

**Report from the Investigation Committee to the DSP National Executive
May 10, 2008**

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1. Establishment of the investigation committee

On March 10, 2008, following its receipt of reports from a number of branch secretaries and members assigned to the DSP national office that documented actions by members of the LPF that were considered to be undemocratic and/or disloyal (Appendices 1 and 2), the DSP National Executive (NE) passed the following motion:

“That in the light of recent events, a subcommittee of National Committee members, comprising Lisa M, Dave H and Susan P, be appointed to investigate whether or not the Leninist Party Faction [LPF] is operating within the democratic and constitutional framework of the Democratic Socialist Perspective, in particular with respect to the constitutional duty of all DSP members to be loyal to the DSP's aims and organisation and to place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP. The committee is also charged with making recommendations for appropriate action. After receipt of the committee of inquiry's report, the National Executive will convene a meeting of the National Committee to consider the report and decide on any consequent action.”

The investigation committee began the work of collecting information pertaining to the investigation, including writing to the Leninist Party Faction National Steering Committee (LPF NSC) on March 26:

“...requesting a meeting with the LPF National Steering Committee or its nominated representative/s to obtain further information relating to the LPF leadership's correspondence to the DSP National Executive since the DSP's 23rd Congress...”

We also request that, at that meeting, the LPF NSC provide the committee with a copy of any internal LPF documents (reports, circulars, letters, etc) since the 23rd congress in which the LPF NSC instructs all members of the faction to place all of their political work under the direction of the DSP and loyally engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.

The meeting is also an opportunity for the committee to receive any other information that the LPF NSC wishes to submit to the investigation.

We suggest that the meeting... be held in Sydney as soon as possible...” (Appendix 3).

On April 2, the LPF national coordinator, Comrade John P, replied: “This is to acknowledge receipt of your March 26 email. We will discuss it at the next meeting of the LPF Steering Committee.” There has been no further response from the LPF NSC regarding a meeting with the investigation committee.

On April 7, Sydney district secretary and NE Secretariat member Comrade Alex B presented a report to the NE Secretariat meeting about activities of LPF members during and around the Australia-Venezuela Solidarity Network's

Sydney annual general meeting held on April 5, and notified the NE Secretariat of his intention to lay charges under the DSP constitution. Later that day, Comrade Alex B emailed the charges in writing to all NE members (the letter was incorrectly marked as "To the NE Secretariat", but was re-sent the next morning marked as for the NE), as follows:

"As presented by me to the DSP National Executive Secretariat meeting today (April 7, 2008), please find listed below the charges that I am bringing against Comrades John P, Marcus P, Owen R, Kerry V and Zoe K, and against the LPF as a whole, following these members' actions during and around the Sydney AVSN annual general meeting on April 5, 2008:

1. Comrade John P is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution:

Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.
- e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

2. Comrade Kerry V is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution:

Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.
- e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

3. Comrade Marcus P is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution:

Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.
- e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

4. Comrade Owen R is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution:

Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.

c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

5. Comrade Zoe K is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution: Article 4, Paragraph 2

a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.

b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.

c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

6. The Leninist Party Faction is charged with organising its members to break DSP discipline and violate the following clauses of the DSP constitution:

Article 4, Paragraph 2

a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.

b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.

c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute." (Appendix 4)

Following Comrade Alex B's verbal report to the April 7 NE Secretariat, that body passed a motion designating the existing investigating committee as the investigating body for the charges, and instructing it to issue the notifications required for disciplinary action and report back as soon as possible to the National Executive, which will serve as the trial body. That meeting also instructed that Comrade Alex B write up his report, which was to be appended to the meeting minutes and used for information reports to branches about the charges laid and the action taken by the NE Secretariat (Appendix 5).

Comrade Alex B's written report (Appendix 6) was sent to DSP branch secretaries on April 7 by the national secretary. The report was also sent to all NE members attached to the minutes of the NE Secretariat meeting.

The NE Secretariat decisions to designate the existing investigation committee as the investigating body for the charges and that the National Executive serve as the trial body were ratified by the NE on April 9 following a vote by email over April 8 and 9.

Following the NE's ratification, the investigation committee wrote on behalf of the NE to all LPF members on April 9 informing them of the charges that had been laid. That email mistakenly omitted to include the basis of the charges. On the

morning of April 10, Comrade Lisa M received the following email from Comrade Kim B, inadvertently sent to her instead of the LPF members:

“Hi comrades,
just re-read the charge list again and they don't actually state in any of the individual charges against the LPF 5 (Free them now, free them now!) or the LPF as a whole how or in relation to what we supposedly broke DSP discipline and violate the DSP constitution. That is they don't state that it is in relation to the AVSN. Instead its some generic charge that could relate to just about anything.

Will we bother to point this out to them or not?

comradely, Kim
ps: what idiots, they can't even draw up a charge sheet frigging properly. Thank Marx, these idiots are not going to the vanguard of any frigging revolution, we would all be fucked.”

Later that day, Comrade Lisa M was sent another email by Comrade Kim B stating:

“NB: Any sarcastic remarks in the last email, which was not sent intentionally to your personal address and not sent to the investigation committee in any capacity, are solely my opinion and should not be interpreted as the opinion of anyone else in the Leninist Party Faction”.

Although Comrade Kim B's email made it clear that the LPF was well aware of the basis of the charges (it states, “That is they don't state that it is in relation to the AVSN”), Comrade Lisa M that day sent a corrected version of the letter formally informing LPF members that the charges arose from LPF members' conduct during and around the Sydney AVSN AGM (Appendix 7).

On April 13, Comrade John P emailed the investigation committee asking for confirmation that the accusations made in Comrade Alex B's report (a copy of which was attached to Comrade John P's email) were the basis for the charges (Appendix 8). Due to their participation in the Climate Change/Social Change conference on April 13, the investigation committee members received that email on April 14 and replied on April 15 (Appendix 9):

“...the charges laid by Comrade Alex B (on April 7, not March 7) against the five LPF members and against the LPF as a whole are based on Comrade Alex B's report ... Of course, further information to that contained in that report may be provided to the investigating committee by Comrade Alex B, or by any other member.”

The reply added:

“DSP members who have been charged have the constitutional right to submit oral or written statements to the investigating committee. We encourage the comrades to do so, by emailing inquiry@dsp.org.au or contacting any of the committee members by phone to arrange a meeting.”

On April 21, the DSP NE meeting set the date of the NE meeting to deal with the charges as May 13. The same day, the investigation committee, on behalf of the NE, sent a letter to all members of the LPF individually informing them of the trial date and that:

“In preparation for that meeting, the investigation committee appointed by the NE has undertaken to have its report available to NE members by no later than May 10. Please note that, in addition to the accused members having the right, under Paragraph 11 (c) of the DSP constitution, "to submit oral or written statements to the investigation commission in response to the charges", paragraph 11 (d) of the DSP constitution states: 'Where the accused member (or members) does not belong to the DSP body dealing with the disciplinary case, the accused shall have the right to submit a written statement regarding the charges to the meeting of the body which considers the charges. The accused may also request that body's permission to attend the meeting that will deal with the charges'." (Appendix 10).

On April 22, the investigation committee received the “LPF statement on the disciplinary charges” (Appendix 11), which noted that each individual member of the LPF charged had not received a separate copy of Comrade Alex B’s report (even though the LPF had been sent a copy). On April 23, the investigation committee emailed a copy of Comrade Alex B’s report to each of the five members individually (Appendix 13).

2. The charges laid by Comrade Alex B

2.1 Comrade Marcus P

Comrade Marcus P attended the whole of the AVSN AGM, renewing his financial membership of the AVSN just before the meeting started.

The previous month, as a result of a series of actions by Comrade Marcus P that both contravened DSP decisions and disregarded the AVSN’s democratic structures, his assignment to AVSN work had been suspended by a vote of the Sydney Central DSP branch (Appendices 14 and 15).

Despite his suspension from this assignment, Comrade Marcus P moved a motion at the Sydney Central DSP branch meeting held four days before the AVSN AGM that the AGM be asked to support the building of campus AVSN clubs and to appoint him to coordinate the establishment of campus AVSN clubs in Sydney (Appendix 16).

The motion was discussed and rejected by a large majority of the DSP branch on the basis that different priorities had been set by the AVSN (in particular, projects to strengthen solidarity with Venezuela in the Australian trade union movement in 2008) and within the DSP. Only the LPF members present voted for Comrade Marcus P’s motion.

Disregarding the DSP branch decision and the letter sent to him the next day (April 2) by Comrade Alex B on behalf of the DSP branch executive explaining

that “the decision by the executive to suspend your assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction includes that you not organise AVSN stalls on campus or elsewhere, or organise other AVSN activities, advertise your phone number as a contact point for AVSN, attend AVSN organising meetings or stand for official positions in the AVSN unless you have been requested to do so by the Latin America solidarity fraction director or a DSP branch organiser” (Appendix 17), Comrade Marcus P came to the April 5 AVSN AGM with his motion (see Appendix 18) typed up and duplicated for distribution to all meeting participants. According to the LPF’s April 22 statement, he did this with the endorsement of the LPF national leadership, which had met and discussed this prior to the AGM (Appendix 11).

During the AVSN AGM, despite clear opposition from all the DSP members present who were assigned to the party’s AVSN-building work, as well as from others, and despite attempts by some people there to find a compromise and defuse the mood of divisiveness the debate was generating at the meeting, Comrade Marcus P insisted on pressing his main proposals to a vote – “That this AVSN AGM endorse the building of campus AVSN clubs... This AGM endorses Marcus P coordinating the establishment of campus AVSN clubs.” (Appendices 5 and 19).

After his motion was defeated, Comrade Marcus P made an interjection in a loud voice for all to hear: “So, no non-DSP members voted against my motion, is that right?” (Appendices 5 and 19). This was clearly intended to discredit the meeting’s decision as the result of a DSP “stack” and to discredit the DSP.

In the next agenda item, Comrade Marcus P again insisted that the AGM endorse him as the (or one of a number of) contact point for AVSN campus work. When others attempted to discourage him from pressing the point, he insisted that his motion be put, stating, “I want to know if I have the confidence of this meeting” (Appendix 19). This comment was apparently intended to force all the meeting participants to “take sides” on an internal dispute within the DSP, which should not have been brought into the AVSN.

Comrade Marcus P’s efforts to divide the AVSN and discredit the DSP continued after the AGM. His private discussion with an independent AVSN activist immediately after the AGM finished, in which he was clearly heard to tell her “...the reason is because members of the DSP don’t want me doing this work...”, together with a separate discussion between Comrade Alex B and that activist during which she asked if Comrade Owen R “was being expelled from the AVSN” (Appendix 20), indicates that Comrades Marcus P and/or Owen R had discussed the party’s internal debate and decisions with this person, and had done so in a way that portrayed the DSP decisions as unjust and politically destructive in order to “line up” a non-DSP member against DSP members working in the AVSN.

This was confirmed when Comrade Marcus P, in a discussion immediately after the AGM involving himself, Comrades John P and Kerry V, and a number of non-DSP Venezuela solidarity activists, said that before the meeting he had telephoned all the independent AVSN supporters and all had been willing to support his proposals for the AGM (Appendix 20). The DSP members assigned to AVSN building in Sydney had not been aware of those telephone discussions.

