

COPY

June 9, 1972

Dear J.P.:

I am enclosing the following items:

1. A copy of a personal letter from me to Hugo Moreno dated June 9, 1972.
2. A copy of excerpts from a personal letter to Peter Camejo from Hugo Moreno dated April 28, 1972.
3. A copy of excerpts from a personal letter to me from Hugo Moreno dated April 28, 1972.

These three items are intended solely for the information of members of the United Secretariat. They should not be attached to the minutes.

Comradely,

Joe Hansen

Personal

New York, N.Y.
June 9, 1972

Dear Hugo,

The letters you wrote to me and Peter arrived within a day or two of each other. Some of the points you deal with are the same in both letters. Peter and I discussed these, and what I have to say on them represents our common thinking. Our response on these points and what I have to say on some other items that I want to take up should be brought to the attention of the United Secretariat for the information of its members. Consequently I am sending a copy of this letter to the United Secretariat. Part of what I have to say would be obscure standing by itself, so I took the liberty of excerpting the political points from your letters in order to make them likewise available to the United Secretariat for the information of its members. (As you will see from the copies enclosed, things that are personal or that involve security have been left out.)

First of all, that wasn't Tim Wohlforth you met in London. It was, Farrell tells me, Shane Mage. At that time Mage was Wohlforth's mentor in questions of theory. Your characterization of Mage is quite accurate. He finally split from Wohlforth; moved into the world of psychedelism, and now appears to have vanished; at least I have heard nothing of him recently.

The latest issue of Wohlforth's paper the Bulletin carries another attack on you. The article appears to be based on stuff that has appeared in Politica Obrera. No indication is given of this; Wohlforth simply talks as if he had an inside source of information. I will airmail you a copy of that issue. As you will see, the article alleges that you have liquidated the Argentine Trotskyist movement into the Social Democracy. The "evidence" cited bears no resemblance, of course, to the truth. It is a highly factional interpretation of your efforts to take advantage of the electoral opening in Argentina.

I was sure that Jean Pierre would make a good impression on your team. He was sincerely interested in learning what the real situation was in Argentina, since whatever the differences or nuances over policies might be it is necessary to start from the reality. I was pleased to hear that you did everything possible to help him and that he for his part sought conscientiously to hold in reserve any preconceptions he might have had.

The character of the French Socialist party and the British Labour party (and the German Social Democracy) has been under discussion among the European comrades for some time. In relation to the next world congress I assume that discussion on this point would come under the "European resolution" -- one of the items making up the agenda. Perhaps you will want to make a contribution on the question after you have had an opportunity to read the resolution. (It has been projected but has not yet been written.)

The stand taken by the majority of the IMG in the last election was affected by the concept that the Labour party had undergone a

... 2

qualitative change, that this was sensed by the workers, and that we should change our attitude toward it. The question thus became an issue in the internal discussion in Britain, and, because of the importance of the matter, in the International as a whole.

My own view is that it is quite dubious that any current grouping in the left will be able to by-pass the British Labour party, and that it would be a serious mistake for us to project a line of that kind. As for the French Socialist party and the German Social Democracy, I would like to hear further arguments from those who think that the workers have definitively turned their backs on these decayed and eroded formations.

The statement of the SWP Political Committee on the Sallustro kidnapping was intended only to draw a line of political differentiation. All the communications media here sought to take full advantage of the kidnapping and subsequent execution of Sallustro in order to depict Trotskyism as equivalent to terrorism. We could not escape indicating the position of the SWP. We expected that the United Secretariat would, in its own way, make a similar political differentiation. I felt disappointment over the failure of the majority of the United Secretariat to see the political need to do this.

We are following with keen interest your struggle to gain legal status. The response you have received up to now seems fabulous to us. There would seem to be an excellent chance to assemble the makings of a substantial base. We hope that your luck holds and that you suffer no major repressive blows between now and the scheduled election. As you point out, the main thing is the expansion you are experiencing. The opening you found will certainly not last indefinitely, but if you can take full advantage of it while it does last, the gains can prove to be of decisive significance in the following period.

At the last United Secretariat meeting two matters came up that I think should be made known to you. One occurred over a very small thing. The majority of the committee objected to including in the minutes the bit of information, first reported by the two comrades who visited Argentina recently, that you are going to translate and publish all the contributions to the international discussion for the benefit of the membership of your party and that the translations will be made available to whatever sections want them. The objection to including this in the minutes was quite mystifying to me, particularly when it was accompanied by a kind of ultimatum -- that if we pushed the matter, then the majority would feel compelled to submit a "five-page" statement for the minutes and even publish an article in Rouge attacking your "electoralist line." In the discussion it became clear that the majority comrades suspected that this was the "opening move" in some scheme to advance the cause of the Verdad group at the next world congress. In face of such suspicions, which were scarcely comprehensible to us, we naturally did not press the matter further.

