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CUBA

VANGUARD ROLE OF AFRICAN YOUTH ON ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Havana BOHEMIA in Spanish 2 Dec 77 pp 66-69

[Article by Juan Sanchez: "The Paths of the Struggle"]

[Text] The Days of Insurrection

The first victim was a 10-year old boy who fell dead as he was struck by bullets after being attacked by a police dog. According to witnesses, the South African policemen pulled the trigger in anger. They fired indiscriminately against anyone who was black. That was June 1976, a historically bloody 16 June in that noisy and steaming Soweto, the largest black ghetto in the world, located on the outskirts of Johannesburg. Some 1 and 1/2 million natives are confined there and half of them are under 20 years of age.

Armed with rifles, anti-riot gas, tanks, and other armored equipment and urging their aggressive dogs on, the forces of law and order opened fire at thousands of student youths who only had stones with which to defend themselves. Those days were like days in hell. According to the local press, the casualties of the events came to 176 killed, 1,500 injured, and more than 3,000 arrested. "That is a lie, a complete fabrication; the number of dead exceeded some 1,200," one of the organizers of the Soweto demonstrations, Tobello Motapanyane, general secretary of the SASM [Southern African Students Movement], one of the youth organizations, stated later.

Soweto is a symbol of the struggle in Africa. For nearly a week thousands of South African workers and student youth took to the streets in a full-fledged insurrection against the racist regime. One slogan shouted at that time epitomized the revolutionary significance of those violent days: "Power to Soweto!" The slogan was answered in chorus by the black masses who transformed the youth demonstrations into a generalized struggle against apartheid in its entirety. The idea in everyone's mind was to paralyze the country's economy.

The spark which had ignited South Africa's "powder keg" was a protest organized by the youth against the imposition of the Afrikaans language by the

authorities (Afrikaans is a variety of Dutch with African adaptations typical of the initial colonizers of the territory). This had been the match, the immediate problem, but the real problem, the real cause, is racism, oppression and exploitation to which most of the blacks are subjected. The youth leader Tobello Motapanyane explained: "The South African youth is sick of the status quo. Clearly, the youth wants action. We do not believe that we have to spend our life in discussions. We believe in positive action, in things such as the armed struggle. The students are attacking the police even though they have no weapons. This evidences that the youth is ready for big things. Additionally, the youth has acquired extensive experience in the struggle, which has provided a firm basis for the armed struggle and other types of positive action against the racist regime."¹

Keys of the Problem

Recently SECHABA, official organ of the ANC [African National Congress] of South Africa, published some statements by Nkosazana Diamini, deputy chairman of SASO [South African Student Organization] in which the distaff leader described the growth of political awareness and the present state of various problems of the youth. A few months after the insurrection in Soweto she managed to escape the brutal police persecution and left the area, moving from room to room in the men's dormitories of the University of Natal. When Nkosazana Diamini escaped in September 1976 she was the only member of SASO's² executive who was not in jail. She was studying at the Weniworth Medical School and was only a year away from graduation when the protest demonstrations began. "The form in which this struggle is maintained," she said, "shows that our people are more determined. In the past the students also staged demonstrations but they were isolated, alone, and the workers did not join them. And when the African workers declared a strike the black students never took notice of the fact that those strikes were part of the national struggle. Now the people are united in their march."

Nkosazana Diamini also noted: "For example, when one talks to black workers it is necessary to explain to them that in its broadest sense white workers fall into their own category since they also work for the affluent in order to enrich a few individuals who own the firms, some of which are the property of foreigners. It is certain that the wages of the whites are higher than those of the blacks but this fact evidences the intent of the owners to have the white workers think that they are better than the black workers. Instead of hating the exploiter, who is the plant owner, the black worker hates the white workers because these earn higher wages.... Nowadays we explain to the people where the problem resides. It is in the socioeconomic structure and not in racial differences. We consider that we can do it because we now enjoy solidarity. We are aware. If we had wanted to explain this matter to an apathetic individual, one of us, and had said that the white is not his problem as such but rather that the problem is capitalism and imperialism, he would not have understood at that time nor grasped what we were talking about. Now that they are with us--I am referring to the students and the masses in general--it is easier to explain the fundamental problems of our struggle to them."

In the present perspective of southern Africa, the student and worker youth of Namibia are also an important factor in the struggle for independence. There the youths have also organized strikes in secondary schools against the so-called "system of Bantu education."³ Connected with SWAPO [South-West African People's Organization], an organization recognized as the only one truly representative of the Namibian people, small study groups in the schools are analyzing matters relating to tribalism, regionalism, racism, neocolonialism, and so on, and from those study groups in which the students and working youths are involved, new buddies and acquaintances are mobilized. In Namibia this type of endeavor among the youth, especially since 1976, represents an important contribution to the efforts to politicize the people.

This revolutionary violence in Soweto, Namibia, and other places of southern Africa makes it clear that there exists a youth who is the vehicle of the earlier great traditions of struggle against colonialism and wishes to secure genuine independence on that continent.

But where do the roots of this entire situation lie?

Common Roots

One would have to seek the deeper roots in the "transformation of the African continent into a preserve for the hunting of black slaves," according to the well-known expression of Marx. No one doubts now that an essential element in the development and growth of modern capitalism beginning early in the 16th century was the slavery of Africans. And that inhumane trade, for obvious reasons, hurt especially the masses of youths moved on a large scale to the plantations and the gold and silver mines in America. Subsequently, the grab for Africa involved the expropriation of natives' land and the exploitation of these groups in their own geographic setting. The plunder reached incredible levels in the 19th century and in the early decades of the 20th century when the major international monopolies appeared on the scene as protagonists.

This phenomenon imposed forced labor, first, and "migrant labor" later. These bore down upon--and still do so in various countries--large sectors of the young African population. In 1941, for example, a census indicated that in the then-Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), about 80 percent of the males of a district aged 15 to 35 years had been removed from traditional agricultural work so that they might be employed as miners. In order to earn any measly pay they had no choice but work in the mines. Thus, in many villages and regions, the production of food items, in the essential context of a subsistence agriculture, remained in the hands of the women, old people, and children. This was the system--as Jack Woodis maintains in his book, "Africa: The Roots of Its Rebellion"--a system applicable to the major part of Africa occupied by the imperialists. Woodis adds that the misery and destitution of the natives because of the "migrant labor" and because of the so-called "reserves"--whose modern version is found in the

famous "Bantustans"--are the product of the exploitation which despoiled the African people of their land and dealt a death blow to their agrarian economy.

The rebellion against this state of affairs, very particularly among the youth, began from the very moment when the colonialists entered Africa sweeping everything in their path. Forcibly settling on African land, the exploiters took advantage of some aspects of social life in that region of the world, frequently altering its true essence in an effort to cancel or quash the movements of rebellion. Thus, they stimulated uprisings among the natives of various groups, taking ethnic affinities, religious beliefs, and other factors into consideration. President Sekou Toure mentioned an example which is worth noting and which we excerpt from his book "Africa on the March" (Political Science Publishing House, Havana, Cuba). It is very representative of a general situation: "Four youths born in the same town of mothers belonging to the same family group but with fathers hailing from different groups mandatorily had to belong to different associations. Even though those four youths might have entered school the same day and covered the same curriculum in their education; even though those four youths might have taken the same examination, been hired in the same branch of the public administration, or employed in the same workshop or in the same office; even though they might have been housed, on account of fraternal bonds and those of friendship, in the same apartment, the irrational situation which used to exist in Guinea dictated that each of them, against his wishes, should be active in a different ethnic group than those of the other three."

Contradictions of the Colonial Legacy

This contradiction, President Sekou Toure asserted, has been definitively liquidated in Guinea where as in other African countries the colonialists exploited the different beliefs or tribalism in order to divide the youth and the people in general. This is a tactic which continues to be in force with its necessary variants and peculiarities depending on the country and the type of government. The animist youth found themselves together in the forests in order to receive one kind of education while at the same time, Sekou Toure recalled, the Catholic youth were active in their own associations and the Moslem youth made up a third group. "The struggle among the faiths maintained antagonistic relations among the youths of the country.... We are proud today to note within the JRDA [Youth of the African Democratic Revolution] of Guinea that the contradictions of this nature have disappeared and that the youth, despite the diversity of their faiths, enjoy fraternal contacts in their daily actions to solve the country's economic, social, and cultural problems in a context of national unity. We also find that the old negative values of race, language, region, and religion have been replaced by positive and rational values, those of the Guinean revolution and the Guinean nation."

Youth, That Objective

It is interesting and very illustrative to analyze, even though briefly, the problems of the youth in another nation freed from colonialism--namely, Mozambique--through its top leader, President Samora Machel. In a recent speech he noted that we are living in the period when capitalism is changing into socialism and that an important aspect of this era of ours resides in the constantly greater participation of the youth in the struggle for social changes at the side of the working class.

It is appropriate to recall that in Mozambique itself, as in Angola and other countries, during the wars of national liberation the guerrilla units included the decisive presence of youths. Referring specifically to the guerrilla struggle in Zimbabwe the British university professor, R. W. Johnson (in his book "How Long Will South Africa Survive?", London, 1977), stresses the fact that these units are made up "principally of adolescents." In the case of Mozambique President Machel himself noted that from the foundation of FRELIMO [Mozambique Liberation Front] on 25 June 1962, the youth fulfilled tasks of fundamental importance for the struggle. These days it behooves this youth--who represent 70 percent of the population--to participate in the building of the material and ideological base of the new society.

Despite the defeat of colonialism, imperialist maneuvers to divert the Mozambican youth--and those of other African nations--from revolutionary ideas have not stopped. And the gauge is also valid here for the general problem of the African peoples. "Recently," President Machel charged, "an intensification in the action of agents of the bourgeoisie in the schools has been observed. What is involved is the action of small groups, to be sure, but well organized ones. By attacking the schools the class enemy strives to undermine through the base the plan to create a new society, a new individual."

"Accordingly, taking advantage of the tendency of the youth to have fun," Samora Machel continued, "the colonialists are striving to disseminate a kind of entertainment premised on the use of liquor and drugs, sexual promiscuity, the contempt for domestic culture, and the blind emulation of the decadent values of the foreign bourgeoisie. It is from this trend that 'parties,' that is, American- or South African-style bashes, emerged at which drinking, the use of drugs, and sexual promiscuity and aberrations became common. 'Freak' talks, that is, the slang of those on the margins of society, spread rapidly among the student youth.... There also emerged extravagant dress, ranging from shoes to pullovers [sic] bearing insignia of the criminal imperialist armed forces (U. S. Army, U. S. Air Force, etc.). Banditry, corruption, immorality, pornography, 'machismo,' individualism, and the spirit of self-sufficiency are constantly exalted in films, in comic strips, periodicals, records, books, and other forms of bourgeois propaganda. And some youths immediately assimilated and emulated such 'values.'"

Naturally, there is the other side of reality. It is the action of the revolutionary process. In Mozambique as in Angola, in Guinea, and other countries, the youth is constantly raising its political, scientific, and technical level and trying to halt the sequels of tribalism, obscurantism, and illiteracy which served as weapon to the exploiters.

The machinations of the colonialists, premised on old sectors of the traditional-feudal dependent society and the discredited representatives of bourgeois ideology, disintegrate on coming into contact with the unbeatable wall of a youth forged in time-worn traditions of struggle. For that reason, as President Sekou Toure noted clearly, "the political option to which the youth of Africa is invited is an option of revolutionary content, the only one suitable to secure the definitive liquidation of all ethnic contradictions, all social antagonisms, and all sequels of colonial domination."

FOOTNOTES

1. Tobello Motapanyane, "how the Demonstrations of 16 June Were Planned," SECHABA, 1977.
2. SASO, or South African Student Organization, is connected with the clandestine ANC. Among its founders is Steve Biko, the intellectual youth recently assassinated in one of the jails of John Vorster's racist regime.
3. "Bantu Education": A traditional system resting on ethnic bases and imposed by the South African regime for the domestication of the native youth. What is involved is an inferior and oppressive form of education for the masses of young blacks.

2662

CSO: 3010

CUBA

DELEGATION OF CUBAN WOMEN'S FEDERATION VISITS

Maputo NOTICIAS in Portuguese 24 Dec 77 p 3

[Text] A delegation representing the Cuban Women's Federation (FMC) is visiting our country for the purpose of exchanging with Mozambique women their experiences in the common struggle. The delegation traveled yesterday afternoon to the CAJUCA [expansion unknown] enterprise in Machava, where it met with the 1,172 women workers of the total of 1,738 employees of that industrial unit and learned of the procedures used in processing cashew nuts.

The visiting delegation consists of Elsa Padron Cabrera, a member of the National Committee of the FMC, and Sofia Soto, secretary of social work of the Directorate of Pinar del Rio Province. The members of the delegation were accompanied by Anabela Rodrigues, an official of the Department of Information and member of the National Secretariat of the OMM [Organization of Mozambique Women], and by other officers of that democratic mass organization at the provincial level and also from Matola District.

While in our country the Cuban women's delegation will visit various sectors in which women are employed and will study those areas of activity in which future cooperation may take place between the FMC and OMM. With this object in view, during its stay in Mozambique the delegation will go to Cabo Delgado Province in pursuance of its contacts with factories, production cooperatives, nurseries, child care centers, communal villages and other centers for enlisting women in the process of national reconstruction.

The delegation was everywhere greeted with expressive demonstrations of joy by the masses of workers, who sang revolutionary songs and performed dances representative of our culture. The delegation began by touring the various facilities in order to learn of the procedures employed in the processing of cashew nuts. In this connection it first visited those sectors where the work is entirely mechanized, including those where the calibrating, shelling, electronic sorting, and cooking (of the husks for the extraction of oil, which is exported for use in the manufacture of rubber and fuels) takes place.

The delegation then also toured the sectors where manual labor is performed, namely the grading, packing and roasting, and also visited the warehouse for the finished products. In these sectors the visitors exchanged impressions with the hundreds of women workers, who told them of their experiences in connection with their production activity.

The visitors evinced an interest in questions relating to organization and to various technical details of the operation of the plant. They praised the fact that the raw materials were being fully utilized, for in addition to the kernel itself--which is destined principally for export--the oil and the residual husk (which is delivered to the paper mills) are utilized. Even the rotten nuts are utilized, for after they are ground they are used in the manufacture of animal feed.

Administrative officials explained that the CAJUCA plant--which at the present moment has a total stock of 110 tons of raw cashews on hand--is processing 60 tons of the nuts per day, from which a total of 5,250 kilograms of whole cashew kernels--and 2,240 kilograms of various grades of broken kernels--are obtained.

At the conclusion of its visit the FMC delegation held a brief meeting with the OMM of the CAJUCA plant and with officials of the Matola District secretariat of that organization, who presented a summarization of their activities.

10,992
CSO: 4401

CUBA

HAVANA REPORTS ON ANGOLAN-CUBAN RELATIONS

Cuba, USSR Lauded at MPLA Congress

Havana GRANMA in Spanish 5 Dec 77 p 8

[Article by Gustavo Ulacia]

[Text] Luanda, 4 December--The heroic Angolan people, who barely 2 years ago proclaimed their independence in the First of May Plaza, began the First MPLA Congress today.

The delegates and guests of the congress burst into tumultuous applause when Neto and other members of the Politburo appeared on the congress rostrum. Soldiers of the MPLA who have been fighting for more than 14 years gathered in the hall of the ancient Restauration Theater. Also present were clandestine fighters from Luanda and other cities of the country's 16 provinces, men who suffered the horrors of Portuguese military prisons, representatives of the working class and of the organization of Angolan women, the revolutionary flower of the Angolan soil.

After comrade Lucio Lara introduced the invited delegations, Manuel Pedro Pakavira spoke on behalf of the Commission of Mandates and reported to the congress that 255 of the 260 delegates were present, of whom 41 percent had been FAPLA soldiers for many years, 20 percent were soldiers in the urban clandestine struggle, and 30 percent had been in prison.

After inaugurating the congress Agostinho Neto spoke and summarized the history of the Angolan peoples' liberation struggles throughout the centuries. He recalled the establishment of the MPLA 21 years ago and the vicissitudes and sufferings of the movement until it achieved victory on 11 November 1975.

Later on he indicated that the split in the MPLA last May had been a result of insufficient organization, which had been overcome.

The MPLA heroes and martirs were accorded a minute of silence by all present.

Later Neto touched on the importance for the country of the MPLA's becoming a party, its statutes and program platform.

"The MPLA," emphasized Neto, "fulfilled its historic mission as a liberation movement. In the future it will be the party of the Angolan working class."

When he recalled the aggressions suffered by Angola at the hands of the allied puppet forces of UNITA, FNLA and South Africa, Neto said that the USSR and Cuba gave the Peoples' Republic of Angola the most important assistance. These words were greeted with ardent applause.

"They gave aid never before seen in Africa in defense of the Angolan nation and the progressive forces in Africa. The volume of arms and diverse equipment was truly impressive. The arms came primarily from the USSR and also from Cuba, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Guinea and Algeria. It was the critical period in our struggle for liberation. With the help of our allies, Angola resisted and won."

"I particularly want to underline Cuba's help which has been a cause of concern for the imperialists and their agents. Cuba not only supplied the equipment which we could not have made use of at that time because of the FAPLA's weak technical readiness, they sent us officers, men and women, some of whom were highly trained in the techniques of battle and in exercising international solidarity. Some of them lost their lives in Angola in the cause of the revolution, of Angola, and in defense of a people oppressed during centuries of slavery.

"Our battle flags bow before the Cuban comrades who fell on Angolan soil facing the racist South African invasion alongside our people."

Neto paid homage to Capt Alberto Barcide, Major Raul Diaz Arguelles (Domingo da Silva), political commissar Ciro Berrios and other Cuban international soldiers who fell on the northern, eastern and central fronts. Among them were peasants and workers who fulfilled during their lifetime the international duty of giving Angola their aid.

"The MPLA Central Committee proposes that the congress grant honors of distinction to the valiant Cuban comrades and praise the international spirit with which the Cuban Revolution has defended the Angolan Revolution."

Further on the president of the Peoples Republic of Angola enumerated the economic and technical help which Cubans are giving his country in numerous areas of production.

Continuing, Neto underlined that Lenin's country, which always supported the Angolan peoples' and the MPLA's struggle, today furnishes considerable aid, both in the military and in the civilian field. Just as in the past the USSR is and shall be the firmest bastion of support in the peoples' struggle for their emancipation and for economic and social progress.

Neto then also expressed his gratitude for the help given his country by other countries of the socialist world, both from Africa and from northern Europe.

In Neto's report to the congress on the MPLA's central committee, he focused on aspects of the country's foreign relations. He mentioned the benefits from tens of countries recognizing the Peoples Republic of Angola and its membership in various United Nations organizations. He traced the future foreign policy of the country which was, he said, headed toward a strengthening of links of all kinds with the socialist community and with anticolonial and anti-imperialist countries. He indicated that Angola would continue to offer its militant solidarity with movements of national liberation in their armed struggle in the defense of their rights.

In pursuing its grand objective of building a free, independent and socialist Angola, Neto emphasized, our party is inspired by the doctrines of scientific socialism, by the working class' view of the world. It applies Marxism-Leninism in a creative way to the actual conditions of struggle here in the south of Africa.

Finally Neto considered the problem of the national economy, referring to the situation which existed when the MPLA took power, the damages to the economy caused by foreign aggression until it was totally expelled from Angola, and how the country's economy was gradually restored.

In his report Neto traced the general outline which the working class and peasants must follow to promote the country's development.

Occupying places of honor among the foreign delegations were Andrei Kirilenko, member of the politburo of the PCUS [Communist Party of the Soviet Union]; General of the Army Raul Castro, second secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee of Cuba; representatives of countries belonging to the socialist community and numerous communist parties of Latin America, Africa and Asia, and representatives of liberation movements in Africa.

Military Chief Message to Cuba

Havana GRANMA in Spanish 5 Dec 77 p 8

[Text] Commander Joao Luis Neto (Xiyetu), chief of the General Staff of the Peoples Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola, sent a message of congratulations to Div Gen Senen Casas Regueiro, first deputy minister and chief of the EMG [General Staff], on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the founding of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

The greeting states that the FAR of the Republic of Cuba constitute a symbol of the practice of internationalism and are a sure guarantee of socialism's defense.

The FAR, the document indicates, have been victorious in the struggle against the opprobrious society of capitalist exploitation and have made good the words of Gen Antonio Maceo when he said, "Whoever attempts to take over Cuba will only gather the blood soaked soil if he does not perish in the attempt."

In conclusion the message wishes members of the FAR success in the revolutionary tasks and missions assigned to it by the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba and Commander in Chief Fidel Castro.