In the same discussion, Comrade Marcus P claimed that the DSP branch meeting held on “the Tuesday before” the AVSN AGM had approved him putting his motion to the AGM, and specifically that Comrade Lisa M (who is not a member of Sydney Central DSP branch and was not at that branch meeting) was present and had supported his motion (Appendix 20). At the Sydney Central DSP branch meeting on April 8, at which Comrade Alex B’s information report on the charges was presented, Comrade Marcus P denied having said this, claiming instead that he’d said that the report by Comrade Adam L adopted by the April 1 branch meeting proposed that, “if there was support within AVSN for doing work on campus” we would be doing that work. However, two witnesses heard Comrade Marcus P’s exact words in the discussion after the AGM. Based on this, the investigation committee doubts the honesty of Comrade Marcus P’s denial, especially given a previous similar situation in which he informed Comrade Alex B that Comrades Adam L and Lisa M had agreed at the January 31 Sydney AVSN committee meeting to his proposal to organise AVSN stalls at university orientation weeks, then later denied having said this.

Later on the day of the AVSN AGM, it was reported to Comrade Lisa M by a participant in the AGM that two leaders of another solidarity organisation, XY, had taken him aside just before the AGM to persuade him to support a motion that was going to be put to the AGM by Marcus P about AVSN campus clubs. The XY leaders told this person that Marcus P was going to be opposed at the AVSN AGM by the rest of the DSP because he is a member of the LPF and that the LPF, especially John P, is being victimised by the DSP.

Whether the lining up of XY before the AVSN AGM to oppose the DSP position was organised and conducted by Comrade Marcus P himself, or by any combination of Comrades Marcus P, John P, Zoe K, Owen R and/or Kerry V, since the LPF has admitted that it pre-organised its intervention at the AVSN AGM (Appendix 11) it can be assumed that Comrade Marcus P knew about and approved of the lining up of the XY against the party.

The investigation committee has therefore concluded that Comrade Marcus P has:

- (i) been disloyal to the DSP and its aims;
- (ii) failed to place all of his political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of his ability;

- (iii) failed to carry out his political activity to the best of his ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP; and
- (iv) conducted himself in a manner that intended to and has brought the DSP into public disrepute.

2.2 Comrade Owen R

Following a series of actions by Comrade Owen R that indicated that he was not willing to carry out his assignment to AVSN in collaboration with non-LPF DSP members also assigned to this work and that he was attempting to implement the LPF's – rather than the DSP's or the AVSN's – adopted perspective for the work (see section 4.1.2), Comrade Owen R's assignment to AVSN work was suspended by the Sydney West DSP branch executive on February 28, a decision that was unanimously ratified by the full branch on March 11.

Comrade Owen R did not attend that DSP branch meeting (he has attended only two branch meetings since the beginning of 2008), but was informed of the decision to suspend his assignment both by email (Appendix 12) and verbally by Sydney West branch secretary Comrade Rachel E.

Neither did Comrade Owen R attend the DSP branch meeting at which a report on the DSP's perspectives for the AVSN AGM was presented and discussed, despite being pre-notified, along with all branch members, of the proposed agenda. Throughout, Comrade Owen R ignored requests from Comrade Rachel E to discuss the suspension of his assignment.

Despite all this, Comrade Owen R turned up at the AVSN AGM, spoke in favour of the LPF's motion on AVSN campus clubs and coordination, and voted for all of Comrade Marcus P's motions at the meeting. As well, by "volunteering" for AVSN tasks at the meeting, he attempted to get the AVSN to override the party's suspension of his assignment (Appendix 20).

Finally, whether the lining up of the XY before the AGM to oppose the DSP position was organised and conducted by Comrade Owen R, or by any combination of Comrades Owen R, Marcus P, John P, Zoe K and/or Kerry V, given that the LPF has admitted that it pre-organised its intervention at the AVSN AGM, it is reasonable to assume that Comrade Owen R at least knew about and approved of the lining up of the XY against the DSP.

The investigation committee has therefore concluded that Comrade Owen R has:

- (i) been disloyal to the DSP and its aims
- (ii) failed to place all of his political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of his ability

(iii) failed to carry out his political activity to the best of his ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP

2.3 Comrade John P

On March 28, Comrade John P, along with all Sydney Central DSP branch members, was sent a circular by branch secretary Comrade Trish C that read in part: "Any comrades who are planning to go to the AVSN AGM should come to the branch meeting. If you are unable to come to the branch meeting, but still want to go to the AGM, you will need to be briefed on our AVSN projections, so should contact Alex". Comrade John P did not attend the April 1 DSP branch meeting, nor did he seek a briefing from any member of the branch leadership on the party's projections.

However, Comrade John P was by his own admission fully aware of the party's proposals for the AVSN AGM, as he had received a copy of the report presented to the April 1 DSP branch meeting via a posting by Comrade Marcus P to the LPF internal elist (Appendix 11).

Comrade John P was present at the whole Sydney AVSN AGM, renewing his financial membership of AVSN just before the AGM began. During the meeting he voted for all of the motions put by Comrade Marcus P (Appendix 20) and immediately afterwards participated in the group discussion with non-DSP members referred to in 3.1.

As a member of the LPF NSC, Comrade John P presumably also participated in the NSC's discussion and decision to defy the DSP branch's decisions relating to the AVSN AGM.

Within the framework of the DSP's organisational principles and understanding of leadership in the party, Comrade John P's position as the LPF's national convener brings with it a specific responsibility to lead by example and attempt to ensure that all LPF members' activity is conducted within the framework of implementing the democratic decisions of the party to the best of their ability. His actions through the LPF NSC and during the AVSN meeting disregarded this responsibility and, by choosing to blatantly flout party democracy himself, he encouraged other LPF members to do likewise.

Furthermore, Comrade John P is fully aware that, as a former DSP national secretary and a former DSP national president, and as a current member of the DSP national committee, his conduct in public political forums reflects directly on the DSP. His support for the creation of an unnecessary division in the AVSN at such an important meeting reflects badly on the DSP, undermining its hard-earned authority as a consistently constructive builder of broader campaigns and organisations.

Finally, whether the lining up of the XY leaders before the AVSN AGM to oppose the DSP position was organised and conducted by Comrade John P himself, or by any combination of Comrades John P, Owen R, Marcus P, Zoe K and/or Kerry V, given that the LPF has admitted that it pre-organised its intervention at the AGM through its NSC, it is reasonable to assume that Comrade John P at least knew about and approved of the lining up of the XY against the DSP.

The investigation committee therefore concludes that Comrade John P has:

- (i) been disloyal to the DSP and its aims;
- (ii) failed to place all of his political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of his ability;
- (iii) failed to carry out his political activity to the best of his ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP;
- (iv) conducted himself in a manner that has brought the DSP into public disrepute.

2.4 Comrade Zoe K

Comrade Zoe K was present at the April 1 Sydney Central DSP branch meeting, which voted to reject Comrade Marcus P's proposal (she voted for Comrade Marcus P's proposal at the DSP meeting), so she was fully aware of the branch's directives to DSP members attending the AVSN AGM. Despite this, Comrade Zoe K spoke strongly in favour of Comrade Marcus P's motion before leaving the AVSN AGM (Appendix 20).

The fact that Comrade Zoe K had left the AGM before the vote was taken on Comrade Marcus P's motion is, in the investigation committee's opinion, immaterial given that, as a member of the LPF NSC, Comrade Zoe K was part of that body's decision to defy the DSP branch decision by endorsing Comrade Marcus P's motion to the AGM.

Like Comrade John P, Comrade Zoe K's position as an LPF NSC member brings with it a specific responsibility to lead by example and attempt to ensure that all LPF members' activity is conducted within the framework of implementing the democratic decisions of the party to the best of their ability. Her actions before and during the AVSN meeting disregarded this leadership responsibility and, by choosing to publicly flout party democracy herself, she encouraged other LPF members to do likewise.

Whether the lining up of the XY leaders before the AVSN AGM to oppose the DSP position was organised and conducted by Comrade Zoe K herself, or by any combination of Comrades Zoe K, Marcus P, John P, Owen R and/or Kerry V, since the LPF has admitted that it pre-organised its intervention at the AVSN AGM through the NSC, it is reasonable to assume that Comrade Zoe K knew about and approved of the lining up of the XY against the party.

The investigation committee has therefore concluded that Comrade Zoe K has:

- (i) been disloyal to the DSP and its aims;
- (ii) failed to place all of her political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of her ability; and
- (iii) failed to carry out her political activity to the best of her ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP.

2.5 Comrade Kerry V

Comrade Kerry V was present for the whole AVSN AGM, renewing her financial membership of the AVSN just before the AGM began. Comrade Kerry V was also present at the April 1 Sydney Central DSP branch meeting that voted to reject Comrade Marcus P's proposal for the AVSN AGM (she voted for Comrade Marcus P's proposal at that meeting), so she was fully aware of the branch's directives to DSP members attending the AVSN AGM.

Despite this, Comrade Kerry V both spoke in favour of Comrade Marcus P's first motion to the AGM, and voted for all his motions.

Whether the lining up of XY before the AVSN AGM to oppose the DSP position was organised and conducted by Comrade Kerry V, or by any combination of Comrades Kerry V, Zoe K, Owen R, John P and/or Marcus P, given that the LPF has admitted that it pre-organised its intervention at the AVSN AGM through the NSC, it is reasonable to assume that Comrade Kerry V knew about in advance, even if she didn't directly carry out, the lining up of the XY leaders against the party.

The investigation committee therefore concludes that Comrade Kerry V has:

- (i) been disloyal to the DSP and its aims;
- (ii) failed to place all of her political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of her ability; and
- (iii) failed to carry out her political activity to the best of her ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP.

2.6 The LPF as a group

The LPF's April 22 statement to the investigation committee attempts to rebut a range of the details contained in Comrade Alex B's original report on which his charges are based (these are discussed in Appendix 22), however, their statement directly admits the central points:

(i) That the conduct of the LPF members at the AVSN AGM directly violated DSP discipline:

“It is certainly true that in presenting such a motion to the Sydney AVSN AGM, Comrade Marcus P violated the constitutional obligation of DSP members to “carry out their political activity ... in accordance with the ... decisions of the ... local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions”, i.e., he acted in explicit contravention to the Sydney Central branch meeting decision to reject presenting such a motion to the AVSN AGM. It is also true that, in voting for the motion presented by Comrade Marcus P to the AVSN AGM, comrades John P, Owen R and Kerry V similarly violated their constitutional obligation to “carry out their political activity ... in accordance with the ... decisions of the ... local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions”.

(ii) That the LPF leadership endorsed LPF members’ breaking of DSP branch discipline at the Sydney AVSN AGM:

“The LPF national steering committee discussed and endorsed, in advance of the Sydney AVSN AGM, Comrade Marcus P’s action in presenting a motion to that meeting that it endorse the building of campus AVSN clubs.”

(The LPF statement does not say on what date the NSC discussed and endorsed the LPF members’ intervention in the AVSN AGM – before or after the April 1 DSP branch meeting decision.)

The LPF statement advances the specious argument that the actions of the five LPF members at the AVSN AGM, and the LPF NSC’s prior endorsement of their actions, did not violate “the constitutional obligation of DSP members to `carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national ... governing bodies of the DSP” because the DSP National Committee meeting in November 2004 decided that DSP members “try and set up Venezuela solidarity clubs/committees on every campus where they are active” and “[that] decision has not been rescinded or overridden by any subsequent meeting of the DSP National Committee or by either of the two DSP congresses held since November 2004, and therefore remains DSP national policy”, which cannot be overridden by a decision of any DSP branch.

It is the investigation committee’s view that this argument is an attempt to rationalise, after the fact, LPF members’ deliberate flouting of the DSP’s constitution. The argument is also factually unsustainable.

