

Rosalio Negrete<sup>1</sup> an Hugo Oehler, 23.11.1936

3 Seiten, Abschrift (Teile), Übersetzung (Teile) und Faksimile

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Barcelona, November 23, 1936

Dear Hugo,

[...]

[3]

[...]

Add the following address to the list. This is the Left Wing of Austrian YCL:

Alfred G. Furstner  
Gumpendorferstr. 143,  
Vienna Austria.

A report on this group is enclosed with the letter.

[...]

Greetings to all the comrades. Fraternally

R. Negrete

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### **Übersetzung:**

Barcelona, 23. November 1936

Lieber Hugo,

[...]

[3]

[...]

Fügen Sie die folgende Adresse zur Liste hinzu. Das ist der linke Flügel der österreichischen YCL [KJÖ, Kommunistische Jugend Österreichs]:

Alfred G. Fürstner  
Gumpendorferstr. 143,  
Wien, Österreich.

Dem Brief liegt ein Bericht über diese Gruppe bei.

[...]

Grüße an alle Genossen. Brüderlich

R. Negrete

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<sup>1</sup> Parteiname von Russell Blackwell

Brief Rosalio NEGRETE an Hugo OEHLER (ms., 3p.)

Barcelona, November 23, 1936

Dear Hugo:

Arrived here the morning of the 21st. Was very cordially received by comrades Nin, Molins and others. Andrade had just returned to Madrid. Have been lodged at the party's private hotel where flop and feed are available. Shall probably assist in some sort of technical work after the first period so as not to be a drag on party and so as not to be too greatly indebted to it. Or perhaps it will prove advisable to take up private lodgings if some arrangements can be made. For the present however, the POUM is giving me every facility to work -- in a technical sense -- About a million confiscated typewriters are available, press files, etc. Will be able to secure a press pass in a few days and the POUM connections in France will be used to get my expulsion order there reversed which will make it possible for me to return, legally to France whenever necessary or convenient.

Naturally, I have not yet been able to orient myself on the recent developments. On arrival here I had not seen the POUM press for two months and almost no bourgeois papers for one month.

Am now trying to catch up and will be able after that to sustain some serious political discussions with the leading comrades. Have already had one long conversation along very general lines with comrade Molins who is at present the editor of "La Batalla". They appear to respect the RWL in spite of all our pounding of them, or rather perhaps, because of this pounding.

Within about ten days I hope to be able to give fairly complete reports on the situation here especially as regards the POUM policies and on the IBRSU Brussels Conference. Fields was in Brussels and seems to have put up somewhat of a fight. Shall soon know the full details of this. The Congress decided to call another congress shortly -- tentatively in January -- to be held in Barcelona. An attempt will be made there to form the "New Revolutionary International". All dissident groups, including I believe the Trotskyists will be invited. In my opinion we should horn in on the Congress, although I don't know yet just what we might get out of it. Will discuss this in the near future after studying the documents.

The military situation appears quite satisfactory. The Militia is better armed, better disciplined and larger than before. There is no food shortage generally speaking although some articles are scarce or entirely unavailable. Masses seem to be dominated by a grim determination to carry on the struggle if it takes years. Meanwhile some progressive steps are being taken behind the lines -- collectivization of all industries employing over 100 workers, confis-

cation of banks by the Generality, completion of the agrarian revolution in Catalonia etc. There was a monster demonstration yesterday of about 300 000 workers in this city in homage to Comrade Durruti leader of the anarcho-syndicalists who was killed at Madrid.

The POUM has now grown to a membership of 30-40 thousand. This is at the expense of quality and the ideological level is very low. There is however a one year's probation period for all raw workers (no probation for ex-CP, ex-SP, etc.). About 10,000 of these members are outside of Catalonia, mostly Madrid & Valencia. The leading comrades definitely fear the effect that this backward element in the party may exert at the next party congress. A formula is being sought to eliminate the voting strength of the new members.

People coming through from Madrid all feel convinced that the city will be held and the reactionaries thrown back. A tremendous amount of war material is now coming in from the USSR. The Madrid area is very well supplied now and the Government forces have already an air force superior to the enemy. The change of policy on part of the USSR has several explanations which do not necessarily contradict each other. There seems to have been a tremendous mass pressure from within. For instance, Comrade Vitte reports that Greek comrades working on ships touching Soviet ports observed the opposition to Stalin, and the repression against it. Leading CP and Red Army leaders of Odessa have been imprisoned, a large part of the Caucasus organization is in opposition.

The workers have been staging illegal demonstrations demanding aid for Spain. "Le Temps" of Paris reported a demonstration of 100, 000 in Moscow at which Sokolnikoff spoke against Stalin.