Neto Congratulates Cubans

Havana GRANMA in Spanish 5 Dec 77 p 8

[Text] Luanda, 4 December (PL)--President Agostinho Neto congratulated the Angolan and Cuban construction workers who worked on the theater where the First MPLA Congress is taking place.

Neto attended a reception yesterday given by the workers at a country restaurant located in the outskirts of this capital.

When he spoke to the workers Neto said he felt happy because it had been a day for building and he described the congress hall as very beautiful.

During the morning Neto attended a ceremony dedicating the first apartment building built in the "Golfe" district of this capital and two schools with a 2,000 student capacity. All of the construction projects were done by Angolan and Cuban workers.

9117

CSO: 3010

CUBA

BRIEFS

NEW ZAMBIAN AMBASSADOR--Havana (AIN)--Yesterday morning Isidoro Malmierca, Minister of Foreign Relations, received His Excellency, Mr Wilson Mofya Chakulya, who presented his credentials as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zambia to our country. During a meeting held later they discussed various aspects of relations between the two countries. [Text] [Havana GRANMA in Spanish 23 Nov 77 p 5] 9117

NEW ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR--Havana (AIN)--Yesterday morning Isidoro Malmierca, Minister of Foreign Relations, received His Excellency, Mr Aymro Wondmagenuhu, who presented his credentials as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to the Republic of Cuba. Various aspects of relations between the two countries were considered during a meeting which took place later. [Text] [Havana GRANMA in Spanish 23 Nov 77 p 5] 9117

CSO: 3010

PERU

POLITICAL PARTIES VIEW ELECTION LAW

Lima EL COMERCIO in Spanish 20 Nov 77 p 4

[Text] Peru should welcome the decree law which has initiated the process of restoring representative democracy in the country, according to Javier Ortiz de Zevallos, general secretary of the MDP [Peruvian Democratic Movement], referring to the law on elections to the Constituent Assembly.

Ortiz de Zevallos also said that the president of Peru had kept his word "and this brings credit to the government and satisfies the public."

He noted, however, that there are some innovations in this decree law which can create unnecessary confusion, such as the preferential balloting, for example.

"We hope that the government will be receptive to the suggestions made to it by the political parties and independent citizens to improve what we feel can be a defect in the electoral process," he stated.

Ortiz de Zevallos explained that his party was getting ready to submit to the National Elections Board comments on the electoral process so that the board may in turn transmit these observations to the executive branch.

"I believe that the National Elections Board is the body which is most qualified to devise an electoral process that does justice to Peru's democratic sentiment, which, without doubt, is the majority sentiment."

Ortiz de Zevallos concluded his comments by appealing to "all men and women who believe in democracy and seek a successful return of the democratic system to support any political party that adheres to democratic principles."

Luis Alberto Sanchez, chairman of the APRA political committee, said that the regulations had been drafted before the promised deadline and that this was a positive step.

He noted that some comments have been made, a few of them important, that should lead to changes, but that a committee of his party was taking care of this matter.

"I can suggest," Sanchez added, "that the amendment of Article 8 of the Civil Code did not, from the legal viewpoint, take into account the consequences flowing from Articles 9 and 10 of this Civil Code. This introduces inconsistency regarding those under 18 but over 16 years of age, those who are in the care of guardians, and so on."

Regarding Article 5, clause B, he noted that this clause is incomplete because it does not require the public or semi-public enterprise to grant without payment the license a candidate is required to obtain before the stated deadline. "Because of this, the chief of the enterprise becomes a censor in fact," Sanchez noted.

"I believe that with respect to the guaranties of representatives in the Constituent Assembly," he continued, "an essential guarantee is lacking, one which specifies that the delegates are not subject to an imperative order. As for the participation of professional parties and associations, this lacks practical, theoretical, and democratic meaning."

Sanchez said that it is obvious that professionals are not deprived of political or social ideology "as the article in question assumes."

He noted that those who did not give voting privileges to illiterate citizens "have assigned to themselves a power exceeding that of the Constituent Assembly and that giving the vote to those over 18 years of age was done by amending Article 8 of the Civil Code, "which is the option of the executive and legislative branches."

Sanchez said finally that additional comments will be forthcoming but that "they will be the subject of a more extensive study of a committee of my party."

Meza Cuadra, PSR [Socialist Revolutionary Party]

Antonio Meza Cuadra, general secretary of the PSR, said that many measures of the decree-law tend to favor the most conservative sectors "represented by the APRA in the erroneous assumption that the popular movement will not be able to adequately organize a majority response."

"This is indicated by the delay," he continued, "with which the rules of the game have been publicized and the deadlines noted. This is also shown by denial of the vote to the illiterate population consisting essentially of the peasantry."

Meza Cuadra stated that in the face of this fact the PSR is expressing its absolute disagreement and using other means announced earlier to object to Peru being considered a single electoral district "which helps to perpetuate an awkward centralism."

He noted that in this respect the PSR reiterates its position of balancing a percentage of national candidates with others from regional slates.

"The PSR reaffirms its position that to prevent the election to the Constituent Assembly from being spurious, an extensive political amnesty enabling the return of deportees and guaranteeing the return of exiles should be granted. Also, an extensive labor amnesty should be granted that would make possible the rehiring of dismissed workers and respect should be shown for the autonomy of popular organizations," Meza Cuadra concluded.

Jorge del Prado, PCP [Peruvian Communist Party]

Jorge del Prado, general secretary of the PCP, last night took exception to the short deadlines for registration. He said that "such short deadlines in general impact adversely on the democratic and popular forces."

He noted that registrations will hit the snag of the early deadlines which have been set. "Lately, new political movements have emerged and the law recognizes the right of citizens to participate in elections even to professional and workers organizations, but these forces will be disturbed that the deadlines are so early."

Jorge del Prado noted additionally that the electoral law does not meet the goals that were expected of it. "We have specified," he said, "that we consider the Constituent Assembly to be a step toward the development of structural changes achieved in the past few years and that for this purpose it was necessary to extend the franchise, recognizing in the first place the electoral rights of illiterate citizens."

"The law," he added, "perpetuates the old formula of franchise for all except illiterate citizens." Later he said: "It is a positive step that the voting right of those over 18 years of age has been recognized. Nevertheless," he continued, "carrying out this positive measure is limited by the excessively short time periods provided for registration."

Del Prado said that he felt that together with the electoral law, a law providing for political amnesty and workers' amnesty should have been passed in order to create a really democratic climate.

He added, "the electoral law tends to favor specific political sectors. I am referring especially to those who expressed their opinions earlier on the Constituent Assembly and the way in which it had to be changed. It is symptomatic that nearly all APRA's demands have been included in the law which has just been passed."

Jorge del Prado said in conclusion that he considered the law to be inadequate and antidemocratic "in relation to the people's achievements and the country's needs for economic and social development."

PERU

FRENCH CORRESPONDENT VIEWS ECONOMIC, POLITICAL SCENE

Paris LE MONDE in French 15-16 Nov 77 pp 7-8

[Article by Thierry Maliniak]

[Text] Lima. Slowly but inexorably, the capital city is becoming a huge slumtown. Its streets are filling with street peddlers, its suburbs with beggars, its hillsides with shacks. The huge capital city of a shaky Peru, Lima is gradually absorbing all the miseries of a country in the middle of a social crisis. Every year it gains several hundred thousand more people -- peasants tired of working a land whose average density is six people per cultivated hectare. They come to swell the hordes of job seekers who survive any way they can in the capital. According to the official statistics, half of the employable population in Lima only works part time or is unemployed.

The ladies of the fashionable surrounding neighborhoods now avoid going to the center of the city to do their shopping. They prefer the ghetto of the luxury shops of Miraflores or San Isidro. In the small narrow streets of the old colonial Lima the "ambulantes" (street peddlers) jostle along. For 10 hours a day they hawk the most bizarre, and often the most useless assortment of wares. They form an ever growing mass of several hundred thousand socially unstable and politically marginal people. They also constitute an army of the sub-proletariat, ready to be used by anyone, in particular by businesses against the unions.

To some extent, they are the symbol of Peru today. Peru, the only Andean country to have had for nearly 10 years a "revolutionary" system of structural transformations, is now facing a major crisis. In Lima -- and nobody now denies this obvious

truth -- the major reforms of the era of President Velasco have really had no beneficial effects on the standard of living of the population. Of course, businesses have been nationalized, lands have been distributed, the role of the state in the economy has been increased; the most archaic aspects of Peruvian society, which no civilian regime had been able to get rid of, have been done away with. But the country had lived well beyond its means until the economic crisis forced it, by means of a coup d'etat, to go over all its accounts. And the bill is high. The Peruvians have already started to pay it. Since 1973, the average purchasing power has declined by nearly 50 percent. And this may well be just the beginning. For it seems that what the economists euphemistically call "the austerity policy" will have to be hardened still more in the months to come.

The Prescriptions of Milton Friedman

In Lima, reckoning up the accounts means first of all settling the problem of foreign debt, whose service charges for 1977 came to 39 percent of exports; it means negotiating with international financing organizations which don't seem much inclined to show any flexibility toward yesterday's "revolutionaries." "Our crisis is not economic but financial," said President Morales Bermudez. By that he meant that the prospects for economic recovery in the mid-term period are real, but the problem for Peru is to find liquid assets right now which will help it to get through a difficult time. How can this be done while at the same time keeping the social situation from going beyond a critical point? The course to be followed is a narrow one. So the Peruvian military for nearly a year have been putting off the day of reckoning. Now they have finally been backed into a corner.

The difficult negotiations with the International Monetary Fund, begun last March, are coming to their final phase. The IMF has hardly made any concessions. "We are the Vietnam of the IMF," a Peruvian diplomat told us. "Just like the Pentagon, the IMF has been playing for its doctrinal credibility in negotiations which have become a test for the entire continent. If it yields an inch to us today, tomorrow it will have to deal with other countries who also have reached the limits of their possibilities of payment."

The objective of the IMF is to discuss the refinancing of the debt in order to eliminate the specter of a stoppage of payments. In 1976, Peru already had to find \$400 million to make ends meet -- at the cost of a package of economic measures which

in June 1976 touched off serious troubles in Lima, and caused most of the "leftist" military to leave the government. This time, \$250 million had to be obtained through a first stand-by loan from the Fund to open up loans from private banks.

What does the Monetary Fund "suggest" to Peru? The secret document the IMF gave the Peruvian authorities last March made them tremble. Its objectives are clear: to reduce the catastrophic deficit of the government budget and to reestablish equilibrium in the balance of payments. But at what cost? "Public enterprises must meet their own needs for internal financing through price adjustments," stated the document. In other words, all their government subsidies must be cut off. "They are asking us to do what no country in the world is doing," say the Peruvians: "to give up the concept of public service. And this in a country where the majority of the population barely lives above a subsistence level."

Price adjustments? For example, a 60 percent rise in the price of gasoline, which has already increased by nearly 500 percent in 2 years. Won't these measures accelerate the inflationary spiral? Certainly, but salary increases, the IMF imperturbably continued, must be cut back this year by 10 to 15 percent. As for the decimation advocated in the public sector budget, this should be manifested by a freeze on hiring, thus further worsening the employment problem.

Some local economists are sceptical. "They are trying to impose on Peru a model for the south of this continent. They are asking us to reduce our consumption in order to direct our production towards exports. But that is a model even less applicable here than in Chile or in Argentina. First of all, because the margin for social maneuver is narrower. And also because Peruvian industry is not competitive internationally. But the IMF is calling for a new devaluation to stimulate exports. But at the same time it is asking us to respect free trade, and to eliminate any measure that may appear protectionist. The result of these prescriptions will be the invasion of the Peruvian market by foreign products, and the crushing of local industry, with a concentration of income that will mean a recession and distortion of the machinery of production. In a word, this means applying to Peru the prescriptions of Milton Friedman."

The recession is already a tangible reality. For example, the number of businesses in the textile and automobile industries which have cut their workweek down to 4 or even 3 days, or

which have closed for several weeks, can't be counted anymore. Products which used to be unobtainable in the markets have been piling up on the shelves of shops, for lack of buyers. Transportation businesses in the interior of the country have been forced to lower their prices.

The Final Blow?

The "advice" of the Monetary Fund has not yet been fully applied. Gradually making sacrifices, the Peruvian military, visibly divided on the issue, are only giving up ground slowly. Last June, Walter Piazza, the first industrialist named minister of the economy since the military came to power, agreed to make some painful compromises. A month after announcing his "austerity plan," he had to resign. He had brought together against him all of the armed forces, worried about the consequences of a process that they really didn't know how to avoid. The troubles in the interior of Peru have already resulted in dozens of deaths.

There is no other way, say the advocates of austerity: the absence of currency makes any prospect of recovery illusory. But must the "cooling off" of the economic machine be done by following the ultra-liberal canons of the International Monetary Fund? In Lima, some officials in the ministry of the economy said no. They believed their time had come after the Piazza resignation. They talked of developing an "alternative" to the prescriptions of the IMF, with whom the negotiations were postponed. They talked no more of devaluation, but of programming imports. They didn't speak of budget cuts, but of a new monetary issue, compensated by a rise in the bank reserve rate, and special taxes on luxury goods.

This was a challenge to the orthodox dogmas of the Monetary Fund. But the rebellion lasted barely 2 months. This was time enough, say the Peruvians, for all credit lines to Peru to be virtually cut off, because of the concern of international banking circles. It was also time enough for the local bureaucratic apparatus to finish paralyzing the new plan by inextricable complications. The experiment was finished, and Peru had to turn again to the IMF, this time with its back to the wall.

Is the final blow now coming for the "revolutionary" model dating from several years ago? As a last resort, the Peruvian military have tried to play the card of human rights. "The deflationary prescriptions advocated by the IMF will certainly lead to a cycle of social agitation and repression, which forces governments to violate human rights more and more,"

the Peruvian chief of state told President Carter in Washington. Did he convince Carter? In any event, he doesn't seem to have convinced the strategists of the Monetary Fund, who made no compromises.

"This is a continental problem," one of Peru's top diplomats recently told us. "The American government's policy today is to put pressure both on the countries of the 'southern cone' of this continent and on Brazil -- whose international image is not very acceptable -- and to improve relations with the more democratic Andean Pact countries -- which may act as a counterweight. Peru today is the hinge uniting the two blocs. If tomorrow Peru falls into the repressive economic model already in existence in the 'southern cone,' the entire balance of forces in the region will be modified, and not in a direction to the liking of U.S. diplomacy." Does Peru hope to convince with these arguments? "Of course," said our source, "the IMF is not much concerned about human rights."

Peru, the Vietnam of the Monetary Fund? The Peruvian military today seem far from having found their Ho Chi Minh.

The Historic Compromise

Nearly 10 years of a "revolutionary" regime have not fundamentally changed the life of the people. To solve the economic and financial crisis, the International Monetary Fund has suggested measures which threaten to stir up social unrest, followed by a repression which would tarnish the good image of the country (LE MONDE, 15 November).

Lima. In less than a year the elections for the Constituent Assembly announced by President Morales Bermudez will be held. At the end of nearly 10 years of hibernation, the parties have reestablished contacts, issued statements, done their house-cleaning. This feverish activity is in marked contrast with the indifference of the people, more concerned about the economic crisis and rising prices. Shouldn't the prospect of a return of the civilians to power excite a population inclined to use the military, worn down by nearly a decade of governing, as the scapegoats for all their problems? Not at all! The electoral excitement seems to be a sort of political growth, extraneous to the social body itself.

What are the traditional political organizations doing to improve their credibility with the people, distressed by the present impasse? In Lima, they don't talk about programs, but about agreements between leaders; not about political action, but

about the number of participants; not about solutions for problems, but about access to power. The crisis in Peru is not just economic and social; above all else, it is a crisis of imagination. The failure of the military to create a mystique around the first truly reformist plan of the country has caused a serious counter-shock. And faced with a country which is confusedly groping for a plan for society to hang on to, the traditional political parties today are offering only outdated platitudes from the Peru before 1968.

The panorama is changing. It revolves around a plan that President Morales Bermudez termed in a speech a "historic compromise." Officially it is the agreement between the major civilian and military forces of the country confronting a particularly difficult situation. In fact, it is something more precise; just as in Italy, it is the rapprochement between the two principal "factors of power" whose antagonism has caused the country's political instability for half a century. In Peru, the opposing forces are the armed forces and the APRA /American Revolutionary Popular Alliance/ of Raul Haya de la Torre.

APRA's history has overtones of classical fatality. For decades, the armed forces, then in the service of conservatism, persecuted the APRA militants who were considered revolutionaries. Now, for 10 years the army, which has become reformist, has fought the APRA party which the army views as the incarnation of the forces opposed to change.

Today the wounds are not completely healed. But each side knows that it needs the other. For the military government, the APRA represents a safety barrier against the rise of popular unrest, a valued support in this period of economic crisis. "After the general strike of 19 July" (in which the APRA was the only confederation not participating) a party leader told us, "we appeared to the military regime as the only possible alternative to ward off a social conflagration." As for the party leaders, they know that for them, access to power requires a prior reconciliation with the armed forces.

So this "historic compromise" is just a "mariage de raison" in which each of the prospective spouses is only venturing cautiously. The APRA shows little enthusiasm about involving itself publicly with a government which, in dealing with the economic crisis, must make a series of unpopular decisions. President Morales Bermudez, also, can not move too quickly, for fear of reviving the anti-APRA feelings latent in some military circles: no longer

the conservative anti-APRA spirit of bygone days when the party seemed to be the "communist" specter, but the anti-APRA spirit of the Velasquist officers still present, who see in the party only the retrograde force which has blocked change in recent years. History also urges caution; all governments which have compromised with the APRA have been overthrown by a military coup d'etat.

A Party Without a Program

Nobody denies the "heroic years" of the APRA activists or the persecutions they have suffered in the past. But what does the party want now? What is it offering Peru in this time of crisis? What does it offer an army worn out by power, but not much inclined to turn it over without knowing how it will be used? The APRA has begun to regild its good image as a "center left" party by reviving its contacts with the Socialist Internationale. But the Alliance has also compromised itself on several occasions with the most conservative political forces. It opposed the nationalization of oil, the first step taken by the military in 1968. Facing the country's serious social crisis, facing the undeniable popular discontent, the party in recent months has kept strict silence. It has only released two statements: on the date of the elections... and on the internationalization of the Panama Canal¹.

In fact, if the APRA has rarely appeared to be so close to power as it is today, never has it seemed so unready to wield any power. In carrying out the reforms of recent years, the military regime has deprived the APRA of many of its old fighting banners. The APRA members have not really readjusted to a Peru which is no longer the Peru of 1968. Also, the age of Mr Victor Raul Haya de la Torre must be taken into account. At 82 years of age, the charismatic leader no longer directs his party with the rationality of days gone by, but no one dares to challenge his views.

The skimpiness of the party's economic program stands in sharp contrast with the extent of the crisis. The "economic congress" which would bring together the representatives of the workers, of employers, and of the government seems too much like the "social pact" that couldn't survive the turmoil of the Argentinian

1. This point, it is true, was included among the fundamental points of the foundation charter of the APRA, which was conceived as a continental project, valid for all the Latinos, or to use Raul Haya de la Torre's terminology, for all "Indo-Americans."

crisis. Isn't it true that the APRA, a multi-class party, and therefore a centrist party, inspired by the social-democratic formations of industrialized societies, like Peronism, is condemned to be split apart in a period of crisis causing social and political polarization?

"The great regret of the APRA members," people say in Peru, "is that they have never been in power. Their great remorse will be if they get there." Some people say that the Peruvian military might repeat the experiment of General Lanusse in Argentina, who permitted Peronism to come to power, where it could only self-destruct. Then the return of the army to public affairs seemed indispensable. The rest is history. The leaders of the APRA youth say that the party's entry in the Constituent Assembly and its arrival to power would give it a new dynamism and would make possible a renewal of its cadres and its ideas, which is obviously needed. Their optimism is not shared by everyone; where is the Alliance's plan for society?

Although worn down by the years, like its leader, the APRA party is still the key piece on the political chessboard, more because of the weakness of its opponents than because of its own strength. Popular Action, the party of Fernando Belaunde Terry, the last civilian president, has adopted the policy of intransigence. Belaunde, treating the military who overthrew him in 1968 as "rebels," rejecting in unequivocal terms the reforms made since then, terming the Constituent Assembly only a "delaying maneuver," by such actions may hope to channel a rightist anti-militarism that has hardly decreased since the departure of President Velasco for the benefit of his own party.