The second item came up in relation to the next IEC meeting. The majority comrades said that they were of the opinion that it

... 3

would be extremely difficult to have representatives from both Verdad and Combatiente in one room at the same time. They suggested some possible ways of handling the difficulty, like meeting with the delegations at different times. The best solution, they thought, would be La Verdad not sending a delegation.

We objected to such an approach. All the other sympathizing groups are to be invited to send representatives. On that basis how can La Verdad not be welcomed?

The "delicacy" of the situation in Argentina was advanced as an argument. Combatiente maintains a very hostile attitude toward La Verdad; and Combatiente constitutes the official section.

We pointed out that the last world congress recognized La Verdad as a sympathizing group and only a world congress has the power to change that decision. In any case, we considered it wrong in principle to treat either group in Argentina as an outlaw, and we would not go along with any efforts from any sources to exclude La Verdad from participation in the next IEC.

Argument over the question ended without any motions being made and thus no action was taken. So much for that.

I now come to a special item. I would very much like to talk with you about the situation in the International, particularly in relation to the developments in Argentina. What would you think about Reba and me taking our vacation this year in Buenos Aires? It would be for two weeks or so during July, that is, next month. What we would like to do is come as vacationers -- no speeches, no public appearances whatsoever, no "spectaculars" of any kind. (It would really be our vacation, and we need to take it easy.) However during our stay we would exchange views and ideas with you and the other comrades on some of the more acute problems the International faces.

Of course, we don't know how this would fit into your schedule. You might not be able to find time in July. Or it might be inconvenient for other reasons. Whatever the case is, please let us know as soon as possible so that if such a trip can be fitted in with your schedule we can begin planning concretely.

With comradely greetings,

Joe

cc:U.Sec.

Excerpts from a personal letter
from Hugo Moreno to Peter Camejo.
(For information of United Secretariat members only.)

Buenos Aires
April 28, 1972

Dear Peter:

* * *

As you will already have read in AS, we succeeded in getting more than 0.4 percent of the signatures in six provinces, and before the end of the next month we will have eight provinces, among them ... in the federal district itself, that is Buenos Aires. We are going to scrape up 25,000 ballot members and by the end of the year may have more than 30,000. I think that your forecast that we would be able to meet the legal requirements imposed on us will prove to be completely accurate. Up to now we have not run into any legal or political obstacles. The government is apparently going along with the electoral legislation. Outside of minor difficulties they are letting us act as a legal formation. In a trip to Patagonia we were able to speak on television and say whatever we wanted to. The same held true for press interviews. As of now we are the only party in the left with the possibility of achieving legal status.

* * *

The important thing is that we are making a spectacular jump forward. You will already have noticed this in AS. We are near to having 30 headquarters or more. Some of them have not been publicized, either because of the fault of the editorial staff or because of legal reasons -- the signing of leases. We are continuing with our plan to have 50 by July. We are expanding in all directions and in many cities of the interior. As soon as the affiliation campaign ends we will start a campaign to raise the circulation of AS to a minimum of 15,000. We believe that this objective can be reached right away. Growth will follow, a growth already to be seen, and that is for us. This pleasing panorama is not without its clouds. We have not got the youth work going fully. We are making big headway but not in a spectacular way as in the other fields. We don't know what to attribute this to. The best hypothesis is that it is new work that we have not yet mastered. We will see.

Jean Pierre's stay was useful in permitting us to get to know him; we felt that he was a comrade like the rest of us. As I wrote Joe he is the first European comrade to visit us with whom we felt at home like with the American comrades. That is why the news you sent us saddened me. I raised the matter with the other leading comrades and we decided to send him a letter of condolences. There was some doubt about sending it or not, since it could be taken by the

French comrades as a factional or tendentious maneuver when there is not an ounce of that in it, just the contrary only a word to a comrade whom we appreciate to comfort him in a sad moment. We will send the letter.