First, the logic of the LPF’s argument, if generally applied, would make a mockery of both democracy and centralism in the party. It would mean that all DSP members can individually and unilaterally ignore a majority decision of their branch if they happen to think it conflicts in any way with a national decision – even one made years ago. The party would become an organisation of autonomous individuals and factions and, insofar as the party’s democratic centralist organisation is necessitated by its program, the achievement of its goals would be impossible.

Secondly, the LPF's attempt to justify such conduct in terms of the constitution and "national policy" begs the question: If the 2004 NC decision about establishing AVSN campus clubs was of such overwhelming importance that it required a group of DSP members to secretly organise against an explicit DSP branch decision, why was Sydney Central branch's supposed constitutional "crime" not raised by LPF members during the branch's detailed discussions about the AVSN work at the April 1 branch meeting (before the AVSN AGM) and the April 7 branch meeting (where the charges against the LPF members were reported)?

Thirdly, it has never been the case in the DSP – and it is ridiculous to expect – that every specific campaign projection made by a National Committee meeting that has subsequently been set aside in light of developments in the party or in broader politics is formally, explicitly overturned by an equal or higher decision-making body.

Fourth, while it probably is the case that no adopted NC or congress report since November 2004 contains the words, "The NC decision of November 2004 that DSP members try and set up Venezuela solidarity clubs/committees on every campus where they are active is hereby rescinded" or similar, the decisions of the 2008 congress could leave no doubt in any member's mind that the projections adopted by a large majority of elected delegates did not include trying to establish AVSN clubs on every campus where DSP members are active.

The LPF's Australian Politics and Campaigns counter-report to the 2008 congress, presented by Comrade Nick E, stated:

"This report proposes that the number one campaign priority for a resurfaced DSP and Resistance must be to lead the building of a broad based solidarity campaign with the Venezuela-Cuba axis. Adopting this campaign priority can help us to gain a bigger audience for Marxist ideas and explanations and to recruit, educate and train Marxist cadres through building an openly Marxist party...

Seeking to build AVSN clubs on campuses where we have a presence provides a means to winning people to Resistance through consistent and patient work alongside them in building a solidarity movement.

Rather than seeing building AVSN on campus as counter posed to building Resistance, we need to view the construction of AVSN campus clubs – and Resistance involvement in AVSN generally – as part of a strategy for rebuilding and strengthening Resistance on campus. This perspective – of making Venezuela solidarity an overarching campaign priority for rebuilding Resistance – was adopted at the November 2004 NC plenum. But it was never seriously tested and remains held back by the DSP's current build-SA-as-our-party line...

There are three proposals that I wish to emphasise here:

1. Making Venezuela solidarity the number one campaign priority for Resistance during O'Week in 2008, by using the Chavez invitation and the speaking tour of Sandino Carrizales to maximum effect. AVSN stalls should be organised on campuses wherever possible, involving members and supporters of AVSN – including members and

supporters off campus – both to build AVSN and maximise support for the Chavez visit and the tour on campus.”

That LPF counter-report was rejected by the congress, with 12 votes for and 45 against (no abstentions).

The proposals for the party’s Venezuela solidarity work that *were* adopted by the 2008 congress, in the NE’s Australian Politics and Campaigns report, were very clear:

“AVSN has consolidated over the last two years with a very wide range of events being organised as well as the brigades. AVSN is gradually attracting more independent activists, although most people just come to the AVSN events rather than the organising meetings.

The key projections are:

Sandino Carrizales speaking tour – jointly organised by AVSN and Resistance between 10 March – 15 April. It should focus on campus activists and meetings and AVSN public meetings.

Solidarity brigades – these are still the most useful tool for building solidarity with Venezuela. There will be two brigades in 2008, a May Day brigade (28 April-6 May) and another in December. We already have 12 people for the May Day brigade. We want to approach more of our allies to go on the May Day brigade.

Workers’ control seminars – We want to bring out a Venezuelan unionist to talk at workers’ control seminars in June-July. There has already been informal discussion with some Victorian unionists about this.

Chavez visit – This will be a major project for 2008. We now have an invitation from Adelaide University vice-chancellor but we need more invitations at the beginning of 2008 to confirm the visit. If the visit is confirmed, this will be a central priority.

Other projects include: participation in CLASS’s new journal of Latin American theoretical discussion; supporting Radio Venceremos’s podcasting initiative, trying to get AVSN programs on community radio; launching Jim and Coral’s book on Venezuela; trying to get a delegation of indigenous activists to Venezuela.

The AVSN national steering committee has decided to hold an AVSN national consultation/Latin America solidarity conference in 2008 but they haven’t settled on a definite date.

Given that the Australian government has no direct intervention in Venezuela at present, it is not possible to develop a mass Venezuela solidarity movement in Australia at the moment. But, the international capitalist media still has a propaganda offensive against Chavez and Venezuela so our Venezuelan solidarity work is primarily focused on educating people about what is happening. A vital part of our solidarity work is our *GLW* bureau and the regular coverage in *GLW*.”

The report specifically did *not* include DSP members establishing AVSN clubs on every campus where they are active. It was adopted with 45 votes for and 12 against.

The AVSN-building priorities listed in the adopted congress report were underlined by the national Venezuela solidarity work fraction held during the congress. That national fraction was attended by most of the LPF members then assigned to Venezuela solidarity work and included a debate, initiated by LPF members at the meeting, about establishing AVSN clubs on all campuses. The national fraction did not endorse their proposal (Appendix 23).

The DSP's Youth Work report adopted at the 2008 DSP congress (with 48 for, 10 against and 1 abstention) stated in relation to Resistance's Venezuela solidarity work:

"Venezuela is increasingly in the media, and young people are noticing. And if Chavez comes to Australia, his visit will be a major focus for Resistance..."

Our Venezuela solidarity work has been critical in confronting the media myths about Venezuela. This will remain one of our central roles for Venezuela Solidarity in the coming period.

We should continue to take the Venezuelan revolution into all of our areas of work, as well as build solidarity projects and the AVSN. The key projections for our AVSN work will be the continuing to use the Chavez petition, but maybe we also have to rethink the Chavez petition. If Chavez has already said he's coming, then maybe we can use O'week to relaunch the petition as an emergency contact network, as we probably won't get a lot of notice of his arrival. We also want to force institutions to sign on...

There has also been some discussion that we organise Latin America teach ins on campus (in May or July). We should continue to encourage as many Resistance comrades as possible to go to Venezuela, but not just be revolutionary tourists, write and learn and report back about the revolution. So we want the December brigade to be another youth brigade, and that we really push newer Resistance comrades to go."

Again, that report contained no proposal to establish AVSN clubs on the campuses where DSP members are active.

Finally, a direct rebuttal of the LPF's proposal to reinstitute the November 2004 NC decision was contained in the summary of the NE's Party Building report, presented by Comrade Peter B, adopted by the 2008 congress with 45 votes for and 12 against. It stated:

"The LPF wants the DSP to focus on recruiting students around inspiration by the Venezuelan revolution. That's how they translate the perspective in the 1997 resolution. And to back this up they pull out a scrap from a November 2004 report I gave to a DSP National Committee meeting proposing the turn we made then to place our youth cadre at the centre of building solidarity with the Venezuelan revolution. This was the proposal to try and build Venezuela solidarity groups on campuses.

But you cannot create a serious program of action for today by making a supposed fix-all out of one proposal in a turn that we did carry out three years ago to the best of our ability, and with considerable success. Stuff has gone on since then. We've had certain experiences and there have been political developments."

Given all of the above, the investigation committee does not believe that the argument presented by the LPF NSC to justify its actions and those of the five members charged around the Sydney AVSN AGM is either the result of genuine confusion or motivated by loyalty to DSP policy and democracy as the LPF asserts.

The investigation committee has therefore concluded that the members of the LPF NSC consciously organised LPF members to violate the following clauses of the DSP constitution: Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

It further concludes that as a direct consequence those actions by the LPF NSC, the DSP has been brought into disrepute.

In the process of investigating the specific charges laid by Comrade Alex B in relation to the AVSN AGM it became almost immediately clear to the committee that the investigation was necessarily dealing with the committee's original brief to investigate "whether or not the LPF is operating within the democratic and constitutional framework of the Democratic Socialist Perspective, in particular with respect to the constitutional duty of all DSP members to be loyal to the DSP's aims and organisation and to place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP". That is, the evidence collected made it very clear that Comrade Alex B's specific charges were just one indicator of the more general issue identified in the committee's original brief.

3. The conduct and character of the LPF

All of the DSP's organisational principles and party building methods derive from its goal – the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by a socialist society. A party that is serious about achieving that goal requires an organisational structure and constitution that can really advance the goal.

In this framework, DSP leaders at all levels and in all party bodies have a responsibility to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner in their adherence to and advancement of the party's political program and organisational principles. This necessarily includes respect for the DSP's democratic centralism, which is the basis upon which the party can both chart a correct course at any particular moment in the class struggle and act with the united force of all of its members.

Based on the following evidence, the investigation committee has concluded that the LPF leadership has abrogated those leadership responsibilities and misled the LPF as a whole into a collective disregard for party democracy and unity in

action. The evidence reveals, in the period since the DSP's 2008 congress especially, a *pattern* of behaviour that is undisciplined, uncollaborative and disloyal, and that has brought the party into disrepute.

Further information, in the form of LPF leadership statements and actions, combined with the apparent failure of the LPF NSC to disassociate the faction from or attempt to halt the disloyal conduct of individual LPF members, shows that the LPF leadership has undermined all DSP members' (in particular LPF members') understanding of their responsibility to carry out their political activity in accordance with the party's constitution.

3.1 A pattern of undisciplined and uncollaborative conduct

The DSP is a democratic centralist organisation. A revolutionary socialist party cannot exist without internal democracy: it requires the maximum possible discussion and democratically exchanged ideas at all levels if the party is to be able to chart a correct course through the abrupt shifts of the class struggle. Likewise, centralism is implicit in the very existence of a revolutionary socialist party: we are a voluntary union of revolutionaries precisely because united action is more effective than the uncoordinated efforts of individuals. Centralism is united action, the principle that all the political activity of party members is carried out under the overall direction of the party.

The centralism of a revolutionary party is made possible by its democracy, the vehicle through which the party solves its problems and sets its course by pooling its experiences and ideas and arriving at a collective decision. Violations of centralism not only undermine the right of the majority to decide, but weaken the party's effectiveness and make it difficult for the party to judge the correctness or otherwise of its political line, since a line that is applied only half-heartedly or by only a part of the membership, has not really been subjected to the test of events.

In this framework, factions are provided for within the DSP as a mechanism for facilitating serious debate and political clarification in the party. But for factions to successfully play that role they must also respect the discipline of the DSP constitution and the decisions of its elected leadership bodies because differences in a revolutionary socialist party are resolved not simply through debate but also by the test of practice. The "Declaration of the Leninist Party Faction" of January 2006 acknowledged this:

"Members of the faction are required to observe faction discipline within the four-point platform listed above and within the framework of the discipline of the DSP as codified in the constitution of the DSP." (Appendix 27)

Based on the following evidence, however, the investigation committee has concluded that, despite its formal declaration in 2006, the LPF does not, in practice, respect the democracy or centralism of the party as a whole.

3.1.1 The PRD split

Comrade Peter B's report on the split in the PRD, adopted by the February 18 DSP NE meeting with only Comrade Doug L, a leader of the LPF, abstaining (Appendix 28), states:

"In August 2007, Comrade Max L reported the split to the DSP National Executive and indicated that he supported the then PRD minority, which he argued had been *de facto* expelled from the PRD without democratic process.