But above all, by beginning a direct attack against the present government, Popular Action seems to count on bringing to power officers who would take a harder line and who would take away from both the APRA and the left any hope of coming to power. Isn't this a foolish attempt? It is true that Popular Action hardly has any choice; a "historic compromise" between the military and APRA would relegate Popular Action to isolation. And the advances made by Popular Action have been scornfully rejected by Mr Haya de la Torre. Really, what can former president Belaunde offer today, who came to power through the backing of the army to apply a reformist program, and who was overthrown 5 years later by the same military who had decided to rule themselves, because of the ineptness of their former favorite?

From Charybdis to Scylla?

In the end the wearing down of Popular Action and of Mr Belaunde is only that of Lima's traditional political world. This traditional political world is today facing a Peru profoundly transformed by a decade of revolution in uniform; despite the turn to the right of recent years, the country no longer resembles at all the country that the civilians used to run. Sectors of society kept on the margins for centuries have burst upon the stage. They don't feel they are represented by yesterday's parties. They remain political orphans, for no new organization seems able to capitalize rapidly on the not yet dead dynamism of Velasquism. Also, it is by no means certain that they will be invited to the ballot box; the 2 million illiterates of Peru may well not be allowed to vote.²

"Decades will go by in Peru before this country again knows a revolution," former president Velasco told us recently. "We will see the appearance of some organizations which will claim to be the heirs of our revolution and which will each try to capture a part of our strength. But only a little part, no more." Ill, still bitter about being turned out of power, constantly under attack by the right still in the throes of the "great fear" of the years of "Velasquism," the former president does not hide his pessimism. So far he has refused to support the organizations headed by his supporters. The PSR /Revolutionary Socialist Party, established in November 1976, is slowly gaining ground among workers because of the economic crisis. But its chances of success seem to lie more in the distant future than in the coming political battle.

Another organization including colleagues of the former president is being developed. It undoubtedly aspires, with little optimism, to "cover" the vast sectors of the center left which have never really been represented in Peru. But the "union of progressives" is still more than ever a slogan for the First of May. Caught up in personal rivalries or party quarrels, the Peruvian left today seems incapable of giving new life to the "revolution" of 1968 -- and even more incapable of creating a more radical revolution. "In Peruvian politics everything is traditional, even the left," say some disillusioned reporters.

2. This measure was in the Constitution in effect until 1968. Peru has about 16 million inhabitants.

Worried about the divisions that nearly 10 years of power created within it, the armed forces are going to try to pass on the burden. But to whom? To APRA, a party without any clear perspective for the future, but which seems to the armed forces the lesser evil?³ "The present military regime is the worst of systems, but we don't see anything better," people say in Lima. "The return of the civilians to power is just moving from Charybdis to Scylla," retort the Cassandras. In fact, everyone is aware that tomorrow's big voters will be, whether anyone likes it or not, the army. It will be the army which in the end will determine which political forces have a chance of coming to power.

The armed forces are therefore quite perplexed. From purge to purge -- against the right at the time of President Velasco, against the left under the present chief of state -- the army has lost many of its most eminent leaders. For nearly 10 years it has tasted the joys of power. But it has also paid the price in the form of internal divisions, while the difficulties of relations with several neighboring countries make its unity all the more urgent. The young generation of officers seems marked by 7 years of "Velasquism" and probably would not easily accept a too abrupt move backwards. But how is it possible to go forward in Peru today?

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3. We should point out that APRA is the party which has regularly received the most votes in the various elections.

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PERU

BRIEFS

FRANCE SUPPLIES PATROL BOATS--Peru has ordered six missile-launching rapid patrol boats from France to patrol its new 200-mile economic zone. These small ships will be delivered in 3 years. They are about 50 meters long, have a crew of about 30 men, and reach a speed above 30 knots. Peru has already bought from France AMX-13 combat tanks and automatic pistols for its Army, Exocet and SS-12 surface to surface missiles for its Navy, and 36 Mirage-III planes and Alouette helicopters for its Air Force. /Text/ /Paris LE MONDE in French
26 Nov 77 p 8/ 7679

THE LEFTIST REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT (MIR)-POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Political Party - A Definition

Caracas BOHEMIA in Spanish 21-27 Mar 77 pp 68-76

[Chapter of New Book "La Izquierda y su Proceso" (The Left and its Process) by Moises Moleiro, MIR Secretary General]

[Excerpt] If the terms of Lenin's metaphor are explained, a much clearer idea will be reached with respect to the vanguard and its role. The term "command staff" gives the meaning of a society split into two bands, which struggle between themselves and must necessarily be led (which explains the existence of class political parties). The parties which aspire to express the interests of one of the bands in the struggle on the "political plane," can be viewed in the sense of being the vanguard of those bands because they concentrate their aspirations and motives in a systematic and coherent action which goes beyond that which the class or classes propose by themselves. However, it is a "beyond" profoundly linked to the initial moment and is the logical and historical consequence of it.

The idea can be traced back to events prior to Lenin, such as the French Revolution, where it was obvious that the various political formations (Jacobins, Franciscans, Girondists, Fuldenses, Thermidorians) represented the interests, the concept of the world and the desires of certain social sectors, which led them to fight among themselves.

If the bourgeoisie, who were already a force against the absolute monarchs and condemned the feudal lords to parasitism, in their rise to power needed the help of intellectuals and thinkers to demolish the feudal order and discredit the institutions that supported it, the working class, which is condemned to make its assault on power beginning from zero, from the poverty and ignorance to which it is reduced, with much more reason has the need to organize itself and organize the exploited so as to wage its struggle with the help of a theory, which, as is known, comes "from abroad," and with the help of those who support it.

For us the problems of the vanguard passes through Lenin, for the same reasons that the study of poetry during the Spanish Golden Century passed through Gongora, and the "monolog" of the novel passes through Joyce, in the sense that he took the formula and developed it into a specific practice. It is not a matter of invoking some inexistent "Leninist principles of organization," because the only valid organizational principal would be the one which provides maximum effectiveness with the least effort. It is a matter of linking the concept to a phenomenon without which there is no possible Marxism: the class struggle.

The vanguard does not express vague trends but rather specific class interests and aspirations, if it is accepted that society is distributed throughout them and they are in permanent struggle.

The status as a vanguard is not an attribution that is granted all at once. On the contrary, as Petkoff says, it is an action in constant renewal, but which must be incessantly put to the test in the "class struggle." Outside of it there are cells, candidates for leadership, and visionaries or prophets, but not members of a coherent political plan founded on social reality rather than on the good intentions of the revolutionaries.

The MIR defines itself as a vanguard (not as "the" vanguard, which would be different) and tries to unite revolutionary theory to a specific practice and a class policy, which creates a unit which is different than its original components; it generates the "party" in which theory is translated into directives and political events, and those who contribute the theory submit to some rules of the game and a discipline as, and in the party the class also finds a way of translating its aspirations "politically," at the same time that it adopts the theory, modifying it incessantly with its struggle and the specific actions that it entails.

The party must guarantee the discussion of opinions, not only because of imperatives linked to the desire to show itself as being "human" but also because it is indissolubly united with its effectiveness as an organization and its chances for influencing events decisively. Actually, the alternative here is clearcut: either it is accepted that once in the world's history there was a thinking that assimilated all the determinations of the present and event of the future still to come, or this delirium is forgotten and it is accepted that it is impossible to attack new problems (and even old ones) without a prior and exhaustive debate, which to take place must be safeguarded, protected, and encouraged by the members of the organization.

The party must also be, as of now, the forerunner of the future society, of the socialist society whose construction is desired. This means that in it there must reign freedom, mutual respect and camaraderie among the members. In a society, whose men live harassed by the values of the ruling

classes, values determined by selfish and superficial motives which hide the tremendous truth of the injustice which reigns in that society, it is terribly subversive to create a community of men who are in some measure free, who maintain different relations among themselves on the basis of other values and motives opposed to those which are attempting to set themselves up as standards for human behavior.

The fact of considering ones self as a vanguard of a class, while it is a political formulation offering that class a historical plan (which in some way was contained in it), and while it is a matter of carrying out this plan through that class and with its help, does not mean that a party falls into the obstinacy of the "worker" concept. The Socialist possibility in Venezuela in some manner must involve the task of winning over the intermediate sectors, the urban infraproletariat (or those who are left out of the mainstream, if you prefer) and certain peasant classes (farm workers, poor peasants and small and medium farmers).

In our case, every Venezuelan who agrees with the MIR program and is willing to join organizedly in one of its structures, can be a member of our party. We also believe that to be a member of a revolutionary organization means a support which extends to practical events beyond being satisfied with the theoretical statements of a party. To be more explicit, we shall say that the only chance of being able to determine the theoretical direction of a political structure is to be a member of it.

If this is not done, this task will be left in the hands of a small group of leaders and what at first seemed a structure making more participation possible, will do nothing but doom the vast majority of the party to passivity and acceptance of anything that is done in the high circles of the organization. Those who do not exercise their actions as members, really have no influence in the decisions to be taken and are not immersed in the "life" of the party structure of which they suppose they are a specific expression.

We harbor no doubt whatsoever that the socialist possibility resides, in the final analysis, in the working class, and it is theoretically explained and accomplished under the terms of the thinking which intellectuals of nonproletarian origins established in the 19th Century--and which in some way maintains its continuity until today: Marxism. Of course we do not refer to a linear continuity, but rather to a true continuity made up of rejections and changes, rearrangements and opposed evaluations on the path to discovering the role for the exploited, and even the meaning of their lives.

Despite the fact that we support the Lenin idea of the vanguard for the foregoing reasons, and because we believe the notion to be strictly linked to the class struggle--without which it lacks sense--we are not its inflexible guardians. On the road of not handling ideas in purely general or

inherited terms, and with the desire to link them to the specific medium in which we are developing, we have for a long time expounded the idea of the MIR as an "open vanguard" in the sense that it not be an iron-bound requirement that total agreement with the party line be demanded of the supposed member, nor should he be forced to function as an integral part of a certain organization (a cell) of the party, and that he be able to do so elsewhere, maintaining, obviously, relations with our party. This is due to the specific circumstance of finding ourselves in the need of having to rebuild a party in the midst of a divided and scattered left, which is profoundly suspicious with respect to party machines, and willing, on the other hand, to link itself--through specific political development--to a specific plan.

When the scope, which the idea of vanguard has for us is explained, the type of party is profiled, which we decided to build on the basis of the aforementioned thinking about overall revolutionary problems. We are not trying to present our organization as a "model," and we understand that if the experiences we have undergone are of some use, it is because they are communicable; other revolutionaries, other socialists can make use of them. We did want to make it clear that our concept is radically different than the idea being handled by Petkoff--and his party with him--with respect to the question of the "vanguard," the class, the class struggle. It is a distinction we make because it is imperative, and because we do not want to forget the old truth that different organizational concepts lead to great political differences. Behind them is the entire idea of the possible course of events and the influence of the historical individuals who will advance them.

Party History to 1970

Caracas RESUMEN in Spanish 1 May 77 pp 11-22

[Interview by RESUMEN with Americo Martin, MIR Presidential Candidate; date, time and place not given]

[Excerpt] RESUMEN: Do you have an overall viewpoint on the agitated life of the MIR?

Americo Martin: I believe that the MIR has lived through three phases: the first phase is its emergence as an offshoot of Democratic Action [AD] at a time when Venezuela was being shaken by an economic recession and was close to the experience of the Cuban revolution....

RESUMEN: Pardon me, but the departure of the MIR from AD, is not due to the economic recession but to very deep ideological differences....

Americo Martin: Which came from the time of Perez Jimenez, but which, obviously, like any difference in the midst of a party, has to express itself through the final results, bringing about the abortion of a process which had been incubating slowly.

RESUMEN: Who were the most important MIR leaders at that time?

Americo Martin: A summary of the MIR: There are two trends which converge in the MIR, that which surrounds Domingo Alberto Rangel, which included the old opponents: Betancourt since the early days of the Perez Jimenez dictatorship and even in the time of Delgado Chalbaud, because of the search for culprits ever since the military coup; and that generation, which Octavio Lepage once called "a generation without teachers."

RESUMEN: Was Octavio Lepage in the MIR?

Americo Martin: He belonged to the AD left. At that time he spoke of a generation without teachers because, actually, we joined in 1952, when none of the teachers were present. Some of them were in prison and others were not in the country. That generation of 1952 is a complete trend, which goes beyond the borders of the AD, and is known as "the 1958 generation," precisely because it was then that it appeared in public, the country became acquainted with them. This was a very spiritually united generation, but also it had its own training. It had made a study of reality, which was absolutely necessary for formulating a tactic aimed at overthrowing Perez Jimenez. In second place, it was prone, inclined toward Marxism. It had very good relations with the Communist Party, which was the other clandestine organization, it was a very small group. You must know, and you must all know, that AD in 1956 had no more than 100 members in the entire country. Recently, its national organization secretary has just said that it has more than a million. At that time it had no more than 100: ourselves. There were leaders, who later appeared in legal life, but who were not members of the party. Well, that is the generation that appears in 1958 surrounded by a great prestige because of the downfall of Perez Jimenez, and which then joined that other, later forming the Movement of the Revolutionary Left. As in any splintering of a party, there are no purely substantive reasons, nor is there a single substance which serves as a bond inside the new party. Rather, at the side of this substantive element, there are other causes, different reasons for breaking with Romulo Betancourt or with the leadership of the party. This was the first MIR, a very large MIR, but because of that very reason, an MIR with different origins, sources and different ideas. Perhaps there lies the explanation why the MIR was the victim of so many divisions. When the first serious confrontations took place, the first stumbling blocks appeared on the road. This situation was overcome when President Betancourt took over the government because relations between us as a party with the government were very special. It may be recalled that at that time the "honeymoon" of National Unity still prevailed and we appeared as something alien to that agreement, even beyond the Communist Party. But our presence alone caused the Communist Party to assume a more militant attitude toward the government. Betancourt is not a man who deals with opponents as determined as we were and relations became very tense until they were broken off. We were forced into clandestinity. But here there appear those types of causes which go too far....of the "Cleopatra's nose" type, the famous editorial of IZQUIERDA, which was the one that went too far.

RESUMEN: The left of a newspaper?

Americo Martin: IZQUIERDA was our press organ, which reached sales of 80,000 copies per week. The editorial, as the entire country knows, was written by Gumersindo Rodriguez, although authorship was assumed by Domingo Alberto Rangel (because he had congressional immunity). This editorial spoke of insurrection, of the need for insurrection. In that way, we, from a constitutional opposition were forced into an insurrectional opposition in the midst of great worker upheavals. The situation of the worker movement was difficult because of the application of the "Law of Emergency Economic Measures" and also because of the government's economic policy, which was in disarray, affected by the tremendous fiscal crisis existing in the country because of a decrease in petroleum revenues, called for obtaining funds by a method traditionally used by these governments. This method is that of tax reform by means of which the popular sectors contribute to complement fiscal revenues. In that fashion, there appears the Law of Emergency Economic Measures, which reduced the income of public administration employees by 10 percent, and also there was a significant reduction in collective contracts signed per year, compared with the number signed during the government of Larrazabal. The overall average, I said this in Congress, was 700 contracts signed in the 5 years of Betancourt government, a figure which was a long ways from the figures of any of the other constitutional governments, or even the provisional government of Larrazabal and Sanabria. The situation reached such an extreme that civic popular insurrection became a civic-military insurrection, because the army had not been consolidated after the fall of Perez Jimenez either, and it also fell under the influence of the Cuban revolution. This civic-military insurrection culminated with the crisis caused by the military uprising of Carupano and Puerto Cabello, which led to the outlawing of the Communist Party and the MIR, led to our arrest and also to the defeat of the insurrection. I believe that this is an extremely important first phase, which significantly reduced our influence and our membership and took us to prison. Personally, I had to participate in a hunger strike in a fight for my release and that of 18 other political prisoners, which lasted 18 days and moved public opinion. This period ended in 1963, approximately. But the difference with respect to the first MIR was very great. We had begun with a membership of 150,000 persons and, although we made no count at that time, obviously we had been reduced to much less than half that number.

RESUMEN: Do you believe it was right, an error or an inevitable error to preach electoral abstention?

Americo Martin: The insurrection, as well as the abstention, was an error. That is an evaluation one makes from a more mature position one has reached with greater experience, but in a certain way it was inevitable because the MIR did not have a calm leadership and at the same time a single leadership.

RESUMEN: What do you mean when you say it did not have a "calm leadership?" The leader of the MIR was Domingo Alberto Rangel. Is he perhaps not calm?

Americo Martin: I am not going to speak of personalities nor of the characteristics of the leaders. I mean that the MIR leadership was not the natural result of the development of a party, but an aggregate of different trends and it was a representative but not real leadership. They were leaders who appeared publicly and had public influence but did not have sovereignty over their party and over the situation, so as to be able to direct policies and to know when to retreat when it is necessary to retreat and advance when it must be done. I believe the characteristics there were just the opposite. Retreats were made when it was necessary to advance and advances were made when retreats were called for. This was a serious error, including in the point of view, an error which cost us much. It was the same thing as the electoral abstention, which could have been the chance we needed to recover before public opinion and recover a certain possibility of open bonds with the country.

RESUMEN: It is important that we understand a process which is not very clear, and that is the moment when that generation of 1958, that is these AD youths: Moleiro, Henriquez, Perez Marcano and you begin to gradually replace the older ones such as in the case of Domingo Alberto Rangel, Saez Merido and so forth. I understand that in December 1963 Domingo Alberto Rangel not only lost his freedom, but he also lost the MIR because he opposed it from prison.

Americo Martin: Yes, at the end of 1963 there was a crisis in our relations. We met secretly in the country. I repeat what I said before, the drive of the masses had disappeared, it was a matter of....

RESUMEN: At the end of 1963, that is, after the elections?

Americo Martin: Because of the elections, on 30 September, some months before the elections, the legislators were arrested. That arrest led to our call for abstention, which was a second great error because even under those conditions we should have participated in the elections, but in any case this abstention led to the jailing of all the most veteran leaders of the MIR and then from prison they opposed our party. In 1964, with this generation which came as a replacement at the front of what was publicly and acknowledgedly the leadership of the MIR, our party began the guerrilla struggle, that is, we began the guerrilla struggle. A great question rises here, a great question to be asked. We acted, I believe, almost by inertia, we had become so committed to the struggle of these recent years that once the insurrection was decreed it was difficult to leave it. However, those who did leave it were the mass organizations because the economic situation became normal and the standard of living of the country rose. The economic situation of the country became stabilized. There was a greater profit margin with which to pay better contracts under those conditions. Obviously, the insurrection was going to continue but only as an insurrection of the vanguard, of the elite, of minorities. We could have stopped to

think and say that the insurrection as well as the concept of insurrection were mistaken, but we said that both were correct. To respond to that singular event of an insurrection without a country--"rice with chicken without the chicken" as Betancourt said jocosely--in response to that there appeared the system of ideas which was known later as "foquismo," which stated that insurrection, based on an axiom derived from some words by Che Guevara, did not always have to wait for conditions to be created, and that the "foco" could create them, that is, the will, the plethora of individual will could create them. This meant that the revolution appeared to be inverted. First there was the vanguard, which was going to carry out the struggle, and then came the struggle itself, the cart before the horse. In 1964, we, almost because of a passionate will and commitment, such as the one we had acquired during the previous years, adopted this policy, although with many reservations because it appeared to us that this "foquista" concept, filled with simplicity, replaced well-founded analyses with very simple analyses, and above all, replaced analyses of our situation with plans of a general nature which could serve for any era, and as a result were of no use, that is, in 1964 we initiated the second great phase of our party, the guerrilla phase, which ended in a second great failure. The failure of the guerrilla took place in 1968 and for that reason one could ask "How can it be that our party after having suffered not one but two "thermidors" (as I said in an article I wrote) was able to survive?" [Thermidor was the 11th month of the French Revolution calendar]. Normally the "thermidor", which means the response following a revolution which has failed, destroys the chances for the continuation of that process for years. The responses are always very violent. The "thermidor" which followed the unsuccessful French Revolution resulted in the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte and the revolution was lost forever during that century, at least in France. The "thermidor" is usually very harsh. We suffered our first "thermidor" in 1964, which reduced us to almost nothing, and then the second one in 1968. With two "thermidors" on our backs, we initiated the process of reconstruction in 1970, that is why it is not only a matter of 17 years, it is a matter of 17 well-tested and well-lived years. I could say that of those 17 years, 90 percent was a long road of errors, that is, error has covered 90 percent of our political behavior. However, the remaining 10 percent can be described by two ideas: the idea of the capacity to survive, and the idea of the capacity to recover, and that is what I think has made of the MIR a phenomenon on the rise, as can be confirmed by the union and mass elections of the country, when in 1970 we initiated the third great phase of our party. We discovered that despite the great efforts made, the country did not know us. We would go to the barrios and to the factories and the country did not remember us. This was inexorably so and it was enough to make one quit with bitterness in this Venezuela which had forgotten us.