The last discussion we had with J.P. was the most fraternal but at the same time the most clarifying. I will summarize it for you because it left me quite worried. He confirmed your remarks that hegemony has not been definitively won in France, that the path before us is a long one, and that we have just begun. J.P. in a very fraternal way asked me what my opinion was on the Labour party and the French S.P. He outlined the theoretical hypothesis held apparently unanimously by the French comrades, or by a large majority, that they have almost certainly ceased to be workers parties. Following your advice I counted first to ten and then on the basis of very abstract and general methodological considerations I told him more or less the following. Our method requires us to provide hypotheses on processes and their genesis, among other requisites (exhaustive study of the reality, relations between classes, etc.). Leaving aside historical considerations, to characterize the Labour party as bourgeois signifies making a prediction, that when the working class and important sectors of the English middle class begin to move to the left they will not move toward the Labour party but somewhere else instead, inasmuch as moving to the left will signify repudiating precisely the bourgeois parties (among them the Labour party for those who believe it to be bourgeois). Without knowing much about the English situation I venture to make a prediction: before the English Labour party reaches its final crisis, it will undergo a colossal revitalization, an upsurge, massive growth, precisely as a manifestation of a prerevolutionary situation. Along with this massive growth mounting into the millions, openings will be provided to the vanguard, thousands and tens of thousands coming to revolutionary positions. To define the Labour party as bourgeois would mean our pressing this vanguard to break off any dialogue with the millions joining with the Labour party precisely because they regard it as "their labour party." A correct definition thus is a life and death question for our section because it is also a life and death question for the revolutionary vanguard. To define the Labour party as bourgeois because of its rotten leadership means in fact to leave these millions of workers in the hands of this very leadership, since we do not orient the vanguard to challenge this rotten leadership for leadership of the working class; therefore we leave them to their fate. Jean Pierre said that my reasoning was interesting and novel; that it explained a French phenomenon: the strengthening of the CP after the May events.

I emphasized that the same could occur with the French SP. It is not a question of Mitterrand but of the probable class dynamics. With an additional sociological factory. They, in order to explain the student phenomenon in France and in the Western world, accept Mandel's theory -- which is a continuation of Marx's theory -- that in fact the "white collar" layer is a sector of the proletariat. If they accept this hypothesis, they cannot give me as an argument that the SP has ceased being a workers' party because specifically

... 3

it is the party of the "white collar" layer. He also argued that it is a party of electoral functionaries.

I read your introduction with pleasure. There are some nuances of differences between your position and mine. I emphasize: nuances. In referring to the national bourgeoisie, you indicate only its historical role without taking up its conjunctural oscillations. With respect to the permanent revolution in the metropolitan countries -- in which we have fundamental agreement -- there is likewise a nuance of difference. You emphasize the combined nature of the Black movement; I emphasize that with the socialist revolution as a whole in the United States is combined the bourgeois democratic revolution of the Blacks and Chicanos, taking for granted the combination of the democratic and the socialist revolutions in the Black movement itself.

* * *

The length of this letter prevents me from telling you about the present situation of the Brazilian comrades. The May 1 group is moving toward the Lambertists. The Faction, on the other hand, with the exception of those around Joel, have turned completely toward us. I am pessimistic concerning their unifying. To clarify: the May 1 group is turning toward PO and Lora, who had a run-in with Lambert in Santiago de Chile. Finally, is Linda coming for sure? Confirm her arrival and the date.

Chau,

Hugo

Excerpts from a personal letter
from Hugo Moreno to Joseph Hansen.
(For information of United Secretariat members only.)

Buenos Aires
April 28, 1972

My Dear José:

* * *

If I am not mistaken I had the misfortune to meet T. Wohlforth in London. Farrell can tell you if that's who it was, because he introduced me. The impression I had of both him and his compañera was deplorable. A type very much like Shachtman and the Shachtmanites. The Old Man was right when he said that they live off crumbs from our table. I would say that in Europe as well as in Latin America, they continue to exert a certain attraction and weight as a consequence of our official policies, which puts wind in their sails. From what Peter said, this does not hold for the United States, where they are reduced to what they actually are -- small, miserable sects. I have to recognize that they single me out with special fury. For years you have been amiable enough to send me this or that clipping from their press in New York attacking me. They reach the height of ridiculousness in writing as if they knew me.

Jean Pierre made a trip through here. He made an immense impression on us. This was the first time that a European comrade has visited us who made us feel at ease with him. This has happened before only with Latin American comrades and with you comrades. This impression did not prevent us from noting that we have been following methods and interpretations on many important problems different from those followed by the French comrades. I am not referring to our continent. What worries us a little are the evident differences we have with reference to France and England, as well as the possible implications these differences hold for the rest of the continent. We are not specialists in anything, least of in relation to Europe; but it was a little difficult to accept the hypothetical characterization that emerged in the conversation -- the Labour party and the French Socialist party are almost surely bourgeois parties already. If this characterization becomes hardened and is projected into daily politics -- but is a mistaken view as we presume it is -- it would be a genuine catastrophe for the International in the European continent as a whole. It would touch off a chain reaction.

* * *

Your official declaration against the terrorist politics of the ERP was a great moral political support in the political and theoretical battle that we have carried on against terrorism and urban guerrilla warfare. In contrast, the declaration made by Rouge

... 2

was a calamity from this point of view. I mean, rather, the article by T.

On the problem of the Frente Amplio and the other points on which we have differences (Chilean Unidad Popular, Velasco government), I hope to be able to make time to write you an extensive letter. My fondest hope is that we will be able to exchange arguments on our points of view in an open and fraternal way, trying to reach an agreement that will enrich our movement.

With my most fraternal regards,

Hugo

* * *