After discussing Comrade Max L's report on August 27, 2007, the DSP NE decided, *unanimously*:

1. To write to the PRD leadership to make clear that the DSP was not taking sides in their internal dispute/split. Our policy is not to interfere in the internal affairs of overseas parties we are collaborating with and we expect the same in return. We recognise however that these relations are based on mutual political assessments and that is why we are interested in studying the various positions in the division in the Indonesian party. If there are judgments the DSP ought to make on these matters it can do so after careful study. In due course, this may influence what groups in Indonesia we work with and in what way.
2. To send a copy of the report that Comrade Max L prepared for the DSP NE on the split to the Indonesian party's majority leadership and invite them to respond to the questions raised in this report.
3. To write to the minority to request a statement of their position in the dispute and to explain to them that the DSP had not taken a position on the dispute in the Indonesian party and therefore should not be represented as supporting the minority.
4. That Comrade Max L and Comrade James B (based in Indonesia and assigned to collaborate with the PRD on certain internet publication and translation projects) should be scrupulous about not doing anything that might be construed as interference in this dispute.
5. That Comrade Max L should ask the minority leadership not to use his name or that of the DSP in their campaign for support from the ranks of the Indonesian party.

We then wrote to both sides of the dispute in the PRD, with the knowledge and agreement of the PRD leadership, and asked for their positions. Both sides agreed to send us their positions...

Material started coming in from the minority and was distributed to DSP NE members for study... the PRD minority made it clear that it was seeking a DSP intervention into the dispute in the PRD...

The DSP NE received a 39-page PRD majority position paper on November 29, 2007 but it was in Indonesian... On December 3... the DSP NE excluded discussion of the PRD split from the last pre-congress discussion because the positions from both sides of the split were not yet available to comrades to study... To have a discussion without access to this would be to do so with only one side of the political dispute available to our membership."

The January 2008 DSP congress voted to affirm the course of action agreed in August 2007 by the NE. The summary of The International Situation and Our Tasks report – adopted by a significant majority – stated:

"...Comrade Max L raised the question of the People's Democratic Party (PRD) in Indonesia and the split. The NE decided not to rush in with a premature assessment of this, its particular rights or wrongs, but to seek to collect the information from both sides of the dispute to study it and make a proper assessment.

Right now, the main document for the PRD majority is being translated. This means the NE will be able to have a discussion with the relevant information available. This is the right approach to take. It would be wrong for us to rush in to take a position on a split in another revolutionary party in another country – especially in regards to a party – the PRD – that we have had nearly two decades of close collaboration with.

One of the factors that has guided the NE's approach to this question is the respect we have for other left groups internationally, for our international comrades, and the principle of mutual non-interference.

I think if we had adopted the approach advocated by Max, and also requested of us by the PRD minority [KPRM-PRD] which wanted us to publicly campaign on their behalf, it would have amounted to interference and it would have been seen by international forces as us intervening into an internal tactical dispute of another party.

Of course this question is ultimately political, and the argument by Max, and the PRD minority, appears to be that the PRD is no longer a revolutionary force – it has betrayed its revolutionary program. That program and tradition, as Max argued, is being continued on now by the minority group.

We will study this but we are not about to rush in to denounce a party we have had such good relations with for 12 years or more. The Trotskyist movement is full of one international group denouncing another international group as 'betraying the revolution' often without any real understanding of the concrete situation that might dictate certain tactical moves. And anyway, there are tactical moves which, even if they prove to be a mistake, do not automatically amount to a revolutionary group ceasing to be revolutionary.

This is not our tradition of how to conduct international relations and it isn't something we wish to start adopting now."

The DSP NE's decisions about how to handle the differences within the DSP over the PRD split were also ratified in the Organisational Principles report and summary, which was adopted by a large majority at the 2008 congress (Appendix 29).

The translation of the PRD majority's position paper was completed on January 13, 2008, and promptly distributed to NE members. The January 21 NE Secretariat meeting scheduled a discussion about the PRD split at the first NE meeting in 2008, on February 18. That meeting decided (with only Comrade Doug L voting against) that: "The DSP should not accept the demand by the KPRM-PRD to take their side against the PRD majority leadership". The NE decided to continue the existing relationship with the PRD while also continuing to receive positions, arguments and reports of actions from the KPRM-PRD.

Ignoring the 2008 DSP congress decisions about how the party would handle its responses to the split in the PRD, repeated written requests from the NE to abide

by the majority decisions (Appendix 30) and the subsequent February 18 DSP NE decision, the LPF has this year publicly campaigned for its line on the split – that the PRD has “broken with [its] revolutionary and democratic traditions” (Appendix 25) – and publicly circulated the KPRM-PRD’s attacks on the PRD leadership for alleged “opportunism”, “parliamentarism”, “liquidationism” and “Stalinism” (Appendices 31 and 32).

The LPF campaign has included:

(i) On February 7, one month after the DSP congress decision about how to deal with this matter and less than two weeks before the NE meeting to decide on the matter, Comrade Max L, a member of the LPF NSC, posted on his SU blog an article he wrote titled “An important development on the Indonesian Left”. The article clearly takes sides in the PRD split, concluding: “It appears that the KPRM-PRD is likely to be successful in saving the tradition of the PRD and ensuring that the radical and consistent politics of the party in the past will be continued” (Appendix 32). Comrade Max L’s article was unwittingly circulated further by some international collaborators of the DSP, and picked up and used by others to attack the DSP.

(ii) In the introduction to his article on the blog, Comrade Max L makes a thinly veiled public criticism of the DSP’s insistence that he, like all party members, abide by the majority of members’ decisions on this issue, stating:

“I apologize to all those readers who have been reading my English language articles as a means of following the Indonesian left. I have been unfortunately constrained over the last seven months, and even now”

However, the party cannot set aside its requirement “to have the Constitution applied equally to all DSP members” (DSP Constitution, Article 4, paragraph 1).

(iii) Comrade Max L also posted on his blog an explicitly anti-PRD, pro-KPRM-PRD article by Comrade Sam K titled “Indonesia: Reject Parliamentarism and Opportunism”. Comrade Sam K had previously attempted to get the article published in *Green Left Weekly*.

(iv) On March 4, Comrade Sam K posted to the Marxmail elist another article he wrote titled “Indonesia: Information on the split in the PRD” (Appendix 31) in which he refers readers to his article on the launch of the KPRM-PRD, pointing out that *Green Left Weekly* did not publish it.

(v) Comrade Max L has also included on his blog a link to the new KPRM-PRD blogspot, and specifically to an interview by Comrade Sam K with the KPRM-PRD (the interviewer is not credited, however, in his article posted to the Marxmail elist, Comrade Sam K says, “The orientation of the KPRM-PRD itself is explained in detail in an almost finished interview with ZA from the International Relations Department of KPRD-PRD”, indicating that he did the interview).

(vi) Only after four written requests from the DSP NE did Comrade Max L post a clear disclaimer on his site that the views expressed on his site are not those of the DSP or *Green Left Weekly* (Appendices 33, 34 and 35).

(vii) Comrade James B, an LPF member based in Indonesia, refused for more than two months and despite numerous requests by the DSP national office, to post a statement by Papernas on the Australia Solidarity with Asia and the Pacific (ASAP) news digest elist and on the ASAP website under “Solidarity” (Appendix 36). Furthermore, Comrade James B has refused, to this day, to carry on the website material about the activities of the PRD/Papernas, despite requests by DSP leaders that he do so.

(viii) It was reported to Comrade Sam W by a non-DSP activist in Sydney that at a solidarity event on April 19 Comrade John P, upon hearing that she was soon to visit Indonesia, raised the issue of the PRD split with her and explicitly advocated for the KPRM-PRD.

Comrades John P and Max L would be fully aware that, given their positions as former DSP national executive members for many years and current members of the DSP National Committee, and in Comrade Max L’s case, the central role he has played in the DSP’s relations with the PRD over decades, any public comment by them on the split in the PRD will reflect and impact on the DSP. The investigating committee’s assessment is that in ignoring and publicly criticising the democratic decisions of the party, Comrades Max L’s and John P’s actions have also brought the DSP into disrepute.

3.1.2 Latin America solidarity work: Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane

It is the committees’ assessment that there is a clear pattern of LPF member conduct across different branches in the area of Venezuela solidarity work that reveals an attempt by the LPF to collectively implement its perspective for this work, despite its perspective having been debated and democratically rejected by a large majority at the party’s 2008 congress and, since then, by DSP branches.

The specific incidents include:

(i) The LPF NSC’s pre-meditated and organised breaking of discipline by five Sydney LPF members at the Sydney AVSN annual general meeting (as documented in section 3).

(ii) The initiation of or participation in AVSN orientation week stalls on university campuses – in contravention of the priorities set by the January 2008 DSP congress – by Comrades Marcus P, Zoe K, Kerry V and Chris A (Sydney Central branch); Owen R and Barbara R (Sydney West branch); Marce C (Melbourne branch); and Sam K (Adelaide branch). In Sydney Central and Sydney West, the

orientation week stalls were organised by Comrades Marcus P and Owen R without being foreshadowed, let alone discussed and agreed to, in *either* the Sydney AVSN committee or the DSP branches/district (Appendix 37).

(In all cases the DSP branch leaderships allowed the LPF members concerned to go ahead with the AVSN stalls because they had already advertised the stalls among non-DSP AVSN members when the DSP branch found out about them.)

(iii) At Adelaide University, Comrade Sam K implemented the LPF's perspective (as elaborated in the LPF's congress counter-report) more fully by establishing a "Venezuela Solidarity Club" at a film screening he organised on the campus under that name (not in the name of AVSN) on March 12. Again, this was done without consulting the DSP branch leadership or the other DSP comrades assigned to Venezuela solidarity work or the party's youth work.

(iv) In Brisbane, LPF members Comrades Hamish C and Gonzalo V attempted to organise a Venezuela film screening at Griffith University (neither is a student at that campus) without the knowledge of any of the DSP comrades involved in the AVSN or on the party leadership bodies (Appendix 38).

(v) The refusal of Comrade Kerry V to give the Sydney district secretary an AVSN contact list that she admitted she had taken during a Sydney AVSN public forum on March 1 (Appendix 14).

(vi) Comrade Owen R's refusal for almost eight weeks, and despite numerous verbal and email requests from AVSN co-convenor Comrade Adam L and the Sydney West DSP branch secretary, to give them the contact details of people who had expressed interest in AVSN at the stall he staffed on UWS Bankstown campus on February 25 (Appendix 21).

(vii) Comrade Owen R's organising of an AVSN stall at Sydney's Palm Sunday rally without informing any other comrade in the DSP's Venezuela solidarity work fraction or the AVSN convenor until the day before. When asked by Comrade Adam L about this, Comrade Owen R dishonestly attempted to shift responsibility onto an independent AVSN member, who later confirmed that Comrade Owen R had in fact contacted her to propose the stall (Appendix 39).

(viii) Weeks after the suspension of his assignment to AVSN, Comrade Marcus P's redesign and reprint on March 12 of an existing AVSN leaflet advertising the April 5 AGM in order to add in his personal phone number as a contact point for the event (Appendix 39).

(ix) Comrades Marcus P's and Owen R's continued participation in Sydney AVSN committee meetings, most recently on April 10, following many notifications, verbal and written, of the suspension of their assignment to the

AVSN.

(x) Comrade Ian J's organisation of MUA meetings in various states to be addressed by him after returning from the AVSN solidarity brigade without informing the DSP members assigned to coordinate the DSP's Venezuela solidarity or trade union work about this plan (Appendix 46).

This pattern of refusing to collaborate with and work under the direction of the DSP in the area of Venezuela solidarity has extended also to Cuba solidarity work.