RESUMEN: It would be interesting to learn when Americo Martin assumed the leadership of the MIR. I understand that in 1965 there was a secret meeting of the MIR in which Gen Simon Saez Merida, who at that time was

in prison, was appointed its secretary general. To substitute for him, Americo Martin exercised the functions of secretary general or supreme coordinator or whatever you wish.

Americo Martin: Yes. I have the highest concept of the integrity of Saez Merida, his honesty and even his political ability. But at that time he was in prison. The Second National MIR Conference met, which is the equivalent of a clandestine party congress, it elected the delegates clandestinely in the midst that very difficult situation, and a replacement leadership was elected to fill the vacancy left by Domingo Alberto Rangel. At my proposal, the secretary general appointed was Saez Merida. I personally have never suggested myself for the post, however, I, in fact appeared as the replacement for Saez Merida, or as the actual highest leader at the time. As of that time, that situation which lasted until 1970, began, a situation in which we began the reconstruction of the MIR and the election of the MIR authorities again at the Third National Conference. The party was semilegal at the time, we were not fully legal but we were tolerated enough so that we could take part in the government, something similar to what happened recently to the Spanish Communist Party. We selected new leaders headed by Saez Merido, until he retired recently for very respectable reasons, and once more a situation similar to that of past years was reestablished. I said that the reconstruction of the MIR was begun in 1970 and lasted until 1973, but in making a balance of 1970, there emerges one outstanding fact: of the 150,000 members we had in 1960, 10 years later we could only gather together for that conference, besides the delegates, some 100 members. They were all that was left, a harsh testimony of failure and the error committed. However, those 100 members were men filled with experience and political wisdom, because no matter how slow one may be, those 10 years of such rich, varied, and different experiences obviously had to produce a nucleus with which to begin a very important endeavor, and we began the reconstruction of the MIR and had to overcome many taboos, cliches.

RESUMEN: One of the taboos (I have been holding back until now in asking you this question which is very important), one of the taboos which I imagine you are aware you have had to overcome, perhaps more than a taboo, an image, a cliché that has been attached to you, is a somewhat bloody cliché. You bear somewhat the fame of having been within the insurrectional movement of 62, 63 and 64, of having been perhaps the most violent group, the bloodiest, responsible for the murders of policemen, burning of factories and of acts of violence of all types. Obviously you have reconsidered, we do not need to repeat that you admit, confess and are perfectly convinced that it was an error and that you had another route, another destiny, another style of acting at that time. However, is it true or not that you had to overcome that to have that fame removed from you?

Americo Martin: Yes it is. We still have that fight. I believe that it is a liability we bear, that is a liability that one assumes consciously, because when one has lived all those years one knows that the objectives

one has are not objectives of one day, they are objectives which must be patiently prepared, but there are two temptations or two dangers: the danger of persisting in an image which is not in keeping with ones conduct, and the danger of trying to free ones self very quickly of that label by jumping into the neighbor's pasture. That happened to more than one of the MIR members and they are in high leadership positions in the government party today. We had to adopt a line in which the main element was honesty, and we tried to rescue several values from all that unsuccessful and mistaken experience. The first was the value of perseverance in a country of unpersevering people; the second is the value of consistency in a country of inconsistent people; the third is the ability to work quietly, silently and systematically in a country like this which had no system, and the fourth, the capacity for renouncing; we renounced public positions in a country, where from childhood many people hope to be a public employee or official, in this elephant-like state stuffed with money. Those taboos, plus others, the taboos of language, the taboos of rites, we have had to overcome slowly so as to project an image which is in keeping with what we are today: a thoughtful party, a very mature party, and what is more a very tolerant party in facing discrepancies, ideas, the differences they may have.

Post-1970 Political History

Caracas BOHEMIA in Spanish 8-14 August 77 pp 40-42

[Article by Sergio Renato 'MIR Opens its Fist']

[Excerpt] At the end of 1970 no one would give a cent for the future of the MIR as a party. It emerged shattered from the insurrectional experience and its successive divisions throughout a decade, which gave it a sort of perpetual instability. However, to the amazement of all, the MIR remade itself as a party, and putting aside romantic postures, it entered into the world of Venezuelan politics. First, it participated in the 1973 elections, adopting the very clever decision to support the candidacy of Rangel at the last minute, which gave them an unexpected number of votes, which served to vanish any doubts as to its existence. From then on the MIR has undergone a growth without pause. It is the second largest force in the country among students and appears prepared to wrest preeminence from the Movement For Socialism [MAS] this very year.

Paying no attention to an overwhelming lead, the MIR has been winning in Universities and Highschools and is openly in the majority in the Los Andes University, the University of Carabobo, the highschools and institutes of technical education in the western part of the republic. But there is something worse: they have managed to change their numerical ratio with respect to MAS in the Central University of Venezuela from a terrible 8,500 to 572, which was the result of the 1973, to that of last year (where the MIR appeared as the second force in our highest house of studies) which was 5,500 to 3,900. Each year that passes, the MAS loses votes and the MIR wins them "without haste but without pauses," as was said by its secretary general, Moises Moleiro.

In the peasant movement it has been surprising that the MIR has drawn to its ranks the old farmers from other parties and is fighting with AD for the control of some peasant unions. There are states in the republic where these are the two existing forces, since the MAS is a city party and COPEI does not appear as active (as it should be in keeping with its interests) in the rural areas.

But where the things have been the best for the MIR people is in the worker movement. It won victories in Sutrahierro and in Orinoco Mining and Steel [SIDOR] over any other force of the left, coming in second behind AD in one case, and behind COPEI in the other. It won in the petroleum union of Lagunilla (which is really amazing) and it made an excellent showing in other petroleum unions. It won victories in various unions of the center of the republic totalling no less than 25. This leads it to proclaim itself the "Venezuelan Workers' Party," to emphasize the weakness of its rivals of the MAS in that and other areas.

In its rise, the MIR has the advantage over the MAS of having a better organization. Its advances are slow but solid and those of the MAS are quick but inconsistent and are subject to sudden and disastrous regressions. The MIR machinery is terrible efficient, as is demonstrated in the recent SIDOR elections where it received three times more votes than the MAS, which a few years ago was an undeniable force in this branch of industry. And there is another advantage: the identity of its leaders. Frequently one finds followers of Petkoff who describe Pompeyo Marquez as a "doddering old man," who accuse him of having advocated unity only for the purpose of defeating the nomination of Petkoff, and they forgot about it and they also accuse him of minor vanities. More frequently one hears others talk about "liquidating the social democrats," who, according to them, exist in their own party. This is not seen in the MIR. As an inheritance of their past, the present leaders of the MIR appear to be very close. MIR Secretary General Moises Moleiro, to whom in good part is owed the solidity and effectiveness of the "apparatus," maintains a deep friendship with the nominated candidate, with whose name are identified the most spectacular victories of the party. Both have undergone similar experiences for more than 15 years. The same happens with the most aggressive of the leaders of the MIR command: Hector Perez Marciano, or with the most malleable and diplomatic: Romulo Henriquez.

Another peculiarity of the Martin candidacy lies in the fact that he was one of the builders of the AD youth sector under the Perez Jimenez administration and a member of that party. The recent internal elections did not make everybody happy in the AD, and it has led to strange movements in the rank and file of the party who support the candidacy of Americo Martin. Actually, many rank and file members retain in their memory the hordes of youngsters who left the party because of profound differences with Romulo Betancourt, and who represented in some manner, the hope of a change in structures which accompanied the first years of AD. Martin was

an AD member and he performed excellently in the party before breaking with it, as did Moleiro, Perez Marcano, Henriquez and many others. If there is some force which may have an influence on the discontented rank and file of AD, it is the party, which having originated there, brings pleasant memories to the old fighters who are today forgotten for other interests.

MIR Presidential Candidate (Biography)

Caracas RESUMEN in Spanish 1 May 77 pp 11-22

[Excerpts] This phenomenon named Americo Martin was born 1 February 1938 and is today 39 years-of-age and married to Monica Venegas de Martin. In his veins runs Spanish, Chilean and Cumana Indian blood, but mainly it is Caracan blood. Americo Martin is a native of Caracas, who entered the Democratic Action Party in 1952. He is a member of that generation called the "generation of 58," which is a generation of the AD youth forged during the difficult times of the Marcos Perez Jimenez dictatorship. In 1960 the first division in the AD took place for clearly ideological reasons, in which Domingo Alberto Rangel, Gumersindo Rodriguez, Moises Moleiro, Romulo Henriquez, Hector Perez Marcano, Juan Manuel Sucre Trias, Hely Tineo, among others, separated from it. In 1962, after 2 years of violent opposition to the government of Romulo Betancourt, the government with Minister Carlos Andres Perez decided to outlaw the MIR and the Communist Party and it imprisoned the 13 legislators from the MIR and 7 from the Communist Party. Americo Martin at that time was president of the Federation of University Centers, a powerful and important position within the political activity of those days. Ten years later, in 1972, the government of President Rafael Caldera restored the legality of the MIR, also by decree, and the MIR began to act in open democratic politics. In those 10 years the men of the MIR went from violent opposition to guerrilla warfare, from the guerrillas to prison, from prison to clandestinity, from clandestinity to being semiofficially legalized and finally, in 1972, it once more emerged into public view. In that year very few Venezuelans would have given anything for the political life of the MIR as an institution, but its men, each of them intrinsically valuable, were already showing signs of the great things they could and should contribute to the country. The organization as such appeared to be dead. To the surprise of many, the MIR supported Dr Jose Vicente Rangel in the 1973 elections, obtaining slightly more than 50,000 votes, double the votes received under the same circumstances by Dr Pedro Tinoco. In those elections Americo Martin was elected deputy by a national quotient and the MIR after 14 years once more made its voice heard in the Venezuelan Congress.

POLITICAL RECORD OF AMERICO MARTIN

1953--Joins the youth organization of Democratic Action.

1957--Official in charge of the AD underground movement together with Hector Perez Marcano and Moises Moleiro.

1957--In representation of the youth of the AD he forms the clandestine University Front.

1957--Preparing for the student strike of 21 November he is arrested by National Security and then sent to the jail of Obispo.

1958--With the dictatorship overthrown, he joins the first legal bureau of the AD youth.

1960--Expelled from the AD together with Domingo Alberto Rangel for publishing articles in the press that the National Executive Committee considers as violating the party line. These expulsions initiated the division of the AD and the founding of the MIR.

1961--He is elected president of the Federation of University Centers.

1962--He is arrested by the Digipol together with Moises Moleiro and a large number of members of the MIR and the Communist Party of Venezuela. A hunger strike of 17 days duration is begun.

1963--He forms the clandestine Liberation Front together with Pompeyo Marquez and other personalities.

1965--In the II National Conference of the MIR he is elected to the political commission and replaces Saez Merida as secretary general after the latter was arrested.

1966--He joins the guerrillas together with Moises Moleiro, Hector Perez Marcano and other MIR leaders.

1967--Arrested at La Guaira aboard the ship "Zatruestegui" when he was traveling to the Tricontinental meeting in Havana. An intensive revision of the "foquista" and guerrilla policies had already been initiated.

1969--Pardoned together with other leaders by President Rafael Caldera.

1969--He writes the book "Marcuse and Venezuela."

1970--The MIR is legalized by decree after 10 years, which gives rise to its reincorporation into the democratic struggle. Americo Martin prepares proposals for the "work with the masses," which with the proposals by Saez Merida, Moises Moleiro and other leaders, make note of the errors of previous policy and accelerate the reconstruction of the MIR.

1973--An attempt is made against his life by a group of unionists who had been denounced by him.

1973--The IV National Conference. The MIR participates in the elections and Americo Martin heads the list of deputies for the Federal District (he is elected).

1975--He publishes the book "The Fat Fish."

1975--He personally directs several important union campaigns.

Rangel: MIR's First Choice

Caracas ULTIMAS NOTICIAS in Spanish 5 Oct 77 p 36

[Article by Miguel Acosta Saignes: The Candidate of the Left: Americo']

[Excerpt] Americo Martin has been presented as a candidate of the MIR. This is a party of the left with a varied and interesting history. It was born of the divisions within the Democratic Action Party, it took the path to the mountains in the decade of the 60's, and it came down when it was

convinced that it had been an armed phase within a political struggle and that it must continue it by other means. The change in tactics did not mean retreats from any fundamental principles in the concepts of the MIR. Its publications and the speeches and interviews of its leaders and members in general have maintained very fine points of view, not always in agreement with those of other parties of the left. The results of its efforts have been seen in the growing number of people who vote for the platforms of the MIR in the universities and the unions. The MIR has not been spared the withdrawal of some outstanding members and some very significant differences in political viewpoint in its ranks, but its electoral progress and membership has been increasing.

The candidacy of Americo Martin has emerged because of a contingent and singular event: in very different areas, the policies of the MIR and the MAS have differed and nevertheless, the MIR stated repeatedly for some months that it would support Jose Vicente Rangel if he were to accept the help they unconditionally offered him. This endeavor ceased when Jose Vicente Rangel chose the policy of the MAS of taking only their candidate to the elections. Then the MIR decided to nominate Americo Martin, a political leader with many attributes and much experience, as its own candidate. This has appeared strange to Venezuelan politicians. Why did the MIR decide to set for itself the simple choice of either Jose Vicente or Americo? Why, despite the political differences, which are easy to delimit between the MAS and the MIR, did the latter insist on supporting Jose Vicente Rangel? It must be noted that the MIR at no time said that it would support the MAS in its presidential candidacy but only that it would support Jose Vicente. Such a situation made it almost impossible for him to accept the support of the MIR because he, who is not a member of the MAS, however follows the MAS policy closely. Why, many ask themselves, did not the MIR at any time present the possibility of allying itself with one or more of the different parties of the MAS?

MAS, MIR: A Difference?

Caracas RESUMEN in Spanish 12 Dec 77 p 10

[Article by Americo Martin: "Why is There so Much Arguing on the Left?"]

[Excerpt] I believe that the MAS and the MIR express political tendencies and present different programs in the midst of a like trend. As parts of a whole, it seemed obvious that they would reach an electoral agreement. As different trends, it also seemed obvious that they would each state what belongs to each of them. An ambiguous, undifferentiated front could not express those two concepts and that is the reason that the MIR never favored a front which would muzzle it, such as some of those who do not listen to what we are saying are attributing to it. We have simply spoken of a rallying around one candidate, each party maintaining its own peculiarities.

It will take a long time for the MAS and the MIR, each in turn, to let go of what it has. No one could be mistaken in that respect. That is why I will not refer to the statements by Freddy Munoz in EL NACIONAL, where he tried to establish a difference between the two parties. It must be recognized that he no longer insists on condensing the electoral proposition of the MIR into a simple intrigue against the MAS, but he is not very successful when he tries to advance on the concept of the MIR with respect to the cardinal problem of democracy and socialism, as well as on other points which are also important. Munoz, from what has been seen, has not read us and prefers to "file" us in a comfortable pigeonhole, allowing the MAS to take over democracy and socialism, which is becoming rooted in the realities of the country, while we would remain closeted with our dogma, plotting black and sulfurous projects. But he must not be believed. The MIR says what it thinks and we are going to say it in a loud voice in the forthcoming campaign. Several friends have asked me to what this passion for debate within the left is due. They criticized the MAS for statements against the MIR, but they also reproached our admission that at least a confrontation of different political concepts and ideologies in the midst of the left was necessary. I would like to explain to them that it is not a matter of unhealthy desires for polemics. As it happens, socialism has not governed in the country, and neither can it limit itself to "perfecting" the thinking of the AD or COPEI, which have governed. Socialism supposes a new desire, a completely different point of departure, a different overall idea. Simone de Beauvoir said it eloquently: while the right "administers" that which exists, it is up to the left to create a new existence. That is why they are more pragmatic and this is their advantage, although they lack in-depth solutions. While we represent fundamental solutions, and this is our advantage, we still have to acquire a greater measure of the pragmatism which is necessary to direct the administration.

Whoever is obliged to offer a new society, should prepare the model. There is a certain propensity among men to present finished models in which there are answers to all questions. If in the left they are obliged to provide nothing less than a new society, it will be very difficult to escape from rational utopias and avoid the temptation of assuming the religious position of the prophet who sells his city of the sun.

From Utopia to Socialism as a practical possibility, is a long way. We are aware of that and try to learn our reality profoundly so that it will inspire the socialist policy and so that the socialist policy will naturally be in keeping with that reality, without arbitrary impositions, without authoritarianisms, dogmatic intolerances and without suppressing freedom.

But from one extreme to the other, at any intermediate point, would be the most diverse political groups. Some closer to dogma, to the point of departure, others already very far away. How to know where, and in whom, socialism is reconciled with freedom, theory with reality? I believe that whoever is aware of the nature of the problem is closer to the truth. No

one can be more in error than he who believes he has all the answers, with his bible and his prophets. In addition to being dogmatic, he has not even begun to be aware that he is.

That is why, my independent friends who reproach our inclination to a serious and well done debate, there should be constant discussions in the left, experiences must be opposed. It must be done with different trends and with respect to the internal. For us free expression of thought should be, and it already is, a vital source. We are democratic because we are socialists; we are antidogmatic because we are socialists; we defend the free expression of thought because we are socialists; we respect, on the other hand, the political construction of socialism in all countries because no one is the only depository of the truth, because there are no predestined human beings.

Possible Rapprochement with MAS

Caracas BOHEMIA in Spanish 12-18 Dec 77 pp 16-17

[Text] Moises Moleiro, secretary general of the MIR, went to Europe to recover from the illnesses that have afflicted him in the last two months. In February he will return to Venezuela and join in the electoral campaign. Before leaving, however, he met with MIR leaders Americo Martin, presidential candidate; Hector Perez Marcano, acting secretary general; Romulo Henriquez and Etanislao Gonzalez to discuss a new united offensive against the MAS. The agreement adopted was the following:

- A) Once more propose to the MAS the idea of "socialist unity," but under equal conditions, not on the basis that the MIR support the MAS in view of the deterioration of the latter party.
- B) Renunciation of the candidacies of Jose Vicente Rangel and Americo Martin and the selection of a candidate from neither party.
- C) A deadline of January for the MAS to make its decision. If it does not, the MIR will continue with its candidate Americo Martin until the end.

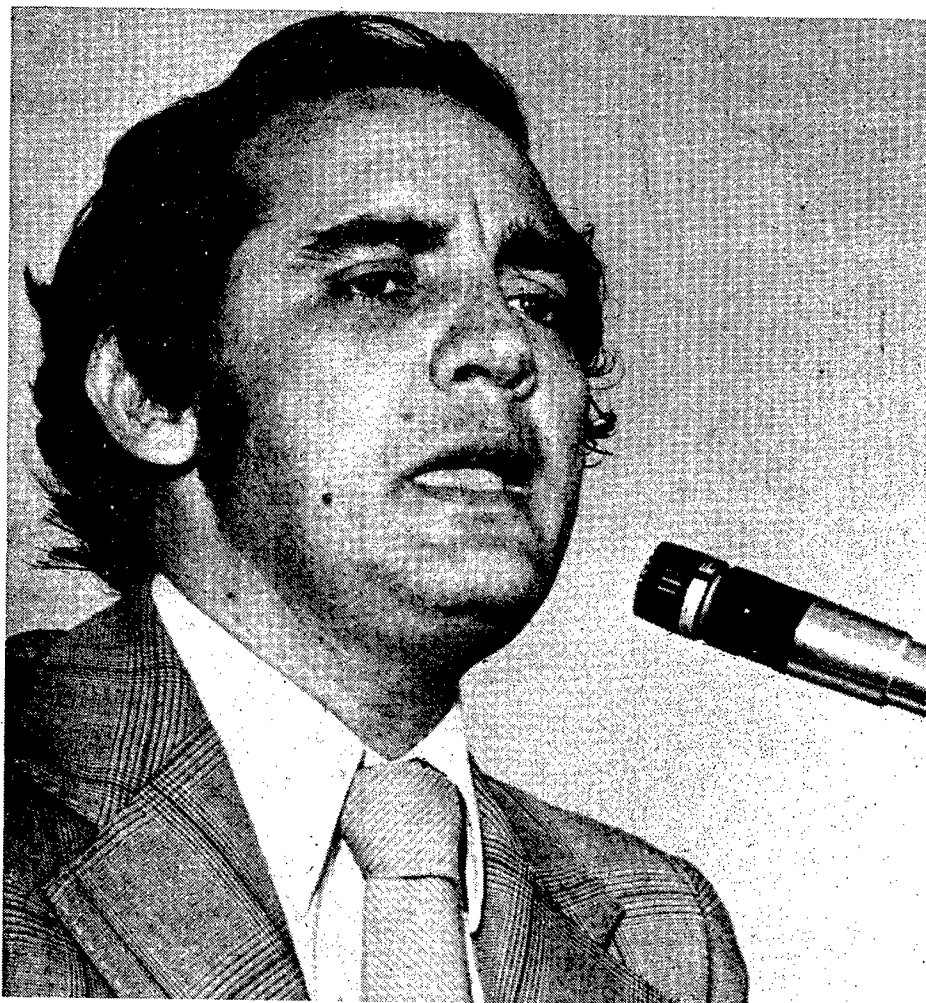
A Political Alternative

Caracas RESUMEN in Spanish 10 Apr 77 pp 24-26

[Published text of speech by Americo Martin; time and place not given]

[Excerpt] It has been some time since we of the MIR abandoned the Manichean view of things, according to which men are divided into villains and redeemers, into the capable and incapable and into the good and the bad. We do not believe ourselves to be redeemers, nor do we believe ourselves to be infallible, or the good against the bad who govern, or the villains who govern. We are going to remove those adjectives from the medium which does

not allow us to see things well. They represent one policy and we represent another. That is all. Ours is an alternative policy against their policy. That is why I have not come here this afternoon to quote or add figures. Theirs is a coherent, and even an intelligently conceived policy. I do not criticize that. I criticize them for being impotent. I criticize the orientation of official policy, an orientation which is arriving after 20 years of the handling of resources, 20 years of leadership of the country which is leading Venezuela to a serious social situation and to a long and serious failure. I say simply this: We represent an alternative, not an alternative of a detail of cutting expenses or of applying a partial policy there where they apply another. We represent a policy of change in the concept of development in Venezuela, a policy of service to the great majority, a policy without social debts, a policy which can do these two things and I cannot explain it here because I am not the president nor have I come to bring presidential messages here. It is a policy which considers and demonstrates that these two things are possible: developed based on satisfying the needs of the immense majority of the country, and at the same time, not with a populist and reformist criterion which acts against productivity but one based on high productivity. Socialism can, and does demonstrate that it not only satisfies the needs of the broad majorities of Venezuela, but also the needs of a rapid development and a high productivity.