Victor Serge is expected here soon. The POUM and the Anarcho-Syndicalists have a confidential agreement to organize a mass street demonstration jointly for the imprisoned Bolsheviks, and Anarchists in USSR. This will perhaps mean a serious clash with the stalinists -- a physical clash. The PSUC (Unified Socialist Party -- Local Stalinists) people are very vicious against the POUM.

The CNT and FAI have a formal bloc with the Stalinists but in practice they are in a bloc with the POUM. The two organizations see eye to eye in most decisive immediate questions. Within the Generality about which I shall send a full report at later date, the Anarcho-Syndicalists and the POUM almost invariably vote en bloc while the Stalinist and bourgeois parties vote en bloc. While the latter have an actual majority of votes, they almost always back down -- that is the Stalinists do -- at the last moment and allow the POUM--CNT--FAI proposals to carry.

The anarchists have become definitely political, they are learning many things these days -- some of them not so well.

The POUM people may force the postponement of the International Congress here until after the POUM Congress. They apparently want to get their own position clear before the International Congress which they hope to dominate, politically. The whole IBRSU mob is down here -- lots of people from the ILP, SAP etc. The "Oslo" Youth Buro is now established in Barcelona, under ILP, SAP, SFIO left, POUM control. The Maximalists have a representative here also. Landau in person.

In addition to the above there are several foreign comrades to the left. Comrade Vitte of the Greek Archio Marxists is here for an indefinite period. Am enclosing detailed reports received from him and from an Albanian comrade of the same tendency. Vitte wants us to work out a bloc for work in the International Congress, but we have not yet been able to examine each others line sufficiently to know if such could be possible. A Cuban Bolshevik Leninist and his Australian wife are also hinting at a bloc in general. There are two comrades from the America RPC from Michigan and Kentucky. Good material but in a swamp at present. These are also to left of the IBRSU forces on many points. The Australian girl edits the English edition of the POUM bulletin ("Spanish Revolution") and the RPCers collaborate. The ILP force is now tending to intervene more decisively in the bulletin.

The bulletin in English is sold in England not only by the ILP but also by other groups, as can be seen from the masthead. The sale in US in charge of Erber - Chicago YPSL and Labor Bookshop. They would like ~~me~~ us to take some also. As you know it is an information bulletin -- fortnightly -- giving the POUM line as well as general information. They are willing to send single copies to our various branches anyway but would like to place bundle orders. Krehm will handle it in Canada. Please let me know the PC decision on this. I may have to do some technical work on said bulletin to justify my eating and flopping permanently in one of the party's hotels. The Archio Marxists and their satellites in the other near eastern countries are a powerful force in the Balkan area. Will every effort to collaborate is political base can be established.

Vitte wants to read our material first -- now in mails. The French Communist Union (Jewish group) is more or less with him. There is, it seems no other group in France. Some capitulated and some joined Communist Union according to information. Will get a fuller report on them however. Vitte may, if Barcelona Congress is postponed until March or April, make a tour to France, Belgium, Austria, Holland etc. He cannot return to Greece because of dictatorship & might even go to Austria if it could be arranged. On USSR which is one of the few points I have discussed with him so far, he agrees fully with our position. Speaks French and German. Reads Spanish and English. Comrade Vitte has promised me an article on the political situation in Greece -- which he claims is not really a Fascist dictatorship -- for the Fourth International. It's untrue that Fields - Caldis was in touch with them previously. No relations.

Cut addresses of French groups off of our mailing list, new addresses will be sent shortly. Add the following address to the list. This is the Left Wing of Austrian YCL:

Alfred G. Furstner  
Gumpendorferstrasse 143,  
Vienna, Austria.

A report on this group is enclosed with this letter.

Mail going out will not be censored (this might mean CP censors who could sabotage) as the POUM has its special service by courier, a service that I can use.

In addressing all mail to me use the following address:  
Fernando Soto, Poste restante, Perpignan, FRANCE.

The Bordiguist movement has split. I have no details yet but it appears to have cracked up on the Spanish Revolution. Now two or three groups. This means, among other things, that the RWL must scoop up the American Bordiguists in NY and Rochester. This should not be delayed. I will try to send material on this matter very soon.

The enclosed reports on various groups are as complete as possible excepting that I do not give much on Archio-Marxist groups position, history etc. but mostly organizational points. Will arrange to have material sent from Greece to Chicago and to Katzikas, who should translate some things. Some may be available in French. Old stuff may be found in your files of old ICL material. Rush through all RWL material on IAG & war position etc.

Greetings to all the comrades. Fraternally

R. Negrete