In 2007, Comrade Marce C was assigned by Sydney district to represent the DSP on the Sydney Cuba Five/Leonard Weinglass tour organising committee in collaboration with Comrade Lisa M as the DSP's national coordinator of Latin America solidarity work. Following Comrade Marce C's move to Melbourne in January/February 2008, Comrade Owen R – and possibly Comrade Barbara R – assigned himself to the tour organising committee (or was assigned by the LPF) without any discussion with any member of his DSP branch leadership or with Comrade Lisa M.

In his letter attached to LPF NSC's March 9 letter to the DSP NE, Comrade Owen R denied that he had actually attended any Cuba Five or Weinglass tour organising committee meetings. However, at the February 12 Sydney West DSP branch meeting, he gave as his apologies (via Comrade Rupen S) that he had to attend the Weinglass tour committee meeting, and his personal email address (along with Comrade Barbara R's) has been added to the Cuba Five committee's internal email list.

3.1.3 Palestine solidarity work: Perth

In Perth, Comrade Nick E organised an Australian Friends of Palestine public forum featuring Comrade Kim B without consulting the DSP branch. While initiating and organising a public forum on Palestine featuring a DSP speaker is not problematic in and of itself, Comrade Nick E's unwillingness to inform and consult his DSP branch about the event indicates a significant breakdown in his willingness to collaborate with the party.

Comrade Nick E attempts to defend his action in a letter appended to the LPF NSC's March 9 letter to the NE. He says that he did this because there had been no objections to the possibility of such forums when raised by Comrade Kim B in an email to the NE and Melbourne branch executive on November 3, 2007. That email said:

"I have received a number of extremely supportive emails and responses from different Palestine solidarity activists and groups while I have been here. As a result, I am very happy to approach them about the possibility of them either organising their own forums at which we could profile the DSP and Green Left Weekly and our long term commitment

to this area of work or we could ask them to consider doing a joint forum with the DSP and Green Left Weekly.”

Comrade Nick E claims that the first opportunity he had to mention to his branch leadership that he was organising AFOPA to host a forum with Comrade Kim B in Perth was at the January 28, 2008, DSP branch executive meeting. This is not believable in the era of telephones and email.

The following month, Comrade Nick E arranged to assist with staffing AFOPA’s orientation day stall at the University of WA, again without discussing with the branch leadership how this fitted into the branch’s plans for campus orientation weeks. Comrade Nick E attempts to justify this by stating in his appendix to the March 9 LPF NSC letter to the NE:

“Had the branch leadership attempted to report to the branch the objectives of the tendency during orientation weeks, and contacted DSP members, such as myself, prior to the orientation weeks, it might have been possible to discern what direction the branch leadership was offering to comrades available to assist the campus intervention.”

While the failure to inform all branch members about the detailed plan for the DSP’s orientation week interventions reflects an undesirable level of disorganisation in the branch at the time, the investigation committee does not believe that Comrade Nick E, a former DSP branch organiser and National Committee member, would not be fully aware of the party’s general prioritising of Resistance stalls on campuses during orientation weeks and of the responsibility of all members to also “take the initiative” to talk to the branch leadership about an intention to allocate half their time on campus to staffing a movement stall. An argument along the lines of “The branch didn’t tell me what to do” is not an acceptable reason for any comrade not to carry out their political work under the direction of the party.

3.1.4 Women’s liberation work: Brisbane

The complete refusal of Comrade Kathy N, despite repeated email and verbal requests, to collaborate in any way with other DSP members in Brisbane branch around the party’s work in the International Women’s Day collective (Appendix 40) was in the branch executive’s opinion a conscious rejection of the constitutional requirements of all party members to carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP.

3.1.5 Environment work: Newcastle

Similarly, but more seriously, Comrade Perry B’s intervention in Rising Tide in Newcastle without informing, let alone discussing this with, his DSP branch, as well as his explicit refusal to attend any DSP branch meetings or engage with the

branch in any way (Appendix 41), is a conscious decision by another member of the LPF not to carry out their political work under the direction of the party.

3.1.6 Abstaining from major DSP projects

The LPF collectively appears to have largely boycotted the *Green Left Weekly* Climate Change/Social Change conference held in Sydney on April 11-13.

This conference was one of the party's most important projects for 2008, to strengthen socialists' weight in the emerging mass movement to stop global warming, consolidate and expand *Green Left Weekly's* role and influence in Australian politics, and win people to our tendency. Yet from among the LPF membership only Comrade Tim S from Canberra attended the whole conference, and Comrades Zoe K and John P from the two Sydney DSP branches, and Allen M and Helen J from overseas attended a small part of the conference each. Ten of the remaining 14 LPF members in Sydney district did not attend any of the conference.

3.2 A pattern of disloyalty

The DSP exists to achieve the goal of instituting socialism. Members of the party have chosen to join it precisely because they are convinced that to achieve socialism the working class must be united and conscious of its goals, a unity and consciousness that is brought about through the medium of a revolutionary party. That is, the party is a voluntary organisation made up of people who have freely chosen to devote their life to the struggle for socialism, and chosen the revolutionary party as the best instrument for winning that struggle.

Because of their belief in the goals and program of the party, members are loyal to the party. Loyalty does not mean unqualified support for every tactical and strategic decision of the party leadership. The party requires the maximum possible exchange of ideas and discussion to be able to solve its problems and chart a correct course through the shifts of the class struggle, and all members have a responsibility to try to change the course of the party if they believe it to be incorrect. It is for that reason that the DSP constitution allows for the formation of factions.

However, party democracy also means, not only respect for the rights of a minority, but also the right of the majority to insist that the work of the party not be disrupted. Therefore, the existence of factions strengthens the party only for so long as the faction members maintain 100% loyalty to the party, its program and its democratic centralist form, conducting all their efforts within the framework decided by the majority at party congresses and on elected party bodies, and giving the party the same degree of loyalty as every party member.

Without such an approach, factions weaken rather than strengthen the party. Since the party is an entirely voluntary union of revolutionaries who are committed to building a stronger party, a faction that is not loyal to the party as a whole will eventually have no purpose or role in the party.

The investigation committee has assessed that the following evidence reveals a repeated failure of the LPF leadership and members to be loyal to the party; that is, to put the interests of the party as a whole (the collective membership and its decisions) before those of the faction.

3.2.1 Collaboration with CLASS without consultation

The leadership of CLASS (Centre for Latin America Studies and Solidarity) comprises former members of the DSP (all of whom were also in the LPF) who resigned from the party in June, 2006, citing major disagreements with the DSP's political perspectives and formed the Marxist Solidarity Network (now CLASS). Soon after, they posted documents on their new website describing the DSP leadership as being on a "sectarian and liquidationist road". This led the DSP NE to unanimously (that is, including the two LPF members then on the NE) pass a motion directing all party members to conduct their political relations with the members of MSN/CLASS under the direction of the party leadership (Appendix 42).

(i) Sometime in December 2007/January 2008, Comrade Kim B arranged with CLASS to present a talk on Palestine as one of the CLASS Bookshop public forums in Melbourne. While Comrade Kim B had previously informed (in November 2007) the DSP NE and Melbourne branch executive that she had received expressions of interest from various solidarity organisations for her to speak at public events, it was only after agreeing to do the forum specifically with CLASS that she informed the Melbourne DSP branch leadership, in an email on January 8, 2008:

"As mentioned in my previous letter, I have been approached by a range of activists in Melbourne and other cities to do forums on Palestine. As a result, I will be doing a forum on Palestine at the CLASS Bookshop on February 22. CLASS has invited Green Left Weekly to also sponsor the event."

Comrade Kim B argues in a letter appended to the LPF NSC's March 9 letter to the NE that, because neither the NE nor Melbourne branch executive expressed any objections in response to her November 2007 email indicating that she had received expressions of interest for her to speak at various public forums, it was fine for her to make such arrangements. However, Comrade Kim B was aware that in the particular case of CLASS she had a responsibility to consult the branch leadership before agreeing.

(ii) Comrade Marcus P, in a discussion with a group of DSP and non-DSP AVSN members immediately after the Sydney AVSN AGM, admitted that he had

spoken to R (CLASS's representative in AVSN) before the February 16 Melbourne AVSN AGM to get his support for and ensure that the LPF's position on establishing AVSN campus clubs was adopted at the Melbourne AGM (Appendix 20).

3.2.2 Collaboration with another organisation to attack the DSP

Whichever of the LPF members organised and conducted the discussion/s with the two XY leaders to line them up to support the LPF's actions at the April 5 Sydney AVSN AGM, and against the DSP in general, the LPF national leadership's admission that the faction's intervention around the AGM was secretly pre-organised (i.e., without informing non-LPF members of the party) places collective responsibility for this anti-party activity on the LPF.

All LPF members (like all other party members) know that, whatever differences they may have with the party at any point in time, choosing to remain a DSP member brings with it the responsibility to defend the party, including immediately informing the branch leadership of any attempts by others on the left to damage the party.

3.2.3 Collaboration with individuals hostile to the DSP

A March 6, 2008, email from Comrade Kim B to the DSP Melbourne branch organisers in which she criticises the branch's handling of Palestine solidarity work and accuses the comrade heading up the work in Melbourne of "actively seeking to *not* collaborate with me politically and ... actively seeking *not* to actively politically involve me in the area of work" was blind carbon copied to former DSP member J.

Since resigning from the DSP in April 2007, then having his application to rejoin the party rejected in August 2007, J has launched a number of dishonest public attacks on the party on left elists, causing the DSP NE Secretariat to pass a motion on February 25, 2008: "That all political relations by DSP members with J be carried out under strict direction of the appropriate DSP leadership bodies" (the motion was supported by the LPF member on the NE Secretariat). Comrade Kim B's informing J of details of differences within the DSP is not the action of a loyal party member.

3.2.4 Comrade Ian J's threats against the DSP

Comrade Ian J's public harassment of the non-DSP partner of a DSP member at an MUA national conference social event in Sydney on April 6, and the threats Comrade Ian J is reported to have made against individual DSP members and the party as a whole in front of a number of MUA delegates at that event, have unquestionably brought the DSP into disrepute (Appendix 43).

3.2.5 Comrade Ian J's conduct at the ABCC rally

Comrade Ian J's public confronting of at least two other party members (separately) at a trade union movement rally in Sydney on April 9, in which he loudly condemned the DSP in front of non-DSP union activists, was disloyal and brought the DSP into disrepute (Appendix 44).

3.2.6 Comrade Andrew M on SA resignation

Comrade Andrew M's email to a Socialist Alliance NE member congratulating him on resigning from the SA, explicitly undermined the DSP's adopted perspective of building the Alliance (Appendix 45).

3.3 LPF misleadership

3.3.1 LPF "Rules of engagement"

Soon after the DSP's 2006 congress, at which the LPF declared its formation, Comrade Doug L, on behalf of the "LPF coordinating committee", wrote in a posting to the LPF internal elist titled "Rules of engagement":

"To members of the Leninist Party Faction: On the conduct of LPF members in party bodies in the immediate period ahead..."

Once the test of practice no longer leads to the correction of a line of march that has been proven by practice to be mistaken, the political homogeneity on which democratic centralism is based has been destroyed. The foundations on which disciplined organisation is built up begin to be eroded."

The investigating committee believes that this statement gave a green light to LPF members to discard democratic centralism as the basis for their conduct within and beyond the party.

3.3.2 Not informing the party of changes in LPF membership

On February 5, 2008, Wollongong DSP branch secretary Comrade Chris W received an email from Comrade Marg P revealing that she had resigned from the LPF in December 2007, following the final vote on platforms. She added that she thought the party would have known this.

The LPF leadership did not inform the DSP leadership of this change in the membership of the faction, despite knowing that the DSP constitution states:

"The faction shall inform the national DSP bodies of its platform, its members and leaders at the time of its formation, and of any changes to these after its formation." (Article 4, Paragraph 1 (i)).