MIR Presidential Candidate Americo Martin

MIR's Political Philosophy

Caracas RESUMEN in Spanish 1 May 77 pp 11-22

[Interview with Americo Martin, MIR presidential candidate, by RESUMEN; date, time and place not given]

[Excerpt] RESUMEN: Well, but up to now you have not told me what the MIR is going to do; what the MIR thinks.

Americo Martin: We are basing ourselves on the reality of Venezuela. The first thing we did was to make a diagnosis we have been reproducing to see what the potential of the Venezuelan workers is and what the potential of the Venezuelan mass movements potential is. This leads us to analyze the entire economic model presented by the government and how that model would affect the country, the immense majority of the country. But it is not only a matter of giving rhetorical answers. It was a matter of creating organizations, which would allow the replacement of the old union leaders and the old trade union leaders and produce new leaders capable, as you say, of fighting for the legitimate demands of a country which is being excluded from that dance of the millions in the Venezuela of our days, and of recent days. This means that we have formulated a policy which begins with a diagnosis of the present situation of the workers and of the Venezuela, which is, shall we say, "punished" by the economic model which has been imposed (and which has been in effect for 17 years) and has resulted in a social debit, as the government itself calls it, which is very high. That social debit must have an organizational expression, and I believe it is unlikely that a party may be found (today) which is working so steadily and seriously with this part of the country as we are doing. We have gone far beyond what we call the vanguard program method, which is that of asking for the moon for the workers or for the students, and at the same time far beyond the classical low-class reformism which has led the popular movements up to now. Then we are creating this theoretical concept on the basis of union democracy and participation by the workers, but a rejection of all forms of aggressive, violent struggle, conflict for the sake of conflict and the vanguard program theory, that is....

RESUMEN: Up to now you have said what you are not going to do, but I have not yet heard clearly what it is you are going to do. Moreover, I have the impression of having heard the proposition that the doctrinaire bases of a political organization are created as they go along. Is that called opportunism?

Americo Martin: No, opportunism is simply changing banners and forgetting principles...

RESUMEN: Opportunism is the 'ism' of opportunity.

Americo Martin: But it has a derogatory connotation in the sense that opportunism is to lay aside principles in keeping with situations created. We base ourselves on the Marxist criterion of an analysis of the situation. It is Marxist, it is creative in the sense that it is not a matter of ready answers. Marxism is not conceived by us as ready metaphysics of answers, truths acquired for all times. Marxism is a position toward problems, and certainly when we say Marxism we mean we have posed this problem to ourselves. It is not a matter, as you said a moment ago, of giving organizational, programatic and combat answers to the legitimate demands of that majority party of the country to which we referred a moment ago. It is a matter of facing the problem of whether we are for assistance and social reforms or whether we should know up to what point these demands hinder the progress of the country.

RESUMEN: Will you allow me a naive question: What is a political party?

Americo Martin: A political party is an organizational structure which represents certain social interests, regardless of what analysis we make of society, we know that there are opposed interests.

RESUMEN: This analysis of society is made in accordance with certain axiomatic values in the first place, and from that there are initiated a number of actions with respect to that social reality analyzed. This is done because of certain beliefs, which although they do not have the inflexibility of religious tenets, they do have a certain perfectly clear delineation, otherwise it would be a disguise which is changed each time that circumstances change. I repeat that this is not only because I believe that it is necessary to know what another person thinks, but also because it is necessary that the country know what to expect from you. We already know that you are not guerrillas; we know that you are not insurrectionists; we already know that you are willing to play the democratic game, now within these guidelines, within this very large, very vast area, there are different positions which can be assumed on the problems posed by a modern society such as the one in which we live and that which we aspire to live in. Do you have a clear idea on this? Turning the question around a little, we know exactly what the Communist Party thinks, and we know with perfect clarity what the Communist Party would do with that victory if it were to receive 51 percent of the votes. Does the same thing apply to the MIR?

Americo Martin: I do not think so because we are searching, just look...

RESUMEN: It seems very honest to me that you admit it!

Americo Martin: The party consists of parcels. I speak of parcels because there are opposed interests, social antagonisms. Those social antagonisms have to have organizational expressions. Therefore, the party is an organizational expression which gives a certain coherence, a theoretical foundation to a resistance or to a demand or to a nebulous unconscious interest by a part of the country; a rooted party, allow me a little moment....

RESUMEN: But the Society for the Protection of Animals is also that...

Americo Martin: No, the Society for the Protection of Animals refers to secondary interests. But what is involved in a political party is the need to lead the state, that means to direct it all, direct the state, that is, politics is the activity which refers to the state....

RESUMEN: Well, but that is because for you the primary thing is the state.

Americo Martin: For any political party, which defends social interests, the main thing is to arrive at power, to govern the state and lead those interests to victory...

RESUMEN: No, because if you ask a member of COPEI that, he will tell you that the objective of all is the "common good..."

Americo Martin: Well, you know that this is purely rhetoric. The interests of the COPEI Party, like the interests of any party, is to lead society from the state government, that is obvious. Now, clearly, the "common good" is an objective of any well-intentioned, honest person, therefore, he has to seek the "common good." But the problem is, what are the interests to which COPEI responds? This can be seen in its programs, in its political activity, in its attempts at government, how it has governed, and in favor of which interests it has governed.

RESUMEN: Well, you are demonstrating that in this process of maturing, which is obvious, you still have a little ways to go because a democratic society is not governed only from the state. If you do not believe that you are not a democrat and you are not a politician.

Americo Martin: Well, look, it is not governed from the state but that is the command post of society and we are particularly speaking (do not forget this) about Venezuela. You know very well that if in any country the state controls social life--to our misfortune--that state is Venezuela. The Venezuelan state has control over the lives and actions of all Venezuelans. That is why the unthinking manner in which public resources are handled is something that is felt by the furthest peasant in Urena.

RESUMEN: I agree with that. And you have touched a point, or we have reached a very important point. I ask myself: What more does a party like the MIR have to do in Venezuela, country in which more than half of everything there is to be done is done by the state (It has just been said with great pride by a great former minister, former MIR member, Dr Gumersindo Rodriguez, in the National Congress that this government has brought the greatest part of the economic activity of the country into the hands of the state)? Now, what more does a party, which has the vocation and prospects for working from the state, have to do? What more is it going to nationalize if there is nothing more left to nationalize?

Americo Martin: You have said something important. I have the good fortune that during the second half of May my book is going to appear. It is titled "I Am the State," and in it our position is analyzed, at least my point of view toward the state. I believe that the state is an inevitable unnatural growth. Every state has a certain tendency to create its bureaucracy of officials, particularly a modern state where problems are dealt with at a higher technical level, with officials not subject to control. There are two sources of power, and we use, not the Marxist point of view but the liberal point of view of the century of light that the source of power is based on the fact that sovereignty resides in the people and that the representatives who lead society are elected by the people, but that they do not usurp power. Sovereignty cannot be delegated.

And since sovereignty is transmitted by the agencies of the people's power, according to the national constitution, there is introduced into the constitution the idea of "responsibility," that is, the state is "responsible" to those who hold sovereignty. But there are some public servants, officials, who do not have the authority which is obtained by means of elections, the employees or public officials who are like an extension of the power of the president of the republic. The officials of the public administration do not have the authority of the legislative representatives, however, in the Venezuela of today we all know that these gentlemen who do not have any credentials as good as those of the legislative representatives, are the ones who have all the power in their hands. The tendency of the state is to create a powerful bureaucracy which is more and more arrogant, more and more uncontrollable, and less and less legitimate, which has a very clear tendency to administer resources which do not belong to it, to waste resources, and to rule over the nation of public servants, as they are known in the doctrine of Administrative Law (I refer to the Administrative Law of the western law schools). They become public tyrants and that is why a Venezuelan who goes to the wicket of a public office finds that he is being treated as if they were doing him a favor and not a public service. We have to save democracy, even representative democracy, that is what I say in the book. We believe in something more than representative democracy, we believe in the democracy of socialism: a state which is very participatory. However, the democracy of socialism, far from what people believe, is not believed by us as a powerful benefactor state, which provides welfare and distributes welfare among everyone. No, we believe it is a constant participation in the functions of the administration and in the functions voted upon by the citizens. That is the way we understand democracy, that is, that in the socialist state it is supposed (and this has not happened yet) that the bureaucracy loses ground. This does not mean it disappears because bureaucracy is a necessary class, particularly because it has a specialized knowledge of all the affairs of the state, but its power is reduced so as to increase the power of participation by the society organized into mass movements, mass organizations or into organizations of any type. That is the way we understand it, including under representative democracy. We are not opposing representative democracy but are rather trying to save it from the rule of the bureaucracy of the state. You are aware, and we are all aware, that congress is losing its functions, that it is a very weak and subordinated power. Why has it lost functions? Because, as we all know, that the real functions, the functions of governing, are concentrated primarily in the hands of the state bureaucracy and not in the hands of elected representatives. It is enough to listen to Minister Hurtado, when he delivers a message on the annual budget, for example, he listens almost yawning to the legislative speeches, he mocks the legislative speeches, because he has all the specific information to prepare his plan and the congress simply fulfills a democratic ritual but changes nothing. It restricts itself to reassigning allocations, and it restricts itself to making secondary cuts, which do not affect the orientation of the plans. The Memoranda of the Ministers are not even discussed anymore, that means that the congress is more and more performing decorative

functions and this conspires against representative democracy, and we wish to expand the function of all the legislative agencies, and we wish to broaden the rights of the citizens so that as long as more organizations are created to increase participation by the citizens in elections and administrative decisions, we support them, even under a nonsocialist state, but even more so in a socialist state. Therefore, even in my book, we have established a conceptual parallel, bureaucracy is paired with dictatorial tendency, and democracy with a participatory tendency, which means that bureaucratic socialism is a dictatorial proclivity, not democratic, and neither is a capitalist state which is excessively bureaucratic. It does not have the seeds of democracy. Do not forget that democracy, the democratic state, is a configuration, a model created by the ideologs of capitalism, the century of light, the 17th Century. Therefore, to believe that socialism opposes democracy is to accept the idea that socialism is bureaucratic and therefore despotic and dictatorial.

Position on Labor

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 19 Sep 77 Sec D p 16

[Text] The III Worker-Union Congress of the MIR concluded, backing the presidential candidacy of Americo Martin and making a call for unity to the union and union local leaderships of all political parties without exception, as well as to the Confederation of Workers of Venezuela [CTV] and the Unified Workers Federation of Venezuela [CUTV] to organize a great class campaign in support of a general wage increase of no less than 40 percent.

The III Worker-Union Congress of the MIR also advocated the approval of a sliding wage scale as one of the few measures which exist to counteract the terrible effects inflation has on Venezuelan workers.

In other of its agreements, the III Congress declared its support for the workers of Colombia, who are now involved in difficult struggles for their very logical hopes, and it expressed its support for Panamanian workers, who are committed to the struggle for the independence and sovereignty of the Canal Zone.

In examining the cost of living, the final document of the congress says that imported inflation has already had its critical moment in the country but now domestic inflation is what is harming the working class.

With respect to absenteeism, it points out that physical and working environments in which the worker operates, social problems (transportation and housing) and food, are a reflection of some conditions which do not provide him with any incentive.

As improvement goals to be pursued within their immediate efforts, the MIR workers established the following: full stability, reduction of the work day, participation in management of companies, wage systems which will control the inflationary situation, respect for union decisions and application of the tabulator [as published].

As chief organizers of this congress, as well as being the general leaders, were Garasimo Chavez, who presided over it; Maximiano Guerra, Heli Saul Puchi, Jesus Maria Pachacho, Angel Calderon, Rafael Humberte Romero, Hose Tesorero, Rafael Casterlena, Martin Rodriguez and Erasmo Gutierrez.

Position on Women's Rights

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 24 Oct 77 Sec D p 4

[Text] The II National Assembly of Women of the MIR, which ended its deliberations yesterday afternoon at Central Park, agreed to demand the immediate discussion of the plan for reforming the Civil Code, which is now in the Domestic Policy Commission of the Chamber of Deputies.

Speakers were presidential candidate Americo Martin and Nora Uribe, chief of the national women's commission of the MIR, who said that "the massive incorporation of Venezuelan women into the struggle for their demands and a greater participation in the mass organizations must take place."

"It is necessary," added Nora Uribe, "that the struggle for absolute equality in juridical, legal, educational, and labor matters be taken up by all women. The experience of the projects for the reform of the Civil Code, which have been 'deposited' in the Domestic Policy Commission of the Chamber of Deputies for more than a year is an example of what the Venezuelan women must face."

She then emphasized the importance of women in the struggle for attaining better standards of living and for greater participation in the organs of political decision. She concluded by making an appeal to all the women of the country to participate in the struggles for the transformation of Venezuelan society.

Following are transcripts of the propositions approved by the II National Assembly of Women of the MIR yesterday afternoon, shortly before ending its deliberations:

1. Urge the National Congress and the minister of education that when the Education Law is discussed there be included programs which allow a process of equality between men and women. Those programs must produce both men and women who are equally skilled, not only for participation in the productive process but also in home activities.

2. Relationships between the couple and their children is an important fact in the life of a woman, however, this must not lead her to postpone or neglect other activities, which make up part of her life, such as the educational or political aspect.
3. An appeal to the Venezuelan Children's Congress with respect to the use being made of those children under 18 years-of-age and the proliferation of beauty contests, which are presented frequently on television.
4. Denounce the use made of children by the media, particularly television, by means of commercials and their presence in musical programs where acts which are not in keeping with their age are presented. Also to denounce the manner in which the media imbues children with individualism and violence and subjects them to material values.
5. Denounce the manipulation and use being attempted of the first exposition of Venezuelan women organized by entrepreneurs (FEDECAMARAS). This exposition has been scheduled to be held at the Palace of Industries.
6. Demand the immediate discussion of the projects for reforming the Civil Code, which are in the Domestic Policy Commission of the Chamber of Deputies.
7. Denounce noncompliance by businessmen and managers, in the state as well as the private sector, with specific laws for women, particularly the creation of child day-care centers.

Positions on Culture, Politics

Caracas ULTIMAS NOTICIAS in Spanish 11 Dec 77 pp 6-7

[Article by Beatriz Navas: "Three Candidates Speak out on Culture"]

[Text] We asked the young deputy what his concept on culture is and he replied:

"There is a definition commonly used, as widespread as it is false, which links cultural events exclusively with fine arts. It is the belief that culture is restricted to dancing ballet, playing the piano a little bit and mangling a few phrases in French. There is another belief, which is as widespread as the foregoing, which simplifies cultural events, reducing it to a process of accumulation of knowledge. That is what makes some say with respect and awe that a certain somebody is "very cultured" because he has accumulated information, figures, events and anecdotes.

Americo Martin expressed his very subjective concept on the subject. "Culture is much more than that which I spoke of before. Contemporary anthropologists all agree that culture is the sum total of that which has been created by man. If we view his travels on the earth," added the MIR presidential candidate, "and we consult, even briefly, the history of the species, it will be revealed to us that "Culture" is the entire complex of manifestations

according to which man produces and reproduces his life on the planet. Obviously, there are manifestations whereby the human being "brings out the best in himself," to speak in the happy phrases of Malraux, which allows one to summarize and synthesize keys by means of which many express the peculiar, strange and terrible adventure of the life of his species on the earth: the gothic cathedrals, the renaissance palaces and the Greek temples.

"In general lines," emphasized Martin, "culture ranges from the manifestations of art to the technological advances, from the cosmovisions, by means of which someone believed it possible to determine the place of man in the Universe, to the culinary art."

[Question] "And speaking of culture, do you believe that it is a class privilege of the capitalist society?"

[Americo Martin] All property is a class privilege in the capitalist society. That which is produced by man is tied to an aberrant, unjust and unequal distribution and participation. That privilege is nested within the very innermost being of capitalism and as long as this order exists, it is impossible that this will not happen in the productive process, based on the work of others, to the highest manifestations of the spirit and in the access to education and the dissemination of knowledge. Material production is based on depriving the workers of all ownership of the means of production. Intellectual production is subordinated to the interests of the ruling class, which tries to weaken it, ideologize it and falsify it.

[Question] What type of culture do you suggest?

[Americo Martin] From my political position it is not enough to suggest a political culture. It is not enough to amend the evils, abuses, excesses and lacks of a society which reproduces its aberrations, making up an anti-human order. A different cultural policy can only be sustained if a different social economic order is created, which is opposed to this one and different in every way.

It must be a socialist order where the workers own the means of production and there exists the most absolute freedom for the exercise of control and participation in the decisions of society. Those are the preconditions for a cultural policy, since, as we have said, the concept is much broader than what it appears to be at first sight.

"The new society designs the forms and means for dealing with objects which do not have to do with partial or sectoral class interests, and, at least in the socialism we propose, neither do they have to do with the interests of the bureaucratic apparatus which decides on the fate of the population. Culture is enriched to the degree that many wills, which today are buried as a result of alienation and injustice, participate in development."

Elsewhere, Americo Martin said that to isolatedly suggest a cultural policy is useless. "In our country," he added, "culture is not only a privilege, but because of reasons deriving from the interference of the ruling classes, it is a grotesque falsification. By means of the media, gross and common falsifications are imposed on Venezuelans, which tend to reproduce established disorder, originate models and patterns which are alien to their historical existence, sponsoring a sort of general schizophrenic explanation which even has the power of diluting a value as widespread as the language of their true sources and removing its content, turning it into a stupid ritualism."

"We are not Communists"

Caracas BOHEMIA in Spanish 18-24 Oct 77 pp 38-41

[Interview with Moises Moleiro, secretary general of the MIR, by Mariano Salazar of Bohemia; time and place not given]

[Excerpts] [Question] At this time there is a polemic as to which parties are really communist in Venezuela. What is the present status of the MIR and the MAS, are they or are they not communist?

[Answer] Well, I believe that it is a problem which is not even very strongly posed in public opinion, but is part of an old mania of Romulo Betancourt, which in some way distracts the attention of the Venezuelans from present serious problems toward definitions of this type. I believe the communist parties in Venezuela are those which in some way carry that name and acknowledge themselves as such. The MIR is a Marxist-Leninist-Socialist party. The MAS has said it is a socialist party. It has denied that it is a Marxist-Leninist party. Communist parties are those which call themselves that: communist.

[Question] Are the communist parties only the Marxist-Leninist?

[Answer] Communist parties are those which call themselves or acknowledge themselves communists.

[Question] Do you acknowledge being a communist party?

