campaign groups such as PGR (Aragon) (Aragon is now a minority since Maoist and military elements have blocked against him) Vanguardia Revolucionaria and the Miner's Union leaders as well as some of the MIRs would be drawn around our orbit and some possibly ^{won} ~~take~~ over to the new party.

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All the above groups PRT, PST, POMR, MRS, OPR, PSR (Aragon), VR (most), ~~some~~ MIRs, Miner's Union, have agreed to support Blanco for president. Napuri had a talk with Barantes the chairperson of the UDP and urged him to consider the vice-presidential spot with Blanco. Barantes said he had refused a coalition of Maoist groups to run for them ^{as president} and that he will consider running with Blanco.

The POMR has begun a process for holding a workers, peasant, pueblo juvenes, & student national conference to adopt a struggle program. They are promoting the idea by getting groups to sign ^{Their plan is to have this conference nominate Blanco for president.} a ~~xx~~ call for such a conference to be held about May day. They will be able to get the seven existing popular assemblies to join the call. They hope to force Ledesma into the call etc. The PRT comrades are hesitant about this. Some like Martine is hostile without it being clear why. The others fear the POMR can't pull it off. One fear is that the POMR will try to give ~~x~~ it the image of a national soviet - that that is what they are trying to do.

Unfortunately they (PRT) still will not go and have a talk with the POMR - they lack the self confidence. I had a talk to Napuri and Villareal about this. They denied the conference has anything to do with soviet~~x~~ type formations etc. The truth in my opinion is that the POMR would like to have called for a national popular assembly but has modified its plans to adjust to the situation. The main present difference between the PRT and POMR lies over their evaluation of the present objective situation. ^{The} PRT says there is a down turn and no longer a pre-revolutionary situation. (Correct in my opinion).

The POMR has a more optimistic judgement of the situation. They place all the emphasis on the CP betrayal for the failure of the recent strike and not on the general mood of the masses. (In my opinion after the failure of the miner's strike last October the mass mood shifted towards the elections as the way to bring down the government. APRA is on a big campaign saying the communist left wants to block the elections by provoking confrontations such as the general strike because they know that APRA will win. The end result of the general strike was to re-inforce APRA. Possibly the CP called the strike in response to government provocations as the government switches from support of CP control of the CGTP to support for APRA in the unions.)

Napuri tends to see conspiracies everywhere. He believes the CP called the general strike as a conspiracy ~~xx~~ with the government to have the strike fail. He believes that Politica Obrera is mounting an international campaign to destroy the POMR and that they have their agents in Peru through the OTR and maybe in the PRT. He also believes the Cubans are behind Ledesma for President and will provide enormous funds.

On this last point I got some independent evidence that the CP will back Ledesma and that a serious effort to form a popular front is under way. Apparently the CP and Ledesma have had talks with the Cubans - what we haven't done and are telling people the Cubans will back them financially.

Hugo Blanco is in fine health. He was very disappointed he was unable to go to the convention in Bolivia. His ex-wife's support suit blocks him from leaving the country until a

xxxxx substantial sum is deposited as bail. Comrades are trying to arrange the necessary deposit. He is hopeful that a unification can be achieved. He is deeply frustrated over the inability of the PRT leadership to get the party organized. This frustration which penetrates deeply through the ranks of the party turns into more fire wood for ~~the~~ ~~unification~~ unity with the POMR.

A few minor points from the discussion with the PST leadership. The PST leadership says that Greco had no authority to make a proposal for unity at the U. Sec. meeting of November, that the PST leadership had never discussed Greco's three conditions and in fact had never heard about it. Also TUCo refuses to participate in the Peruvian Commission of the U. Sec. It did not cross my mind to ask Enrique Fernando whether he accepts serving on the commission. A formal letter from the center should be sent to them to confirm whether they are members or not. If they refuse we should consider adding a central leader of the FIR-POC people - maybe not.

Lastly I had a discussion with Napuri on the Anti-Imperialist United Front. He doesn't understand it. They seem to be shifting their position or adjusting it so as not to block the unification. They are now using the phrase for a classist and anti-imperialist front.

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