It was only after two letters from the NE to the LPF leadership requesting an updated LPF membership list that the LPF NSC responded, on March 2, sending a list that did not include Comrade Marg P.

3.3.3 Including non-DSP members in the LPF discussions

On April 7, the NE Secretariat wrote to the LPF NSC informing them that the DSP membership of 11 members, all of whom were also members of the LPF, had lapsed for non-payment of dues or conference levies. The letter listed the names of the 11 members and said, “As such these comrades can no longer remain members of any faction of the DSP”.

Each of the 11 former members had received multiple notifications (from their branch leaderships or the national finances office in the case of members at large) before April 7 that their party membership was about to lapse and were given every opportunity to avoid that. It must therefore be concluded that each consciously decided, for whatever specific reasons, that they no longer wanted to be a member of the DSP.

Yet, a month after these LPF members left the DSP, the LPF elist “membership” was 62, two higher than it had been on April 6, before the 11 members left the party. While the difference between the actual number of members of the LPF and the number of addresses subscribed to the LPF elist can be explained by some members having multiple email addresses, the constancy of – and increase in – the LPF elist membership since the lapsing of 11 members indicates that the LPF has allowed people who have decided not to be members of the party to remain members of the LPF, privy to the faction’s discussions on its elist and probably privy to internal DSP correspondence and documents (Appendix 24).

The investigation committee’s assessment is that this deliberate action starkly reveals that the loyalties of the LPF are to the faction, rather than to the party as a whole.

3.3.4 LPF leadership letters to the NE

In a number of letters to the NE sent since the DSP congress in January 2008, the LPF leadership explicitly attempts to justify the breaking of party discipline by LPF members, indicating that the faction leadership has departed significantly from the DSP’s understanding and practice of leadership in a Marxist party.

(i) In its February 17 letter to the NE (Appendix 25), the LPF NSC states that it:

“Will not repudiate Comrade Max L’s actions [referring to his posting of his article “An important development on the Indonesian left” on his SU blog site on February 7] because it refuses to be complicit in the continuing suppression of the basic facts of the split in the PRD in Indonesia [and] ...refuses to be complicit in the fake neutrality espoused by the DSP NE majority [on the split in the PRD].

The LPF NSC letter also states:

“Comrade Max L is a well-known researcher and commentator on Indonesian affairs both on the left and by the mass media. It would be inappropriate to instruct him in this role to suppress information about developments on the Indonesian left...

“The LPF will not repudiate Comrade Max L’s actions because it also refuses to be complicit in the abandonment of solidarity with the Indonesian comrades struggling to continue to build a party in the revolutionary tradition of the PRD ... Blind Freddy, let alone the leadership of a serious socialist party, should be able to see that the actions of the Sari-Jabo group have broken with the revolutionary and democratic traditions of the PRD.”

(ii) In its March 9 letter to the NE (Appendix 2), in response to the NE’s letter listing a range of instances in which LPF members ignored or defied specific instructions from their DSP branch leaderships regarding their political activities, the LPF leadership states:

“All of these activities contribute to building our tendency and the Australian left and progressive campaigns... It has never been the DSP’s tradition to quash initiative among its members and require every single one of their actions to be screened first...

In a March 5 email sent to all NC members you state: “The latest blatant contravention is a posting by Comrade Sam K from Adelaide branch on the Marxism List today which attacks the PRD, Papernas and its leadership despite the NE’s decision on our approach to split in the PRD adopted February 18, 2008.” Is it now your position that even *simply providing other members of the international left with factual information* about the political positions taken publicly by the PRD-Papernas leadership on the 2009 Indonesian elections is to be regarded as an “attack on the PRD-Papernas” and therefore a “breach of discipline?” [emphasis added].

This assertion – that an article posted on an international left email list that is devoted to questioning the positions of one side in a political dispute does not publicly take sides in that dispute – cannot possibly have been made in good faith by long-term, experienced leaders in the socialist movement.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Democracy in the party

A revolutionary socialist party cannot exist without internal democracy: it requires the maximum possible discussion and democratically exchanged ideas at all levels if the party is to be able to chart a correct course through the shifts of the class struggle. Likewise, centralism is implicit in the very existence of a revolutionary socialist party: we are a voluntary union of revolutionaries precisely because we understand that united action is more effective than the uncoordinated efforts of individuals.

In this framework, factions are provided for within the DSP as a mechanism for facilitating serious debate and political clarification in the party. But for factions to successfully play that role they must also respect the discipline of the DSP constitution and the decisions of its elected leadership bodies because

differences in a revolutionary socialist party are resolved not simply through debate but also by the test of practice.

We have now had more than two and a half years of internal struggle in the DSP, during which period we have had seven months of oral and written pre-congress discussion, eight LPF counter-reports to two congresses and numerous LPF counter-reports to four National Committee meetings.

In order to maximise the chances of increasing political clarity in the discussion, the majority in the DSP have bent over backwards to not use organisational measures to deal with the LPF's increasing disregard for party democracy and discipline. Numerous leadership reports, letters, and individual and collective contributions to the discussions have urged the LPF to work for its stated aims within the framework of loyalty to the party as a whole, and many warnings were given to the LPF of the damaging consequences – for the party and the faction itself – if they chose not to do so.

Furthermore, over the past two years, the DSP leadership has repeatedly encouraged the LPF to dissolve the faction and engage fully in the party's collective discussions and activities, rather than conduct an ongoing, separate and secret discussion via the LPF elist and meetings.

While recognising the right of DSP members to form factions, the party leadership warned of the dangerous dynamic inherent in exclusive/secret discussions among sub-groups of party members, which tend to cement and exacerbate differences, rather than resolve them. The most effective way to resolve differences, it argued, is through the maximum possible engagement, in discussion and action (Appendix 47).

The January 2006 congress rejected the LPF's perspectives by a 75% majority. The majority line was tested over the next two years and at the January 2008 DSP congress, support for the majority line was even stronger, securing 80% of the delegate votes.

The views of the DSP membership were further underlined in the 60 delegates' votes for a new National Committee, which reduced from nine to three the number of LPF members on the NC, with two of those three, Comrades John P and Max L, receiving the lowest votes of the 52 NC members elected.

The party membership had a right to expect that, whatever the LPF thought of the congress outcome, the minority would respect the overwhelming decision of the majority and allow it to try to implement its perspectives. However, as the evidence documented in this report clearly shows, the LPF has proceeded along a different course.

4.2 LPF as a separate organisation

After examining all of the evidence relating to the specific charges laid by Comrade Alex B in relation to the Sydney AVSN annual general meeting the investigation committee has concluded that the charges should be upheld against Comrades Marcus P, John P, Owen R, Zoe K and Kerry V, and against the Leninist Party Faction National Steering Committee.

However, all of the evidence considered by the committee during its investigation has revealed that those LPF members' activities around the AVSN AGM are only one example of many incidents in a *pattern* of LPF conduct. The evidence presented in this report shows that the LPF has *repeatedly* violated the constitution and organisational principles of the DSP, in particular during the four months since the January 2008 DSP congress.

In sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the report, the committee has presented a plethora of evidence that multiple LPF members, including in the elected leadership of the LPF, in a variety of areas of the party's work, are no longer willing to carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and under the direction of the DSP as a whole, are no longer loyal to the DSP and are willing to conduct themselves in a manner that brings the DSP into public disrepute. The evidence specifically relating to the charges laid by Comrade Alex B, together with the evidence presented in section 3.3, shows conclusively that the LPF leadership has consciously led the LPF membership into this pattern of refusing to respect the party's democracy and unity in action.

Further, the evidence taken as a whole reveals the LPF as more than simply an undisciplined faction. In fact, the LPF is now operating as a *separate* organisation, within and outside of the DSP.

The evidence presented in sections 2 and 3 shows that:

- (i) the LPF has its own internal organisation and discipline, to which LPF members give their first loyalty even when this unquestionably damages the DSP's ability to achieve its aims;
- (ii) the LPF decides and collectively implements its own campaign perspectives and activities separate from and often in contradiction to those democratically decided by the DSP as a whole;
- (iii) the LPF collaborates separately and secretly from the DSP with other left organisations, both in Australia and overseas, including with organisations that are politically hostile to the aims and activities of DSP; and

(iv) the LPF has its own separate membership that includes people who have consciously decided not to be members of the DSP but who are given access to internal DSP discussions through the LPF's elist.

In sum, the LPF has effectively split from the DSP.

The investigation committee has on this basis concluded that the continued existence of the LPF is incompatible with the aims and organisational principles of the DSP, and that membership of the LPF is incompatible with membership of the DSP. The investigation committee is therefore recommending that the LPF be expelled.

4.3 A way forward

It is the investigation committee's view that the expulsion of the LPF is a necessary acknowledgement of and response to the actual situation in the DSP – wherein the LPF is now operating as a politically and organisationally separate organisation – and the most politically responsible measure to prevent further damage to the democracy and unity in action of the party. The recommendation is not based on any notion of collective punishment.

The evidence makes clear that the leadership of the LPF is largely responsible for the unprincipled and destructive path taken by the faction, and for the mis-education of less experienced faction members about how a faction discusses and acts in order to strengthen, rather than weaken, their party.

Therefore, in the event that the NE accepts the investigation committee's recommendation, we also propose that the NE establish a clear way forward for individual LPF members who are genuinely willing to respect the democracy and unity in action of the DSP so that they can participate in building the party without having to disavow their political views, which they may continue to argue for in the manner and at such times provided for by the party and in accordance with the constitution. The committee recommends that where comrades contact their branch secretary or the national executive to indicate that they want to do this, the NE consider readmitting them as full members of the party.

Appendices

1. Letter from NE Secretariat to LPF leadership appealing for unity

Date: Saturday, 1 March 2008 2:09 PM

To the Leninist Party Faction steering committee

Dear Comrades

We note with disappointment that Comrade Max L, a leader of the Leninist Party Faction (LPF), has failed to act on the National Executive's direction (February 13) to "promptly add a statement to his February 7 blog posting making it clear that the posting expresses his personal views on the split in the Peoples

Democratic Party (PRD) and not that of the DSP or Green Left Weekly”.

In addition to the refusal by Comrade Max L to abide by explicit and repeated political direction from the National Executive and National Executive Secretariat on our approach to the split in the PRD, there have been several reports from branch organizers and Comrade Lisa M, the comrade assigned to head the DSP’s work in AVSN at the national level, of other LPF members carrying out political interventions outside of, or against, direction from DSP leadership bodies.

These include:

1. The resistance, refusal or failure of certain LPF members, including Marcus P, Owen R, Barbara Rojas, Kerry V, Chris A, Marce C, Sam K and Nick E, to work under the direction of their branch leaderships in our interventions during campus orientation weeks in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.
2. The organization of political speaking engagements for Comrade Kim B in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, without prior discussion with local or national DSP leaderships.
3. The resistance, refusal or failure of certain members, including Marcus P, Owen R, Marce C and Sam K, to work under the direction of their branch leaderships in our intervention in the Australia-Venezuela Solidarity Network (AVSN) in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.
4. The refusal or failure of LPF member Kathy N to work under the direction of her branch leadership in her intervention in the International Women’s Day collective in Brisbane.
5. The refusal or failure of LPF member Perry B to work under the direction of his branch leaderships in his intervention in the Rising Tide collective in Newcastle.
6. The refusal or failure of LPF member James B, since November 2007, to work under the direction of the DSP national leaderships in his work on the Action in Solidarity with Asia & Pacific (ASAP) website and e-lists and to cooperate, as assigned, with the leadership of the PRD. He has refused to post appeals from PAPERNAS and reports on its mobilizations, while posting reports of the smallest actions of the Political Committee of the Poor – PRD, despite repeated requests from Comrades Pip H and Comrade KP the international officer of PAPERNAS.