[Answer] We acknowledge ourselves to be a Marxist-Leninist party. That about communist is still doubtful. We believe that in Venezuela the task of building a new order has to be based not only on Marxism-Leninism itself, but a great role must be given to the national categories, to that which is Venezuelan. We believe that socialism is superior to capitalism. We maintain relationships of critical solidarity with the socialist countries and we describe ourselves as a Venezuelan Marxist-Leninist party. If what is being pointed out by calling a party communist is that it obeys foreign powers or instructions which are alien to our nation, we are not a communist party. If what is meant is that it aspires to a different social

system than the one in which exploitation, oppression and inequality is exercised, we would be a communist party. But it is well to explain that when Betancourt spoke of a communist party, in some way he tries to insinuate that they are parties which are alien to the country, which receive instructions from abroad.

[Question] Pardon me, but when Betancourt insinuates this, he is not talking about the MIR.

[Answer] One of Betancourt's old manias was that of attacking the MIR. I do not know whether it is nostalgia because the MIR left Democratic Action. In any case it is impossible that Betancourt refrained from naming the MIR for some disparaging motive, for the simple reason that the MIR has won some very important union elections such as that of the Petroleum Workers Union of Lagunillas, the Iron Union, and in textiles, and Betancourt is not unaware of that. Moreover, we have won significant student elections. I believe that in some way Betancourt has a great interest in emphasizing that the MAS is a communist party and he referred to the parties which originated since the Communist Party of Venezuela [PCV] did, that is the MAS, PCV and Vanguardia, and the MIR does not have those origins. Now, the MAS has denied being a communist party and I do not believe that the MAS is such a foolish party that it is a disguised communist party. That is in keeping with a concept of communism worthy of a spy novel. If the MAS denies that it is, it is because it is not.

[Question] But is it not a matter of trying to build up the MAS with those anti-Marxist statements and that policy which has been unleashed?

[Answer] I believe that the policy builds up the MAS despite the desires of Betancourt. I believe that the ideal country for Betancourt is a country where half of the Venezuelans are members of AD and the other half members of COPEI. The problem is that the cleverness of Betancourt takes a back seat to his obsessions--and that is not new--and the anticommunism of Betancourt is an obsession. When Betancourt faces one of his resentments, one of his manias, he ceases to be a clever politician. It is a matter of life and death for the COPEI to be different than the government and that in some way it propose a different option.

[Question] You spoke at the beginning, when I was asking you about the differences between Marxism-Leninism and Communism--What are the differences between Marxism-Leninism and Socialism?

[Answer] One of our differences with the MAS, is that we do not believe in a socialism that is not Marxist-Leninist. We do not believe in that. We do believe that socialism should have a family name. We cannot simply talk about socialism, we must first of all speak of proletarian socialism because in some way that has the connotation of the class struggle. We must speak of revolutionary socialism even if it is only to distinguish the socialism we preach from all sorts of Christian Socialists, Social Democrats and all those types of strange socialisms through which nothing has been done but consolidate the rule of the bourgeoisie in power.

[Question] Then the MAS-MIR relationship is similar to the AD-COPEI relationship?

[Answer] No. There are no great political differences between the MAS and the MIR. There is a clear common objective, very clear and that is that of constructing a communist society. Between the AD and the COPEI the clarity of the common objective is that of maintaining the existence of a bourgeois society. However, there is no reason for denying that there are differences between the MAS and the MIR, and that the thing is to try to come together. That is the civilized use of the difference within the left. After all it appears, for example, that there can be as many differences between David Morales and Pinerua as there are between the MAS and the MIR, and they belong to the same party.

[Question] But you are sure that in the short term the left in Venezuela is not going to do anything at all, that those are not elections, that the AD and COPEI have already won?

[Answer] That would be the truth if in some way evolution in Venezuela were a calm accumulation of events and did not pass through critical periods. If inflation continues in Venezuela, and if the promises of the governments continue unkept, and unemployment increases; if the left does not commit the errors of the 60's again, isolating itself from the masses, inventing a war that was not supported; if all those factors unite, then surely the evolution of the left will be very rapid.

[Question] And why have you not overcome all these points up to now?

[Answer] Because the left in Venezuela comes from a great defeat. The true history of the left in Venezuela began in 1968. The left was absolutely defeated. This is a movement which hurled itself toward the seizure of power, which had the blessed daring of trying to capture power, but doing it in the midst of errors of such magnitude that everything ended up in total defeat. The MIR today is, for example, around 100 times as large as it was in 1970 and 10 times larger than what it was in 1974. The same thing applies to the MAS. This recovery is accentuated as the governments which are not of the left and who are opposed to it, make errors. Therefore, it seems to me to be a bit risky to maintain that it is not going to play a role. For some time the majority of the Venezuelans will not belong to the left, but that conversion will be more rapid than it would appear at first glance.

[Question] And you do not believe for the moment that in the next elections the Venezuelans are going to forget the death of Jorge Rodriguez, specifically?

[Answer] It is possible. But what is unlikely is that the million and one half unemployed are going to forget that they are jobless. In the coming elections, if the left acts intelligently and becomes that rallying point

which I so maniacally ascribe to it, the left can emerge as important force in the country, as a force which at least will force the dialog to be among three: AD, COPEI and the left, and not as it is now.

[Question] The left has not been acting intelligently and it is not acting intelligently at this time.

[Answer] All serious politics should exclude those great errors committed. If the left, which since 1961 controlled the Chamber of Deputies, which was gaining in the worker movement, and in addition, controlled the student movement, and which even had prestige in the armed force, had not decided on the unfortunate idea of inventing a war, falling into the trap of provocations spread for it by Betancourt, the history of the country would have been different.

[Question] Well, but you admit that the MAS is a greater force.

[Answer] That the MAS is a larger party? Yes, it is a larger party. That is obvious. What happens is that the MAS occupies a role within the spectrum of the left that the MIR did not want. The MIR occupies another place, another role.

[Question] And you are proud of that?

[Answer] Of course! We believe that radical solutions are needed in Venezuela.

[Question] The fact that you have penetrated into areas which have been traditionally controlled by the AD, and this together with the penetration which the MAS has in other areas where the MIR is not received--could you compensate and could you create a greater receptivity for the left in the forthcoming elections? Is that what you have studied?

[Answer] Exactly! It could become a very important advance of the left in the next elections.

[Question] The electoral period will be what shall determine a pact between the left or an agreement among the lefts, but only motivated by a single candidate. However, after that electoral moment, the division in the left will continue because there are no differences of form but in depth differences.

[Answer] Yes, they are profound. What happens is that we aspire to have some type of coexistence despite our differences. The Venezuelan Left has to reach a degree of culture and civilization necessary for coexistence despite their differences because a rank and file member of the MAS and the MIR, or any other party of the left, is not indifferent to the fact, for example, that in the area of iron, the MIR was second and the MAS was third and that if the MIR and MAS had merged, they would have defeated AD resoundingly.

[Question] Does the fact that the MIR proclaims a unity pact and makes real efforts for obtaining unity of the left truly mean that you are in a disadvantageous situation with respect to the other parties of the left and against the other parties of the opposition in general?

[Answer] Well, that is more than doubtful. I think that numerically the MIR, if it is at a disadvantage with respect to the MAS, if perhaps now... politically it is not at a disadvantage with respect to any party. It traced itself a policy, and on the basis of this policy, it has been doing well. Because unity is not sought only for the benefit of the MIR but so that the vague discontent which exists can become an option of the left. The voter has to see somehow that the left is one option, that the left is a pole of attraction and an alternative. And if a candidate from the MAS, one from the People's Electoral Movement MEP, one from the Communist Party and one from the MIR, compete in the elections, the voter is going to see absolutely none of that.

[Question] Well, but the MAS says that they are the alternative for power.

[Answer] Each party says that but it is impossible to ignore the presence of the other parties. I believe that the official policy of the MAS up to the end of last year was to officially ignore the existence of the MIR. It is now changing it because it is a policy which did not bear fruit. Now that rallying point which I say has to be around the MAS-MIR and around an independent candidate, has no reason to be closed to other possibilities, because discontent in Venezuela is manifested in many ways and in various degrees of radicalization.

[Question] What is the position of the MAS toward you at this time? Are there talks?

[Answer] We know that in the MAS there are parties which support the Petkoff candidacy. They believe that the MAS does not need allies and that a purely MAS alternative could achieve spectacular support in the elections. And there are those who believe that this is not so and they maintain as necessary a policy of understanding with at least one sector of the left, and that sector of the left appears to be the MIR. They also think, however, that the alternative to be created goes beyond any party of the left considered individually.

[Question] Then the MIR by proposing the candidacy of Jose Vicente Rangel also proposes to divide the MAS?

[Answer] We, by nominating Rangel as a unity option, are not aiming at the division of the MAS. It seems to us to be very bad for the left in general that the MAS be divided, although there does not appear to be any symptom of that. We do believe it is necessary to encourage the idea in the MAS that by itself it is not an alternative against the government and that there are forces on the left which can help to create that alternative.

A joining of forces of the MAS-MIR is important. Now that depends a great deal on what the MAS does, on how the MAS wants to do things.

[Question] Are there conversations between the two parties?

[Answer] Yes. We have talked with MAS leaders but only on bases which up to now have been ethereal, on the basis that it is not good to continue the mass fronts separately, that important elections are coming in the petroleum cities and that if the two parties go together they will obtain better results. We have had talks on that level. It has seemed to be a problem of tact for us not to talk about the candidate problems of the MAS because the MAS has not made a resolution on that policy. Therefore, it appears that the MIR is sticking its nose into a problem which does not concern it.

[Question] With respect to the candidacy of an independent. You have decided that it should be Jose Vicente Rangel. Would you not support Diego Arria as a presidential candidate?

[Answer] Not Diego Arria because he is not of the left. We have to have a candidate of the left not a businessman.



MIR Secretary General Moises Moleiro

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VENEZUELA

POLITICAL LEFT REACTS TO MAS UNIFICATION PROPOSAL

Text of MAS Proposal

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 27 Dec 77 Sec D p 1

[Text] The general secretary of MAS [Movement for Socialism], Senator Pompeyo Marquez, yesterday [26 December 1977] invited his colleagues from the MEP [People's Electoral Movement], MIR [Movement of the Revolutionary Left], and the PCV [Communist Party of Venezuela] to a joint meeting to be held early in January 1978 in order to exchange impressions regarding two fundamental questions: The search for procedures and arrangements that would make it possible to improve relations among the various elements that make up the Venezuelan left, and a study of the possibilities of blocking out a common stance on problems affecting the broad popular masses and the country.

In a letter addressed to the general secretaries of the MEP, MIR, and PCV, Senator Marquez explained that the invitation restricted to the parties mentioned does not imply a discriminatory attitude toward other groups or personalities of the left but rather that it is limited for the time being to those organizations that are putting up a presidential candidate.

Below is the text of the letter of Pompeyo Marquez to the other general secretaries of the groups of the left:

[Text of the Letter]

Gentlemen, General Secretary of the MEP, General Secretary of the MIR, General Secretary of the PCV:

The Executive Committee of the MAS considered it appropriate to address itself to you to propose a joint meeting early in January 1978 for the purpose of exchanging impressions regarding matters that we deem to be important.

1. The search for procedures and arrangements that would make it possible to improve relations among the various elements that make up the Venezuelan

left today, independently of electoral positions and more concretely of the presidential candidacies which in your cases and that of MAS we are proposing to our people.

2. A study of the possibilities of developing a common stance on problems affecting the broad popular masses and the country, among which those relating to democratic freedoms, trade union rights, oil questions, education, the cost of living, and the public services occupy a priority position. It is obvious that in this field of defense of the interests of the majority sectors of wage-earning workers of the city and the rural sector, of science and culture, and of the intermediate groups as well as in everything that is related to independent, harmonious, and self-sustaining economic development, numerous overlapping points can be found that would facilitate those joint actions. This in turn would contribute to a substantial improvement in relations among the various participants, making you partners in a common effort and some identical objectives.

We have restricted this invitation for the time being to those organizations that are putting up a presidential candidate but in no case are we in favor of a discriminatory attitude toward other groups or personalities of the left. We believe that you gentlemen are very familiar with our thinking in the sense that the potentials of those struggling for social change cannot be confined exclusively to what is known today as the left, and far less can the potentials of a movement which could open to the country the prospects of being ruled and administered in a different manner from that in which the AD [Democratic Action] and COPEI [Social Christian Party] have ruled these past 20 years. However, we believe that this initial meeting would be more effective and useful in the form that we propose.

We attach for your perusal a copy of our latest declaration in which we broach, in very general and synthetic form, the two points to which we have referred.

We could decide the practical matter of coordinating the day, hour, and location of this meeting immediately following the end-of-year holidays.

With socialist greetings,

Sincerely yours,
Pompeyo Marquez,
General Secretary,
for the Executive Committee
of MAS.

Ortega Diaz, PCV

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 26 Dec 77 Sec A p 4

[Article by Pedro Ortega Diaz]

[Text] The central goal of unity of the left and the progressive sectors is the removal and replacement of the oligarchic groups and their governments in the leadership of the country. The struggle to forge this unity does not begin or end with the elections. Rather, it is ongoing and has to occur before and subsequent to these elections.

This unity should involve all the revolutionary or progressive parties and sectors which accept the idea that Venezuela has to achieve genuine economic and political independence, breaking the bonds which keep us subjected to foreign capital and the groups associated with it.

It is a unity of wills among groups which have different concepts of social development. It involves the following:

1. That we all gather around those fundamental goals which unite us.
2. That no party try to impose its exclusive points of view on others and that it not stress what divides us.
3. The maintenance of a high-level and respectful discussion in face of the different opinions.

Let us understand that the formation of a force of this type will ease the indispensable effort to make the masses and the people who today vote for the leadership of the AD and COPEI grasp where their genuine interests lie and where their position in the struggle is located.

As regards the elections, within this frame of reference we Venezuelan communists launched a public appeal to present a presidential candidate of all groups and a single electoral platform for the 1978 elections.

In the present situation of deterioration of the system with the high cost of living, administrative corruption, the incapacity to solve the problems of forsaken children, poor medical-hospital care, the shortage of foodstuffs, the chaos of the transportation system, inadequate education, the persistence of the unemployment which has characterized the regimes of the AD and COPEI, the presentation to the people of a united alternative of the left and the progressive sectors is a leap forward in the country's political situation.

Our proposal was insistently presented in private or public form to independent personalities and parties.

We can assert that Miguel Otero Silva, Miguel Acosta Saignes, Joaquin Gabaldon Marquez, Hernan Mendez Castellanos, Said Moanack, Elpidio La Riva Mata, Freddy Carquez, Orlando Araujo, Isidro Valles, Rafael Haddad, Victor Hugo Morales, Margarita Rondon, Gabriel Bracho, Belen San Juan, and Elena Sassone among other distinguished personalities have propounded goals similar to those outlined by ourselves.

However, we believe that the parties of the left, because of various circumstances, experienced difficulties in accepting our proposals.

The leadership of MAS has formulated an entire theory which in the last analysis denies the suitability of unity.

The MIR always called for the unity of the MIR and the MAS, which they have designated "socialist unity." Some independent personalities, among them Dr Jose Herrera Oropeza, supported and strived for this stance.

The MEP envisioned integration only if total unity could be achieved and, being unable to count on the MAS, the MEP has kept its own candidate.

The MIR and the MEP did not accept the proposal made by independent personalities and directly by ourselves of partial unity based on the MEP, MIR and the PCV and open to all other progressive forces--for example, the First of May group and GAR [Revolutionary Action Groups], which had declared their readiness to support such a plan.

There was no question of excluding anyone but rather of initiating the unifying process even if this were only partial.

Before the impossibility of agreement concerning a presidential candidacy, we insisted with the MEP and the MIR on the idea of presenting joint slates for municipal councils, legislative assemblies, deputies, and senators. In this way each party will be able to win more seats than if each went it alone.

The MIR told us that it could not accept the proposal in general terms because we planned to begin with a slate in Bolivar State headed by the MIR and another in Anzoategui State headed by the PCV. The MIR replied to us that for the time being it could not accept our proposal.

We have detailed our insistence and the variety of proposals and initiatives taken because, as potential allies, the respect and consideration that we have for all the forces of the left cannot exclude the analysis of the various positions to strengthen the unity-oriented theses.

It is not a matter of achieving political or electoral advantages. We are convinced that as long as we do not manage to advance the unity thesis in practice, the people will only deem that the progressive sectors have been unable to take the better way.

In these discussions with our future allies we want to be frank. We have noted a tendency to discriminate against the PCV. This way of thinking has already started to produce undesirable results and made joint arrangements difficult.

History shows that the Communist Party of Venezuela has always played an important role in the major popular alliances. Let us only recall the periods of 1936-37, 1957, and 1960.

No one can think sensibly that an alliance of the left could occur without the communists. The revolutionary forces cannot make concessions to the demands of the adversary.

We thus hold out our hand and we should all come to an understanding for the good of the working class and the people of Venezuela.

It is under these conditions that we decided to launch our own candidate who will try to consolidate the most consciously unity-oriented sectors. We have done this through a personality of great potential and excellent personal qualifications. This is the case of Hector Mujica, enhanced by the political impact that we have realized and will continue to achieve.

This involves the continuation of the same policy. We seek total unity but we have not succeeded in achieving even partial unity. Now we are struggling to strengthen ourselves, to attract progressive and revolutionary cores, and to lay down bases for future gains.

Unity will not be easy but it will be achieved by the working class and the people in the plants, neighborhoods, schools, and also at national elections, if not today then tomorrow.

Radames Larrazabal, PCV

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 18 Jul 77 Sec D p 7

[Text] Punto Fijo, 17 July, special.--For the first time in history there could be five candidates seeking votes for socialism. However, if one also takes into account the fact that the AD is a social-democratic party and COPEI is a social Christian party, one will think that in this country socialism does not have enemies, said Radames Larrazabal, head of the PCV, who came to Punto Fijo on invitation to lecture at the University Center.

Radames Larrazabal continued by stating that such a situation would be the result in the first place of the historical stupidity of a left which never thinks in terms of power and in the second place of manipulations of the parties interested in conserving the status quo.

The system, he noted ironically, operates to polarize electoral opinion between the AD and COPEI. Yet on the other hand it encourages other

diversionist candidacies in that camp, and finally it strives to foment division in the leftist camp.

"It is not certain," Larrazabal added, "that the MIR has envisioned unity. It merely seeks coalition with the MAS, which has always sought division. As for the MEP, it is already known that it does not give evidence of working for unity."

Larrazabal continued: "He who in the left thinks that by going it alone he will win more votes is figuring things out very badly. And those who may believe that it is the leadership which envisions a struggle within the left figure things out very incorrectly. Such a theory for sure conceals the relinquishing of the struggle against polarization. Division has been the trap which the system has placed at the disposition of a left with strong suicidal tendencies."

Radames Larrazabal said that the five presidential candidates who would go to the elections to seek votes in the name of socialism would be those of the MAS, MEP, MIR, the Socialist League, and the PCV, whose candidate would represent the only and genuine revolutionary socialism.

Fabian Chacon Lopez, EPA

Caracas ULTIMAS NOTICIAS in Spanish 30 Dec 77 p 20

[Text] The welcome given by the left, and essentially by parties with electoral alternatives, to the proposal of the EPA [The People Progresses] movement regarding possible unity, and the impulse which the MAS has given to such unity by inviting the general secretaries of these organizations to discuss the common prospects are evidence of the maturity which the left is showing before the country.

That is what Dr Fabian Chacon Lopez, national leader of the EPA movement and a member of the political executive of that organization, told this daily.

"The EPA proposal concerning possible unity," Chacon Lopez said, "has created a very favorable climate for discussion of the prospects of unity in the left and has generated, as have the measures of the MAS, positions that favor its implementation.

These events are demonstrating to the country that the left has a clear sense of its responsibility and maturity, elements which it had been thought to lack for many years, the head of the EPA added.

Finally, he noted that the present context of relations in the left calls for major efforts to implement the unity-oriented prospects and that in that sense the EPA, together with outstanding independents of the left, will continue to take steps to bring about the summit meeting of the general secretaries of the MAS, MIR, MEP, and PCV regarding the proposal for possible unity.

MIR Reaction

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 29 Dec 77 Sec D p 2

[Excerpts] "The MIR understands that any progress toward unity in the leftist camp is positive and that any change of attitude which makes it possible is desirable."

The party whose candidate is Americo Martin transmitted, through its press office, a communique in which it makes a favorable evaluation of Pompeyo Marquez's letter wherein, on behalf of the MAS, it calls on the other leftist parties to follow converging paths.

The MIR's communique speaks of the steps taken by the EPA group in favor of MIR's unity of the left. In the same way it notes that on 6 January 1978 the MIR's National Political Committee will discuss the proposal of the MAS. However, the press office of the MIR states that its decision will be favorable to plans for unity.