For more details please see appendices.

The National Executive Secretariat urges the LPF leadership to promptly direct its members to abide by the constitutional duty of all members to “place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability”.

It is particularly critical that DSP members behave in a disciplined and loyal way in interventions that affect the building of Resistance. This is why it is essential that all DSP comrades work in a united and coordinated way during interventions on campus orientation weeks. This includes following leadership direction of allocation of comrade resources between various stalls and meeting, and the collectivization of campus contacts and contacting. Several LPF members in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney resisted, avoided and/or ignored branch leadership direction on these matters.

At a minimum, the NE Secretariat urgently seeks:

1. A commitment by the LPF leadership to instruct its members to abide by DSP leadership direction on (a) DSP stance on the split in the PRD; (b) in our work in AVSN, IWD committees, and in all other areas of movement intervention; and (c) in our work in Resistance.
2. Evidence of such a direction, in the form of a letter/email or circular from the LPF steering committee to its members and action by LPF members to comply with directions on political work conveyed by DSP leadership bodies.

As the Preamble to our constitution explains, the DSP bases its organisational structure and methods on the proven Leninist principles of organisation, summed up in the concept of democratic centralism.

“[At] the heart of this concept is the democratic principle of majority rule: all members of the DSP, in both their public political activity and in their participation in the internal life of the DSP, are required to abide by the decisions of the DSP, as determined by majority vote. Without the adherence to this basic principle by all its members the very existence of the DSP as a united and coherent organisation would be undermined. The DSP would degenerate into a loose coalition of individuals and groupings, each deciding for themselves what political activity they would engage in.”

The DSP is an organisation for revolutionary action, not a discussion club which debates interminably on any and all questions at any and all times without reaching a binding decision. The purpose of its internal

discussions is to reach decisions for action. Once a decision has been made by majority vote, as we did in our Congress less than two months ago, all members are required to loyally implement it. This ensures that the DSP maximises the effectiveness of its efforts and fully tests out its decisions.

Comrades holding minority views are not asked to give up their views. They must simply await a new opportunity to present their views when internal discussion is again authorised by the official party bodies.

Once again, on behalf of the DSP National Executive Secretariat I appeal for unity in action and cooperation of the LPF leadership in ensuring that its members abide by discipline and collectivity. We have much to do in the period ahead, including the beginning of campus year, the Climate Change-Social Change Conference and the May solidarity brigade to Venezuela. To maximise these important projects we need all DSP members to be firmly united in action.

Comradely,

Peter B

DSP National Secretary

On behalf of DSP National Executive Secretariat

* * *

APPENDICES: 1. Report on conduct of members of the LPF assigned to Venezuela solidarity work from Lisa M, 29-2-08; 2. Email from Chris L re Nick E and Palestine solidarity, 10-2-08; 3. Letter from Guy G regarding: UWS orientation day, 26-2-08; 4. Paul B regarding our political intervention into the IWD committee; 5. Letter from Pip H re correspondence with James B, 29-2-08

2. LPF NSC reply to the NE letter re LPF members' conduct

Date: 10 Mar 2008, 01:29:03 AM

To Peter B,

DSP National Secretary

March 9, 2008

Dear Comrade,

It is virtually impossible to take your March 1 letter with its alleged infringements of discipline with any seriousness given that it is framed in the most hypocritical and nonsensical “call for united action”. Since at least May 2006, you have pursued a course breaking the key principles underpinning democratic centralism and making it increasingly impossible for the party to work on the basis of united action. You have utterly failed the test of handling differences.

Excluding LPF comrades

At the very first National Committee meeting after the Congress where the Leninist Party Faction was formed, after the Congress recommended the minority do so, you presented a report branding the faction as a “hostile” force in the party. You asked the NC to brand the whole of the LPF as a “hostile” force in the very first NC after the Congress. How did you think officially branding more than 20% of party members as hostile would help achieve “unity in action”?

Since then your misleadership has step-by-step revised the DSP’s tradition of building an inclusive leadership team, i.e. inclusive of comrades with differences with the majority, to start a new tradition of leadership exclusivity. Even then you moved proposed amendments to the Constitution that would ban informal so-called “exclusive” meetings. You have turned almost every branch leadership body in the party into an exclusive meeting. Every branch executive is now an exclusive meeting of your supporters and the 20% of the party organised in the LPF is excluded

At the national level, violating Bolshevik tradition, you have rejected proportional representation for an organised faction of 20% of the party and given only token representation – just another form of exclusion. One fifth of the membership is represented with a token representation of three members of a 52 member NC. While the membership of the LPF has stayed the same (growing slightly) since the previous congress you supported a reduction of the representation of the LPF on the NC. You excluded the LPF leaders who have given most of the counter-reports to the NC and the congress.

There are two sides to the “united in action” coin: and one of these is building inclusive leadership and not — at the very start of a situation marked by the existence of differences — formally branding those with

differences a “hostile” force.

Furthermore, you have de facto excluded the LPF from the process of testing the line. The concept of a minority implementing in united action a line adopted by a majority is based on the argument that this best allows the testing out of this line. Testing out itself implies evaluation and evaluation in the light of the existence of at least one other possible perspective and assessment. During NC sessions, and most especially, during the last PCD and Congress you and your supporters made no attempt at all to engage in any real debate or exchange of views on the question of assessment of the line that the party had adopted for implementation during the previous period. The LPF presented its own such assessment and not once did any of the current misleadership attempt to answer the LPF positions and convince the LPF that its arguments were wrong. You have adopted a stance that any such evaluation will be conducted by your leadership group, separate from an evaluation of the two lines.

Furthermore again, on a practical level, LPF comrades have had a constant series of obstacles put in their way or have been ignored in the organisation of the party’s week-to-week work. Even in the current round of allegations made by you where allegations are made that LPF comrades prioritized staffing AVSN O-Week stalls and not Resistance stalls, you do not seem to realise or are ignoring the fact that in most branches no LPF members were contacted to help with Resistance stalls. Of course, this is very understandable when we note that the national secretary of the party as early as May 2006 presented a report to a National Committee branding the LPF a hostile force. This is a very unsubtle way to send a message to all your supporters to treat LPF members as enemies of the party – not to be organised but rather hindered in our political activities.

Ultimately, the responsibility for the tense relations inside our party lies with you.

The current allegations

It is very difficult for us, therefore, to take your latest allegations and call for “unity in action” as anything but a factional manoeuvre that you think somehow will advance your factional cause. The LPF’s response to your letter is therefore an appeal to you to make a turn away from your current path of failing to handle differences in the party democratically.

An initial perusal of the incidents you have outlined indicates that it’s a list of activity including the following:

- (a) building solidarity with revolutionary Venezuela, by building AVSN on campus;
- (b) taking advantage of public speaking opportunities to raise the issue of the oppression of the Palestinian people;
- (c) helping build independent women’s liberation movement activity; and
- (d) initiating and facilitating public discussion on Indonesia on the left.

All of these activities contribute to building our tendency and the Australian left and progressive campaigns. None of these have been carried out in a way that has damaged our party’s public image. It has never been the DSP’s tradition to quash initiative among its members and require every single one of their actions to be screened first. Comrades have always been free to take such initiatives as long as it is within the party’s current line of march and is not damaging the party. The allegations you have raised have not at all presented any analysis showing that the actions of any of the comrades concerned have damaged the party politically.

Having excluded LPF comrades from DSP leadership bodies, it seems your intention is now to exclude them from participation in any political work at all, trying to insist that every activity must come under the detailed supervision of a majority commissar. Indeed, this control mania now even seems to extend to demands to regulate LPF comrades’ social life. At the February 25 DSP NE Secretariat meeting one of the accusations made by you against an LPF member was that he held a social barbeque of workmates and friends at his house and failed to invite any majority commissars to supervise any potential political discussion!

All this super-centralism is of course in total contradiction with the plurality and flexibility in our supposed “broad party”, Socialist Alliance. But perhaps not – there’s little contradiction if the “broad party” is nothing much more than the DSP masquerading as Socialist Alliance, which is the reality.

In any case, we have forwarded your letter to all members of the LPF and have asked for the facts of the incidents from them. Appended are the initial responses from some of the comrades. We will forward

responses from other comrades as they come in. From these responses it is clear that the allegations made against these comrades are false.

We note that even before you received any responses to these allegations, on March 5 you called an NE meeting for March 10 to discuss “the serious situation facing the party with several members of the Leninist Party Faction refusing to abide by explicit party direction on a range of political interventions” – not “with several members of the Leninist Party Faction ALLEGED to have refused to abide by explicit party direction on a range of political interventions”.

Finally, in a March 5 email sent to all NC members you state: “The latest blatant contravention is a posting by Comrade Sam K from Adelaide branch on the Marxism List today which attacks the PRD, Papernas and its leadership despite the NE’s decision on our approach to split in the PRD adopted February 18, 2008.” Is it now your position that even simply providing other members of the international left with factual information about the political positions taken publicly by the PRD-Papernas leadership on the 2009 Indonesian elections is to be regarded as an “attack on the PRD-Papernas” and therefore a “breach of discipline”?

Comradely,

John P

For the LPF Steering Committee

Appendices attached from: 1. Nick E; 2. Owen R; 3. Ian J; 4. Perry B; 5. Sam K; 6. Marcus P; 7. Kim B

3. Investigation committee request for a meeting with LPF leadership (before charges were laid)

Date: Wednesday, 26 March 2008 10:53 AM

To: Leninist Party Faction National Steering Committee

c/ John P, LPF National Convener

From: DSP investigation committee

Dear comrades,

As you are aware, the March 10, 2008, DSP National Executive meeting passed the motion:

"That, in the light of recent events, a subcommittee of National Committee members, comprising Lisa M, Dave H and Susan P, be appointed to investigate whether or not the Leninist Party Faction (LPF) is operating within the democratic and constitutional framework of the Democratic Socialist Perspective, in particular with respect to the constitutional duty of all DSP members to be loyal to the DSP's aims and organisation and to place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP. The committee is also charged with making recommendations for appropriate action. After receipt of the committee of inquiry's report, the National Executive will convene a meeting of the National Committee to consider the report and decide on any consequent action."

As part of the committee's investigation, we are requesting a meeting with the LPF National Steering Committee or its nominated representative/s to obtain further information relating to the LPF leadership's correspondence to the DSP National Executive since the DSP's 23rd Congress (letters dated February 17 and March 9, 2008).

We also request that, at that meeting, the LPF NSC provide the committee with a copy of any internal LPF documents (reports, circulars, letters, etc) since the 23rd congress in which the LPF NSC instructs all members of the faction to place all of their political work under the direction of the DSP and loyally engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.

The meeting is also an opportunity for the committee to receive any other information that the LPF NSC wishes to submit to the investigation.

We suggest that the meeting, which will be attended by the three members of the investigating committee, be held in Sydney as soon as possible. Please contact us at inquiry@dsp.org.au or by phone to organise a mutually convenient time.

Comradely,
Lisa M, Dave H, Susan P

4. Alex B letter to NE notifying of charges laid

Subject: [DSP Ne] To DSP NE: written charges against five comrades and the LPF
Date: Tuesday, 8 April 2008 11:39 AM

To the DSP National Executive

Dear Comrades,

Please find below the charges that I am bringing against against Comrades John P, Marcus P, Owen R, Kerry V and Zoe K, and against the LPF as a whole, following these members' actions during and around the Sydney AVSN annual general meeting on April 5, 2008. These were presented to the DSP National Executive Secretariat meeting yesterday (April 7, 2008) and I am now making clear that I am bringing the charges before the NE as a whole as well.