In one passage the statement released to the press says:

"The MIR has come to maintain as a permanent question, rooted in its long-term strategy, the need for the unity of the forces of the left. For that reason in 1978 we strive to achieve a united electoral stance. And lately, before the imminent electoral event of 1978, we have been engaged in a major unity-oriented drive recognized by the entire country. We do not relate the propitiating attitude of understanding exclusively to the electoral question since we aspire for the sign of unity to strengthen the struggles of the left in all fields. We are sure that the correlation of existing forces in the country both in the general political field and in the trade union, agrarian, and other movements would be different if we leftists acted jointly as regards the points of view that are common to us. Within this general orientation we have strived sincerely and systematically."

Later the document states:

"It is for that reason that notwithstanding the fact that the proposal of the general secretary of the MAS, Pompeyo Marquez, will be given full attention at the meeting of the National Political Committee on 6 January, the press office of the MIR suggests that, like other unity-oriented initiatives, this one will be received positively, especially as it originates from a party with the importance of the MAS."

Socialist League Reaction

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 29 Dec 77 Sec D p 2

[Text] The Socialist League has called for the unity of the left and stresses that none of the candidates of the MAS, MIR, MEP, and PCV will be able to defeat singly the AD or COPEI.

In the statement transmitted to the press by the National Committee of the League, headed by Carmelo Laborit, Juan Medina Figueredo, Oscar Battaglini, and Norelka Meza Dorta, it is stated that "the left is not capable of reaching an agreement on the bases of a minimum program to face the repression, the high cost of living, the shortage of supplies, rationing, distortions, the militarization of justice, the struggle for a variable wage scale, for the right to strike, against corruption in the administration, for human rights, the release of political prisoners, freedom of expression, and the respect for public liberties and democratic rights."

The Socialist League has outlined the need to take advantage of the present electoral situation to implement the demands for unity of the masses and to extend the popular struggles.

The League is of the opinion that participation in these elections by four candidates, instead of defeating the two major parties, would achieve nothing more than create competition for the voters of the left and divide them. "Partisan egoism does not allow them to see that the principal adversaries to defeat are the AD and COPEI and that in the meantime the more candidates present themselves, the greater will be the distrust of the masses and the greater will be the skepticism toward the socialist message because of the inconsistency of those who speak in demagogic fashion of the unity of the people but serve to divide them in practice."

This movement of the left considers that unity will be achieved--and this is what is proposed--if the goal is set to raise the combative spirit of the masses, the momentum and radicalization of their struggles through specific plans "which consolidate the problems affecting the people."

As for intervention in the elections, this movement maintains that "participation in this process is always appropriate when the latter does not try to play up the electoral carnival to which the ruling classes have accustomed the people--so long as it does not serve to underwrite the claims of the dominant classes by creating erroneous illusions for the masses regarding the advantages of elections to solve their problems."

It was learned that in January 1978 the Socialist League will issue a call for a meeting at the national level where it will determine its position regarding the present electoral process and the participation of the left, given that it holds that "possibilities do indeed exist to back a single candidate, but for this purpose the contradiction between partisan interests and those of the people would have to be resolved in favor of the latter."

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VENEZUELA

SOCIALISM IN VENEZUELA, JOSE VICENTE RANGEL, MAS

Cultural, Economic, Political Matrix

Caracas ULTIMAS NOTICIAS in Spanish 11 Dec 77 pp 6-7

[Article by Beatriz Navas]

[Excerpt] Jose Vicente Rangel

We also wanted to begin from the ground up with the MAS [Movement for Socialism] candidate and we asked him what his concept of culture was.

"Culture," Rangel said, "is the fruit of man's work on nature, nature being the outer and inner universe that has been accorded man without his participation. In this regard, culture is a cumulative and age-old inheritance of material, intellectual and spiritual goods based on which man promotes and strengthens social well-being, the ongoing progress of science and technology, man's knowledge of himself, the progress of peoples, man's esthetic accomplishments in the field of arts and letters, the social struggle against exploitation and injustice and the avid search for a better society."

Do you feel that politics is at odds with culture?

"Politics is a culminating and organized form of culture. As a science and in practice, politics demands the commitment of man's best abilities in precisely that irreversible struggle for a constantly improving society. When politics becomes divorced from culture, we enter the realm of social injustice, man's exploitation of man, the violation of human rights, moral corruption and the decadence of civilizations. However, the country's political situation could lead us to respond to this question in the affirmative, when political actions are aimed at benefitting at all costs from the worsening of all social conditions and when the men who have led the Venezuelan state hold a concept that discredits cultural activities and denies the conditions that are essential for their development.

"I hold a different concept. In my mind, politics is a cultural activity; it means helping to raise the country's awareness to more responsible and demanding levels. Moreover, if there is something important that should

come out of the formulation of a socialist program in Venezuela, it is the vindication of the cultural element of a society, both for its intellectual development and for the crystalization of a sovereign national identity, and therefore, for the development of all the country's potential. The production and use of the esthetic and of cultural manifestations in general is essential as part of a policy whose historical goal is to unleash our best forces for our own national development."

Does the cultural level of the people depend on the current economic structure?

"We live under a dependent capitalist system; in other words, we belong to a world that is still dominated by the forces of transnational capital, whose cultural superstructures penetrate our life styles and conduct brutally or subtly, brazenly or in disguise.

"Through the so-called 'culture industry,' Venezuelans are continually bombarded with alienating messages that are designed to mold the spirit and awareness of the masses for the benefit of the economic and political interests of the national and international groups that divide up the wealth and monopolize power. Therefore, the true people's culture is neither fostered nor developed to an appropriate and sufficient extent. I feel, however, that it is not enough to change the current mercantilist economic structure in order for us to immediately have the optimum conditions for true cultural output. We must have a social policy that is aimed specifically at that sphere in order to turn it into an instrument of daily and widespread use in the society. We need to enhance its presence in formal education and in the mass media; we have to give it new value by improving the conditions of cultural work, because this work is one of the elements involved in turning this united and just world, which is possible and necessary today, into a real and historic one."

In conclusion, the MAS presidential candidate said that the Venezuelan state does not have a cultural policy that has been coherently formulated by the current administration. There are hair-splitting discussions of rules and responsibilities, as well as depressing budgetary haggling. "In addition," he added, "the cultural policy of Venezuelan governments has not gone beyond the culture of spectacles for the social or less well-off sectors or the hand-out culture for the low-income sectors, at times."

The New Majority

Caracas SEMANA in Spanish 29 Nov-5 Dec 77 p 22

[Text] The socialist program that we have been working on as part of the MAS policy is basically geared toward the establishment of a new majority

in the country. What does it mean to form a new majority in Venezuela? In a word, it means the chance to bring together, around a coherent policy under the leadership of socialism, various elements of the society that are in one way or another opposed to the dependent capitalist system. In other words, to approach the task of transforming Venezuelan society in the broadest possible way, free from any sort of sectarianism and with the full-fledged willingness to bring into the organized struggle the Venezuelans who are aware that the country must not continue to be handled as it has been up to now.

This involves replacing the policies put forth indistinctly by AD [Democratic Action] and COPEI [Social Christian Party] in their administrations and exercise of power. It involves doing away with polarization; it involves blowing the lid off the inertia and conformism of incompetence and the privilege of utilizing the people's potential, but not for the strident and fruitless exercise of power but in order to seriously carry out the goal of change that the socialist program is based on.

Can this new majority be created? Some will look skeptically on this goal, consider it impossible and judge that the resources of AD and COPEI, backed by the groups that dominate the national economy, are beyond measure and therefore unbeatable. Mistrust of the people is at the root of every political outlook that is imbued with pessimism. This can be seen even in revolutionaries, who on more than one occasion have underestimated the capacity of the masses.

However, the work of organization, of patient waiting in action, of gradually setting up a close-knit network of solidarity, identification and commitment to a common policy is the only work that yields benefits in the end. The masses cannot be organized overnight; the country cannot profess its faith except within the framework of a process. The people who have prepared to leave their meetings behind and plunge into the country sense that the old leadership is breaking down. They know that the policies that have been in force up to now are wearing out; moreover, they are aware that there cannot be a vacuum, that there is a demand for certainty in a country that wants to move forward and needs channels.

As time passes, the workings of our society become more unjust. There is no longer any way to describe the profits of businessmen and the exploitation to which Venezuelan workers are subjected. The proportion of income earned by a minority, in contrast to the growing poverty of the majority, is intolerable. Over the last few years the country has become fully aware that the answer to failure can be neither passivity nor a hazardous and sudden maneuver. Today more than ever Venezuela needs a movement that can put aside childish attitudes or the Social Democrat temptation and work out a policy that gives the masses the feeling that leadership has passed into capable hands.

The new majority must come about through socialism, without sectarianism, without arrogance. But it is obvious that reformism has now fulfilled its task. Today more than ever the democratic system needs to be reformulated so that it can work better. Democracy must become a mechanism for the true participation, rather than representation, of the people. Likewise, the superstructure of democracy and the values of liberty must be tied in with social and economic accomplishments. The country can no longer continue to allow its legitimate right to a truly just economic and social system to be confiscated in the name of democracy and freedom. In the same way, Venezuelans would not be willing to sacrifice the values of liberty through economic compensation. Over all these years there has been a process of maturing that is clearly one of the strongest factors favoring the urgent consolidation of all Venezuelans.

A Non-Communist Movement

Caracas BOHEMIA in Spanish 18-24 Oct 77 p 12

[Article by David Morales Bello]

[Text] The MAS is currently hampered by a situation similar to the one faced by many people whose birth certificates list first names, last names or personal data that do not correspond to those that they allege to be the correct ones or that they use in public and private life. However, in contrast to these individuals, whose good sense has led them to request a certificate rectification from a family court judge, the MAS people have strived to invalidate what the "movement's" spokesmen presented to the Supreme Electoral Council by denying what can be read in the voucher of its legal existence. This is without doubt a mistake. Because, if this were a merely verbal debate, each party would have in its favor the doubts that it succeeded in raising by arguing that the people who are contradicting their statements are lying. However, that is not the situation. The situation consists of statements that are contained in the MAS birth certificate (the text of which includes the self-definition of a Venezuelan "Communist force") and mere retorts that lack comparable documentary support, to an impartial observer, which would analytically discredit the statements for and against MAS's avowed communism. Therefore, an instrument imbued with authenticity still stands, with all its probative value: the birth certificate that has not been contested and that has not even been modified with regard to its validity vis-a-vis third parties. Thus, it is an unconvincing defense for MAS leaders and political friends to try and discredit the stand taken by people who, with indisputable documentary support, have underscored what is (or was, if you wish) a spontaneous and voluntary confession, since, aside from the good or bad intentions that can be ascribed to it, it is untenable to try and say that something does not exist which everyone can see exists by merely reading a documented statement signed, free from coercion, by people who later feel the need to deny it. Therefore, MAS has no other recourse than to

rectify its birth certificate by asking the Supreme Electoral Council, after evaluating the evidence that it must present to demonstrate its non-communism, to modify the original text and certify that the MAS is not "the Venezuelan Communist force" by means of an accepted revision similar to the one that reads thus: "Let it be known that where I say say, it is not say that I am saying, but rather see." If something like this does not happen, everything said or done in defense of MAS's non-communism will be nothing more than wasted efforts, except if, through a legally accepted recourse as well, the MAS members display a document with the same date as and annulling the official statement before the Supreme Electoral Council and demonstrate that the public definition was a sham designed to take in naive Communists and that privately from the very beginning, it was stated in writing that MAS was not a Communist organization. That would also be valid.

An Island Unto Itself

Caracas ULTIMAS NOTICIAS in Spanish 12 Oct 77 p 38

[Article by Miguel Acosta Saignes: "The Candidates of the Left: Jose Vicente"]

[Text] We have already explained why we feel that MAS is left-wing, despite the views of some of its leaders who are against dividing parties into "left-wing" and "right-wing." We simply consider as left-wing all of the parties or groups that advocate profound modifications in Venezuela's socio-economic fabric through socialism. We are leaving aside the different concepts that the various groups have of socialism and we are classifying from the broadest standpoint. Concerning Prieto and Americo, we pointed out some of general circumstances involved in the division of the Left and the individual excellence of the two candidates, in a sort of initial approach with two sides to it, political and personal. Without doubt this same excellence could also be applied to Jose Vicente Rangel, the MAS presidential candidate. He is a well-balanced politician and a tenacious fighter for the legal system and for the most proper exercise of human and constitutional rights. During his many years as a member of Congress he has maintained an unchanging, firm and courageous attitude in this regard. He was the MAS presidential candidate in 1973 and won a good number of votes, which would have no doubt been even more if the factors that we mentioned very briefly in a previous column had not come into play. We must remember that the "left-wing parties" as a whole amassed a half million votes, the first time that Venezuelan voters had expressed such great support for the advocates of some kind of socialism in Venezuela. The combined vote count seemed to be a big lesson. Many people expected that the left-wing would come up with formulas to achieve a front in 1978 that would acquire considerable strength in representative posts and therefore in the general political structure. MAS has been the most tenacious supporter of its need to be electorally independent. One of its most intelligent leaders, German

Lairer, seems to lean towards the reassessment of former arguments that seemed quite proper at one time to keep the party isolated.

In reality, there are various reasons for MAS's isolation. Some have to do with sound arguments concerning the need to do away with old methods that have become traditional and stereotyped. In reality all parties should constantly guard against stagnation. Some of the proposals by some MAS leaders seemed at least worthy of consideration. Another reason for MAS's isolation has no doubt been its origin, its split from the Communist Party (PC). But whereas the PC does not scorn electoral alliances even with people who at some point left its ranks, some people have pointed to its origin as the decisive obstacle to positions of flexibility and convergence. We would be inclined to think, like Lairer, that adopting flexible stands would redound to the overall benefit of socialist factions.

We have read propaganda, not only from MAS but from other left-wing groups as well, that is designed to present the 1978 elections as merely a tournament in which the highest goal is the "alternative" government. In comments of a few months ago we expressed our belief that no left-wing group can expect a definitive victory, a majority of votes over the parties that have been in power. We believe that a different stand would be effective: winning the votes that the general state of the country's political development can muster. In other words, do publicity that is full of truth and does not merely play the elementary game of "the economy of the vote," a principle that seems to obsess numerous political leaders. People have spoken on several occasions of the "electoral phenomenon" of 78. Some say that it could be Prieto, some say Americo or Jose Vicente or Hector Mujica. What is all this about an "electoral phenomenon?" What the Venezuelan experience has shown is that in each period an at times unexpected number of votes has been obtained by the candidate who has surrounded himself with the most independents and has presented his candidacy as an adversary force to the parties. In this regard, one would expect the electoral phenomenon of 78 to be Renny Ottolina, who has expressed the view that the parties lack the appropriate abilities to govern well. The question is whether in 78 the independents too are going to rally around the adversaries of the multi-party system. Moreover, it seems that several, rather than a single group of independents, will compete in the tournament. Other considerations can be mentioned; for example, some politicians, like Argelia Bravo, have already in 1977 pointed to profound changes in the working class sector and in the fringe sectors. Won't these changes have influence, spurred on by the development of capitalism in Venezuela, on how the votes will go? An analysis of election chances in 1978 should, in our opinion, take into consideration social structures, the phenomena of class struggle and its current features in Venezuela, not the limited view of the "electoral phenomenon," which is in no way a part of socialist outlooks. Elections are not games of chance; they are a form of political struggle, in other words,

one of the limited ways in which the deep social structures manifest themselves. Political science, not the determination to "corral" votes, must prevail in them. Naturally, the parties that call themselves socialist know this well. Hasn't the time come to act accordingly? Hasn't the time come for talks among left-wing parties, to evaluate the whole situation and to enumerate their points of agreement, which could be the basis for general or partial pacts in 1978?

Failure of AD, COPEI

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 17 Oct 77 Sec D p 1

[Article on statements by MAS presidential candidate Jose Vicente Rangel]

[Text] Puerto Cabello, 16 October—COPEI and AD have nothing to offer the country; on the contrary, they have failed for 20 years and they have failed historically while Venezuela is suffering the effects of their negative performance in government, MAS presidential candidate Jose Vicente Rangel said in this city.

Rangel pointed out "that today, more than ever, Venezuela has to have a real government, not what it has had up to now, a fictional government."

He indicated that it is a good idea to alert Venezuelans to what AD and COPEI are trying to do through the mass media, with "their brazen and demagogical propaganda." "My candidacy," he went on to say, "is aimed at forming a new government for the majority, in order to assume power and use it to carry out the changes that the majority is waiting for."

"Therefore," Rangel said, "we must all take part in the political work, reveal the truth about ourselves in the streets and convince people that MAS represents a real chance to save them from social conflicts. This is feasible inasmuch as we have many things to do for Venezuela and we are the ones who can do the job because MAS has no commitments to anyone, commitments that could get in our way."

The MAS candidate warned that political work cannot depend on visits by the candidate or by political leaders. "There are many states, towns, villages and neighborhoods that we have to tour and visit, as well as meeting with family groups. The organization's work should focus on the groups of people we are depending on to achieve our goal and thus become the number one force."

"We must," he added, "organize the people around socialist policy and MAS, which will be the means of taking power."

During this visit to Carabobo and Aragua Rangel toured neighborhoods in Puerto Cabello and Moron. In Aragua he met with agronomists, who had shown up in large numbers, and told them that in a socialist government farming would be a priority issue and that based on this hundreds of experts in this field would take part in drawing up his government program.

Rangel concluded his visit by touring neighborhoods in Maracay as well as Turmero, Magdaleno and Villa de Cura. He took the opportunity to assert that the city councils of Aragua districts, which are controlled by AD and COPEI, have been a complete failure, because "they have not even been able to solve their most basic problems, such as water supply, paving the streets, street lighting and holes in roads."

New Book Outlines Platform

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 28 Sep 77 Sec D p 3

[Text] The National Commission of Research and Study of MAS will present today to the representatives of the various mass media the recently published book entitled "Another Government That Has Failed." It contains an analysis of the national situation in the form of studies done by several MAS leaders. The ceremony will take place at 1130 hours at the headquarters of the party's congressional group.

"The book that we will be presenting to the press," a MAS spokesman pointed out, "includes studies by Teodoro Petkoff, Anselmo Natale, D.F. Maza Zavala, Carlos Mendoza Potella, Andres Sosa Pietri, Ernesto Carmona, Juan Luis Hernandez, Jose Agustin Silva Michelena, Argelia Laya, Alberto Urdaneta, Freddy Munoz, Alonso Palacios and a group that evaluated the disastrous performance of the current administration."

The MAS spokesman concluded by noting that the book is a sort of "prolog to the government platform that MAS and its presidential candidate, Jose Vicente Rangel, will reveal to the country during the 1978 election campaign."

A Socialist Presidency (Perspective)

Caracas RESUMEN in Spanish 12 Dec 77 pp 14-25

[Interview with MAS presidential candidate Jose Vicente Rangel by Ted Cordova-Claire and Antonio Aparicio at RESUMEN headquarters; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Question] Moving from the current objective reality to the hazy realm of futurology, what might the minimum program be of a socialist administration in Venezuela?

[Answer] At present several technical teams are thoroughly studying what we call an alternative government program. Nevertheless, we can at this point specify some of the basic features and measures that the experience of these last few years has placed high on the agenda. Above all if we take into account that the big paradox of sizable government revenue and worsening living conditions for the masses is becoming more severe, instead of diminishing. The deteriorating economic condition of low-income groups and the prospect of greater indebtedness, new foreign investment and the country's heightened dependency make necessary an emergency program that places the improved quality of life for Venezuelans at the top of the list.

a) These measures would be based on guidelines such as a redistribution of property and income, which would be an expression of social justice and an incentive for the national economy with a coordinated, independent and self-sustaining approach.

b) In this regard fiscal reform would play a major role in terms of reorienting production, by discouraging everything involved in the output of luxury items, investment, savings and imports. This would be accompanied by what we have called an "inexpensive government" that would substantially cut the bureaucratic and operational expenditures of the administrative machine, all of which implies a reorientation of state outlays. Public services, which are a real disaster nowadays, would get preferential attention. It is strange that in a country like Venezuela, with its considerable annual government expenditures, the most basic of services that make people's lives easier are notable for their absence. The participation of social organizations and a policy that stresses this aspect could perform miracles in all that involves bettering citizens' living conditions, to cite an intolerable case in present-day Venezuela.

c) With regard to property, in an economy like Venezuela's, where the state's economic power is so great, it is a question of affecting only what is essential to reorient economic and administrative affairs. In other words, it would not involve an avalanche of nationalizations of all kinds of property, merely of large monopoly holdings, while providing small and medium-sized holdings all the protection necessary, making them part of socialist programming and bolstering them against collapse and the pressures to which they are subjected thanks to a government that serves the powerful and to an economy in which the predominant role of the large monopolistic groups is decisive.

d) As far as jobs are concerned, we would give priority to a process that would be based on a different growth model than the one in the Fifth National Plan and that would consider the use of intermediate technology which utilizes manpower and is in keeping with the country's level of development. Along with this, mass programs to turn under- and unemployed manpower with low cultural and technical levels into skilled manpower that can meet the requirements of industry, trade and services.

e) Education would undergo an immediate and radical change. Turning it into a tool for independent development implies education that is tied to the production process and to social needs. We would declare an emergency and utilize all available resources--of which there are many--in the form of space and personnel in order to do away with the shameful annual quota or studies that do not properly prepare citizens to meet the requirements to which I have referred.

f) An overall research plan that would provide a single, coherent direction for all of the various institutions that exist in this field and that would boost the status of technical and scientific research. Our immediate objective would be to achieve the highest degree possible of technological sovereignty without severing ties with all of the varied markets that supply technology, the transfer of which would be insured in accordance with a sovereign approach to our economic and social growth.

Together with these measures we want to stress the idea that a socialist government from the outset, and in sharp contrast with the current capitalist democracy, would take up everything related to the concept of mass participation in government tasks. This is not a question of having elections every 5 years; it is a question of guaranteeing the presence of the producers themselves in the administration and distribution of the nation's wealth. This participation should be reflected in government organs, in the activities of social organizations, in the leadership of large enterprises, of the socialized economy and of social, cultural and recreational life.

We would guarantee a wideranging freedom of information, of expression of political and religious views, as well as unfettered creativity in all areas of knowledge, science and culture, by breaking up the monopoly of the main mass media, avoiding their nationalization but turning them into social property.

Regarding the cost of living, bringing goods closer to consumers, eliminating middlemen and facilitating agro-industrial integration at the level of small and medium farms would be urgent measures that would act directly against speculation and the high cost of living.

Two major changes have to take place in agriculture:

Those involving the technological and ecological aspects of farming must mark the serious beginning of a tropical agriculture that is tailored to our ecological conditions.

The second changes involve the economic and social sphere, and two major moves are in order here:

1) Eliminate the control exercised over agriculture by the agro-industry and agri-business, which manipulate the market for their own profit and strangle small and medium producers. (Agro-Industrial Integration, Socialization of Imports and Distribution of Strategic Inputs Act)

2) The construction of an alternative socialist agriculture based on large, truly integrated development projects to create a new quality of life on the farm. These projects will affect areas that are not being utilized, as well as large landholdings and farmland earmarked for other purposes.

3) In order to achieve these goals we need serious farm planning, in which small and medium producers and peasants can really take part and in which a local agrarian authority is set up to execute the plans. The groundwork for this authority is contained in our law in the form of the agrarian center.

[Question] Could the transition from a capitalist democracy to a socialist democracy come about peacefully, as a step by step reform or is it only to be viewed as a break? In other words, would your MAS candidacy represent an inducement to reform or a revolutionary stand to replace one society with another?

[Answer] A peaceful transition is not ruled out. I am even asserting that we are looking for it, we want it and we believe that the objective conditions exist for it. The opposite would be to accept that the essence of revolution is violence, not social change. It would be like falling into the trap of idealizing violence, and we are all cured of that idealization of violence, in other words, violence for violence sake. The Serelian view of revolution is not dialectic. A violent break can always be anticipated, but it must necessarily be that way. Ultimately, it is the enemy who introduces violence. We would have to ask how the powerful economic groups, the transnationals would react to a socialist government that would be prepared to carry out a program of social and economic reforms approved by the people, and how that government would have to react. I believe that it should do so by strictly enforcing the legal system, the same legal system corrupted by the administrations that the country has had, but without copying its methods of degrading the human person. But of course it would have to utilize the resources of the legal system to defend democratic institutions and the accomplishments of the people. If the transition takes place as part of a great debate, without violence, through a development achieved around a people who support the job done, so much the better. If I thought otherwise, I would be crazy and more desirous of producing bloodshed and suffering than of promoting the transfer of the country.

Once my candidacy becomes official, it would represent a potential revolutionary stand. In other words, the attainment of feasible goals

within a national context, without childish approaches but at the same time without hesitation. Reformism has already exhausted its potential. It would be absurd for a new alternative seeking to carry out the first stage of the construction of socialism in Venezuela to opt for a revival or a vindication of reformism.

[Question] Many people have a serious conflict of conscience, a conflict that we believe is not foreign to you; all of the experiences of this century involving the establishment of socialism, from 1917 in Petrograd to 1958 in Havana, have been at the expense of a sacrifice of freedom. If—pure hypothesis—Venezuela were to become socialist, what guarantees could be considered valid for a socialist model that would not rule out political freedom for dissidents or critics?

[Answer] That conflict does exist, and consideration of it is in order. The values of freedom are irreplaceable, especially for us Venezuelans, a nation of liberty par excellence, the homeland of Bolivar. The mention of the devoted adherence of Venezuelans to freedom also leads me to point out that each one of the experiences noted in the question took place within a given context and in keeping with specific realities. Not only the national context but the international context as well. Don't a country's social fabric and historical and economic characteristics influence such an experience? Don't the siege, ambush and aggression of enemies influence the course of conduct of a regime? I am not attempting by this to justify abuses of any sort or accepting that socialist experiences encourage such courses of conduct in those situations. There also exist bureaucratic distortion, contempt for dissidence and the values of freedom, fear of criticism that is identified with a regimented view of society and which, in practice, is a negation of socialism. It is often said that the existing socialist models have survived thanks to their toughness and to their ability to face up to domestic and foreign dangers, but one wonders whether socialism would not have achieved much more positive effects, from the standpoint of its spread and adoption as a system in the world, if it had shown its genuine humanist features, its true democratic nature, along with its ability to resolve man's material needs.

In Venezuela the socialist view must go hand in hand with freedom. This is an historical mandate and a fact that stems from what the country is today. The socialism that we are proposing is not to destroy democracy but to bring it about, so that the country can truly live in a democracy, not in a falsehood. The guarantee of a socialist system in Venezuela is the chance for an open, unrestricted debate. If socialists are not able to convince the people and keep them on their side through debate and government undertakings, it is because they are inferior to their adversaries. The ideas that we set forth should be considered better not because they are in themselves but because they achieve a greater consensus than the ones proposed by the people who oppose us. The only way to find this out is through a democratic debate.

However, not all of the experiences that the world has seen with regard to the establishment of socialist systems have affected freedom at the outset. Allende in Chile maintained the outlines of democracy and the legal system under the most difficult circumstances, which has not been the case in capitalist democracies. It was the adversaries of the experience that he headed up who took it upon themselves to destroy democracy and suppress freedom with bloodshed and repression. It was the economic groups, the transnational firms, the military traitors, the old political conservatives, a faction of Christian Democracy, who led Chile to disaster by opposing Popular Unity's policy of social and economic changes not through the established legal system and democratic institutions but through treason and genocide.

Guarantees? There are many. One of them is the thought that we have all given to the need to coordinate socialism and freedom and to what the country is and how the task of transforming it cannot be the work of sects and fanatics but of all the people. The very magnitude of the undertaking requires a broad spectrum, a convergence. Men and women with different ways of thinking and viewing the country, but united by the desire to remove it from the chaos of dependent capitalism, must decide to act together. This joint, many-sided effort, enhanced by experiences, by shades of difference, by differing evaluations, is the antithesis of a monolithic approach, of dogmatic imposition and in and of itself injects a first-rate democratic element. Socialism as a clear-cut, open activity, not as the reflection of a bureau or a fanatic vanguard, is a guarantee by itself.

Another guarantee is the life that each one of us has led, our conduct over many years. Each one of us has a record of service to freedom. None of us has been involved in shady dealings that trample on the idea of democracy. To a greater or lesser extent, all of the people who are part of the socialist program and of the MAS policy have spent years in jail or in exile, not for fighting for privileges or dictatorships but for having risen up against the ignominy and degradation of man. The socialist idea has been a genuine effort of faith and confidence in man, of exalting the homeland and its values. This is neither a pose nor the routine practice of self-criticism. It is an evaluation of what our country is today and of how ideas are dealt with in the world. We are contemporaries of a great anti-totalitarian and humanist thought. In our view socialism is not just bread, housing and jobs—gains denied by capitalism—; it is culture, freedom. Socialism is not mere economic and social data; it is the highest expression of the redeemed human being, for whom it will always be worthwhile to sacrifice everything, since he will always be an unsatisfied being because of that tiny opening through which the light of freedom will always shine, a light without which everything else means nothing. In other words, socialism viewed as a concept of a new life and even as an ethical and moral obsession, as Camus conceived of it.

The guarantees go beyond words, but the words are there too when they have reflected an unchangeable course of conduct and a definition that is not open to vaguities. Why shouldn't one think that freedom and democracy will be authentic, for all people and not have restrictions and be fully perceived by a nation in the process of resolving its economic and social tragedy with the advent of socialism?

[Question] In conclusion, what political experience did you acquire from the 1973 election, and to what extent will it be helpful for 1978?

[Answer] After an electoral campaign a person gets a more comprehensive and direct view of the country, above all when the campaign is conducted under the conditions that I had to face. The lack of funds forced me into very close contact with the country's real situation. We went into the campaign amid severe limitations, and only our mystique and determination to expound a policy made us continue. I visited thousands of neighborhoods, shook hands with thousands and thousands of persons and spoke with thousands and thousands of Venezuelans. I think that no problem was foreign to me.

Direct work is the best experience; it is irreplaceable in politics, and especially in socialist politics. We found out that although material and economic resources are lacking in a nation suffering from severe distortions, it is also true that there are values that have not been impaired, as well as the determination to create, to produce resources. During the campaign we vindicated imagination and creativity and came up with the slogan of "imagination versus money." We did not use it insolently but with a realistic outlook and an awareness that the country would understand it. And it did.

Another experience involved language. Our efforts at communications were not sufficient, and we have thought about how to present our ideas and contact the country.

[Question] A closing question: many critics of the current situation, especially the people who, in the wake of disillusionment with the COPEI government, believe they have a right to feel disappointed with Carlos Andres Perez's performance so far, nevertheless consider that the continuation of this two-pronged monopoly of power is protection against the threat of a dictatorship on a continent dominated by strong-arm governments. Do you think that this view is correct? To what extent do you think that there is a danger of dictatorship (a right-wing or pseudo-left-wing totalitarian bent), and do you feel that a government move to the left—a MAS administration—would heighten or preclude this danger?

[Answer] The risk always exists. Reality in Latin America is alarming. But the risk should not be exaggerated. And in any case I would place it

on the right. Among us there is a strengthening of the democratic experience that demands consistency. The greatest danger that I can see is the ineffectiveness of the regime; I am also referring to corruption. Peoples' frustration builds, and they relate it not just to a government, to the failure of a leader and a party; they generalize it. I believe that a governmental move towards socialism would be the best antidote to the risk of dictatorship, inasmuch as to the extent that the needs of the people are satisfied and a democratic regime can be set up, any dictatorial process will be checked to that same extent.

[Question] Moving from critical to nonessential matters, who might we see in a MAS cabinet?

[Answer] As we have promised the country, our administration would be the antithesis of the sectarianism practiced up to now by parties like AD and COPEI. A collective effort is needed to overhaul the country's social, economic, institutional and cultural workings. Socialism must be extremely broad-based. A MAS administration has to ask capable and talented people everywhere to work with us, as long as they are willing to do so by really participating with and contributing to the nation. Socialism can deny no one an opportunity. Rather than list names, it is better to express this concept to seek out men who would take up the great task of transforming the country.

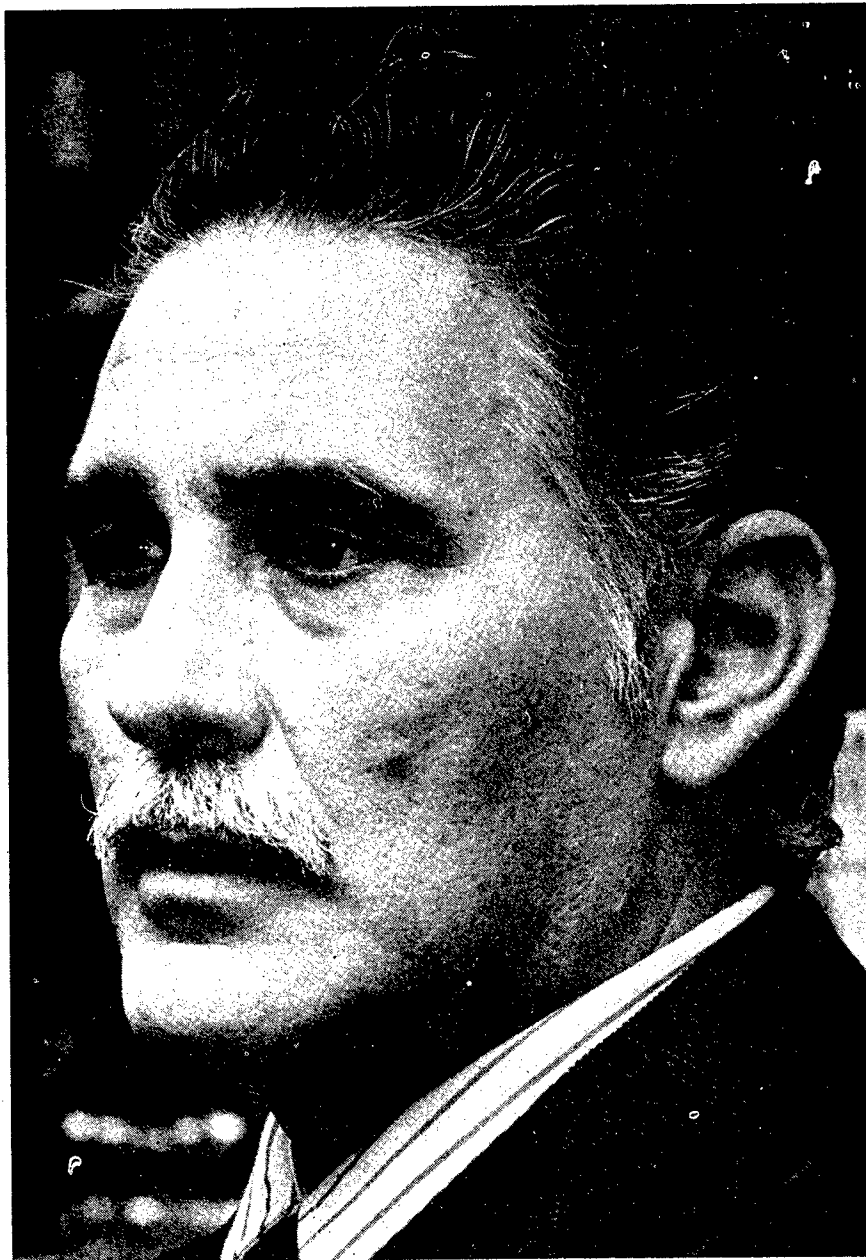
In turn, MAS has extremely capable people of great moral solvency. In our country there are thousands of professionals, technicians, experts and specialists in varied fields who are either directly connected with the socialist movement or are friends or sympathizers. Previous administrations have been unable to bring them in, and the state, because of its chaotic workings or because of pressure groups, has not utilized them.

As far as socialism is concerned, the human condition excludes no one, and participation is guaranteed by talent, ability and the vocation of service.

Goal: Venezuela's Third Party

Caracas BOHEMIA in Spanish 12-18 Dec 77 pp 5-7

[Excerpts] Polls show that about 10 percent of the voters like Jose Vicente Rangel. But there are factors that make the MAS candidate's vote block difficult to expand. First of all, MAS is determined to become the country's third party. There is a vacuum in third place that MAS is prepared to fill. Given the country's electoral and class structure, MAS has liberalized its approach in order to achieve third party status. As a result, in the attempt to shake from the isolation that the Left was reduced to (notably because of the situation in Venezuela and on the



MAS Presidential Candidate Jose Vicente Rangel

continent in the 60's) but without being able to compromise the Left as a whole in the wake of its leading role, MAS has come face to face with this situation: a) More than 80 percent of the politically active people hovering around the COPEI and AD organizations; b) The traditional strongholds of the Left, where it used to operate, have competition from MIR [Movement of the Revolutionary Left]. Although MIR has, in truth, modified its style in view of the program promoted by MAS, in universities and in some unions it seems less anxious to join "the system."

As MAS delineates its outlines further with regard to the left-wing and shows little interest in becoming confused with other groups, its presidential candidate is forced to act in the same regard. This highlights the program more but weakens the man as an alternative, because reaction will give rise to other candidates on the Left. Is the 10 percent going to expand that way? It seems unlikely that there will be a significant move to Rangel over the remaining 12 months among the 40 percent of the voters who are still undecided. On the other hand, it seems possible that if the country's electoral mood shifts towards the administration, some left-wing votes and most of the undecided will swing to Pinerua; or if the country is angry and wants a change, the vote shift will help Herrera Campins.

Militant Internal Strife

Caracas RESUMEN in Spanish 25 Dec 77 p 11

[Text] On the plains of Barinas and Portuguesa MAS candidate Jose Vicente Rangel came out with a very amusing sentence that could go down in the history of Venezuelan political humor. His words were published in EL UNIVERSAL on Tuesday 13 December on page 1-29. "There is no longer a duo but a trio." So far, Jose Vicente Rangel's candidacy has melted rather than jelled. In reality we have not yet come up with the causes of this phenomenon, but if you take to the streets and talk about politics, a great many people agree that it is the coldness of Rangel's candidacy. The internal strife in MAS might have contributed to this situation, but many party members have told us that they are not going to vote for Rangel but for another candidate. That other candidate could be Americo Martin or Luis Herrera Campins. We cannot explain this attitude either. "There is no longer a duo but a trio." If there is a single Venezuelan who is convinced that this is untrue, it is Jose Vicente Rangel himself. In Venezuela there is and will be, as the election draws near, a radical and decisive polarization between AD and COPEI. All political analysts who base their studies on pragmatic facts and not fleeting emotions assert that the polarization will be even more clear-cut in the 78 elections than in the 73 elections. The only way that we would see the "trio" of which Rangel spoke in Barinas and Portuguesa would be if URD [Democratic Republican Union], MEP [People's Electoral Movement], MIR, MAS and the PCV [Communist Party of Venezuela] joined forces, and

this is not going to happen, at least right now. Veteran analysts and observers also point out that there is only one left-wing candidate who arouses emotion, none other than Americo Martin. Unfortunately for them, candidates Prieto, Mujica and Rangel do not stir up the electorate; their candidacies are for history rather than for government. Even Americo is a candidate for history because with good sense he clearly sees that it is absolutely impossible to compete for victory against AD and COPEI. We believe that what Rangel said in the states of Barinas and Portuguesa is just another pose lacking any scientific or realistic basis. They are just words, which will not influence the outlook of the average Venezuelan, in other words the multitude of independents who will cast their ballots in December 1978. Rather than statements born of frivolity, Jose Vicente Rangel should base his speeches on the government platform that MAS would implement if it got to Miraflores, something that is not, of course, in the offing now. What is obvious is not up for discussion, says an old popular proverb, and the AD-COPEI duo is not only obvious, it is already a proven fact.

Militant Journalists' Faction

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 15 Oct 77 Sec D p 12

[Text] In an assembly the journalist members of MAS agreed upon a series of activities that are designed, according to what they said, to increase their participation in the election campaign of the party and its presidential candidate, Dr Jose Vicente Rangel.

The assembly was presided over by the secretary general of MAS, Pompeyo Marquez, who presented a wideranging report on the progress of the "Ready for the Campaign" stage that MAS is currently carrying out throughout the country and which includes the meeting on the 27th of this month at Mexico Avenue.

Present at the assembly were the members of the national board of directors: Jacobo Borges, Franklin Guzman, Manuel Felipe Sierra and Eleazar Diaz Rangel.

Deputy Expelled from Party

Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 15 Oct 77 Sec D p 13

[Text] Barquisimeto, 14 October (Special)--The Regional Board of Directors of MAS has decided to expel Deputy Orlando Fernandez because it feels that he has been running a splinter group movement that is disregarding the party's authorities.

The announcement was made by Sol Alvarado, the MAS secretary general in Lara; he explained that Fernandez had been carrying on a campaign to

discredit the leaders of the movement, undertaking splinter group efforts and inciting members to disregard the legitimate authorities, thus causing anarchy within MAS.

Fernandez, he said, has gone so far as to demand as a condition for his continued participation in socialist politics that he be assigned a main spot among the candidates for deliberative bodies.

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