1. Comrade John P is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution:
Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.
- e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

2. Comrade Kerry V is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution:
Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.
- e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

3. Comrade Marcus P is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution:
Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.
- e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

4. Comrade Owen R is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution:
Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the

DSP to the best of their ability.

c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

5. Comrade Zoe K is charged with violating the following clauses of the DSP constitution:

Article 4, Paragraph 2

a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.

b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.

c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

6. The Leninist Party Faction is charged with organising its members to break DSP discipline and violate the following clauses of the DSP constitution:

Article 4, Paragraph 2

a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.

b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.

c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

Comradely,

Alex B

DSP NE Secretariat member & DSP Sydney District Secretary

5. Minutes of DSP NE Secretariat at which Alex B laid charges

Minutes of DSP NE Secretariat April 7, 2008

Present: Dick N, Alex B, Will W, Brianna P, Doug L, Pip H, Stuart M, Graham M (chair), Peter B (minutes), Margarita W, Sue B, Jim C & Lisa M.

Motion 2: That the National Secretary write to the LPF leadership informing it that the DSP membership of the following comrades has lapsed for non-payment of dues or conference levies. As such they can no longer remain members of any faction of the DSP.

1. Ben R (March 19 for non-payment of conf levy)
2. Jason C (March 19 for non-payment of conf levy)
3. Louise M (March 19 for non-payment of conf levy)
4. Stella R (March 31 for not paying two quarters of dues)
5. Allan L (March 31 for not paying two quarters of dues)
6. James P (March 31 for not paying two quarters of dues)
7. Sarah S (March 31 for not paying two quarters of dues)
8. Lachlan M (March 31 for not paying two quarters of dues)
9. Barbara R (March 31 for not paying two quarters of dues)
10. Sam K (March 31 for not paying two quarters of dues)
11. Marce C (March 31 for not paying two quarters of dues)

Both motions voted on together. Adopted unanimously.

3. Report from Alex B on the Sydney AVSN AGM last Saturday, where five members of the LPF intervened directly against directions from the Sydney DSP branch (see attached).

Motion 1: That the existing investigating commission comprising Lisa M, Dave H and Susan P be designated the investigating body for the charges laid by Alex B against LPF members Marcus P, John P, Zoe K, Kerry V and Owen R and the LPF as a group and that it be instructed to issue the appropriate notifications required for disciplinary action under the constitution. The investigating committee should report back as soon as possible to the National Executive which will serve as the trial body.

Motion 2: That Alex B write up his report and this be appended to these minutes and used for information reports to Sydney and other branches about the charges laid and the action taken by the NE Secretariat.

Motions adopted

1 abstention: Doug L

6. Alex B report on the basis for the charges

Report to DSP branches about the conduct of LPF members at the Sydney AVSN annual general meeting on 5-4-08, and charges laid

[This report is based on a report presented to the DSP NE Secretariat on 7-4-08 by Alex B.]

This report presents information about the conduct of five LPF members at the Sydney AVSN AGM on 5-4-08. The information is the basis for charges being laid by Alex B against the five members, and the LPF as a whole, on 7-4-08.

The relevant facts are:

1. Despite his assignment to AVSN work having been suspended by Sydney Central branch, Comrade Marcus P attempted to amend the agenda of the AVSN AGM to include a separate report on "AVSN's campus work", to be presented by him. Following discussion Marcus P withdrew this motion but then, during the agenda item on solidarity campaigning, moved a motion that read, in part: "That this AVSN AGM endorse the building of campus AVSN clubs" and "This AGM endorses Marcus P coordinating the establishment of campus AVSN clubs."

Marcus P had presented and spoken in favour of these proposals at the previous Sydney Central DSP meeting (1-4-08). His proposals were discussed and decisively rejected by the DSP branch. (Only LPF members voted in favour of Marcus's proposal.) Despite the DSP branch's decision, Marcus came to the AVSN meeting with his motion and a motivation for it typed up and duplicated for all in attendance.

2. It has since been revealed that LPF member(s) had also discussed the motion and attempted to line up support for it among a number of non-DSP members of AVSN before the AVSN meeting.

3. Marcus pressed his motion to a vote at the AVSN meeting, despite the fact that it was clear that DSP members present were opposing his motion and despite some at the meeting attempting to develop a compromise motion.

4. All five LPF members present at the AVSN meeting (John P, Kerry V, Marcus P, Owen R, Zoe K) voted for Marcus's motion.

5. After the vote, Marcus made a comment loudly enough for all present to hear along the lines of "So only DSP members voted against my motion?". (In fact, of the three non-DSP members of AVSN who voted, one voted for, one against and one abstained.) Whether or not Marcus was aware that his comment was untrue, his interjection was an attempt to discredit the democratic vote of AVSN and/or to discredit the DSP in the eyes of other AVSN members.

6. Later in the meeting, during the item to elect Sydney AVSN office-bearers, Marcus nominated himself to be a “campus work contact point” for AVSN, and moved a motion that the AVSN AGM endorse him in this role. This motion was also rejected, by a larger margin. The three LPF members still present voted for Marcus’s motion.

7. During the meeting, Owen R volunteered to enter contact information into the AVSN database.

8. After the meeting had finished, Marcus P, John P and Kerry V attempted to lobby [non-DSP participants] to support the establishment of AVSN campus clubs. During that discussion, according to two people involved, Marcus P claimed that he had been authorised by the DSP to move his motion at the AVSN meeting.

Violation of discipline

These actions by the five LPF members were clear violations of DSP discipline because they contradicted the decisions of two DSP branches’ membership meetings.

Of the five LPF members who participated in this breaking of discipline, three (Kerry V, Marcus P & Zoe K) were present at the Sydney Central branch meeting on 1-4-08. A fourth, John P, received an email from Sydney branch secretary Trish C that read in part: “Any comrades who are planning to go to the AVSN AGM should come to the branch meeting. If you are unable to come to the branch meeting, but still want to go to the AGM, you will need to be briefed on our AVSN projections, so should contact Alex.” John P neither attended the branch meeting nor sought a briefing on our projections.

Owen R had been suspended from AVSN work by a decision of a Sydney West DSP branch meeting in March. Nevertheless, at the AVSN AGM he volunteered to take on work on behalf of AVSN and voted in favour of Marcus’s motion.

Following the Sydney Central DSP branch meeting that explicitly rejected Marcus P’s proposal to recommend to AVSN that it establish campus clubs, an email was sent by Sydney district secretary Alex B to Marcus P explicitly reminding him that his assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction and AVSN work is currently suspended and that if he continues to organise regular AVSN activities (as he was threatening to do) this would be a violation of the constitutional requirement of DSP members to place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP. The email spelt out:

I explicitly informed you over the telephone on 12 March 08, and am repeating in writing here, that the decision by the executive to suspend your assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction includes that you not organise AVSN stalls on campus or elsewhere, or organise other AVSN activities, advertise your phone number as a contact point for AVSN, attend AVSN organising meetings or stand for official positions in the AVSN unless you have been requested to do so by the Latin America solidarity fraction director or a DSP branch organiser.

Marcus P acknowledged on April 3 (two days before the AVSN AGM) that he had received this email.

Charges laid

As a result of the actions described above, Comrades Marcus P, John P, Kerry V, Owen R and Zoe K have been charged with violating the following sections of Article 4, Paragraph 2 of the DSP constitution:

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

- e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

Given the involvement of two members of the LPF national steering committee (John P and Zoe K) and the pre-meditated and organised nature of this breaking of discipline, charges have also been laid against the LPF as a whole (in addition to the charges laid against the individual members).

The LPF is charged with: Organising its members to break DSP discipline and to violate the constitution of the DSP. This relates to:

Article 4, Paragraph 2

- a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.
- e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute.

The National Executive Secretariat meeting on March 7, 2008, adopted (with 1 abstention by Comrade Doug L) the following motion in relation to the charges laid:

“That the existing investigating commission comprising Lisa M, Dave H and Susan P be designated the investigating body for the charges laid by Alex B against LPF members Marcus P, John P, Zoe K, Kerry V and Owen R, and the LPF as a group”, and that the committee “should report back as soon as possible to the National Executive, which will serve as the trial body”.

7. Corrected NE letter to LPF notifying of charges laid

[Letter sent to all LPF members individually]

Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2008 9:46 AM

Subject: To all LPF members: Corrected NE notification of charges

To: All members of the Leninist Party Faction

From: DSP National Executive

Dear comrades,

We are writing to inform you that the following charges were laid on March [sic] 7, 2008, by DSP NE member Comrade Alex B. His letter to the National Executive states:

"As presented by me to the DSP National Executive Secretariat meeting today (April 7, 2008), please find listed below the charges that I am bringing against Comrades John P, Marcus P, Owen R, Kerry V and Zoe K, and against the LPF as a whole, following these members' actions during and around the Sydney AVSN annual general meeting on April 5, 2008:

[The specific charges were listed here.]”

The National Executive has designated the existing investigating committee, comprising Lisa M, Dave H and Susan P, as the investigating body for these charges, and directed it to report back as soon as possible to the National Executive, which will serve as the trial body.

Under Paragraph 11 (c) of the DSP constitution, "Every member under the jurisdiction of the DSP body dealing with the charges shall be obliged to furnish the investigation commission with any information it may request. The accused member (or members) shall have the right to submit oral or written statements to the investigation commission in response to the charges."

The investigation committee can be contacted at inquiry@dsp.org.au or by phone to any member of the committee.

A date for the National Executive to consider the charges has not yet been set. The National Executive will notify you at least seven days in advance of that date. Paragraph 11 (d) of the DSP constitution states: "Where the accused member (or members) does not belong to the DSP body dealing with the disciplinary case, the accused shall have the right to submit a written statement regarding the charges to the meeting of the body which considers the charges. The accused may also request that body's permission to attend the meeting that will deal with the charges."

Comradely,

Lisa M, Dave H, Susan P (Investigating Committee)
for the DSP National Executive
cc: DSP NE

8. Letter from LPF national convener to IC re basis of charges

Sent: Sunday, April 13, 2008 11:08 PM
Subject: Re charges against LPF

To DSP NE investigation commission:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your email of April 9 informing me and the members of the LPF that DSP NE member Alex B has brought charges against five individual LPF members and "the LPF as a whole".

The charges, which your email mistakenly states were "laid on March 7", do not provide any information as to the specific acts that the charges are based on. However, on April 7 DSP national secretary Peter B sent an email to DSP branch secretaries/organisers with "the report to be relayed to your branch members for their information about the charges laid today." The introduction to this report states that it "is based on a report presented to the DSP NE Secretariat on 7-4-08 by Alex B". Can you confirm that the accusations made in Comrade Alex B's written report sent out by Comrade Peter B are the basis on which the charges have been laid.

Comradely,
John P,
LPF national convener,
For the LPF National Steering Committee
9 Apr 2008 23:56

[Attached to this letter were: 1. The investigation committee's two notifications to the LPF of the charges laid; 2. Comrade Alex B's report to the NE Secretariat on the charges laid, as distributed to branch secretaries for reports to branches.]

9. Reply from the IC to LPF national convener re basis of charges

Date: Tuesday, 15 April 2008 12:32 PM

To John P, LPF National Convener

Dear John,

Responding to the queries in your email of April 13, the charges laid by Comrade Alex B (on April 7, not March 7) against the five LPF members and against the LPF as a whole are based on Comrade Alex B's report, which was presented verbally to the April 7 National Executive Secretariat meeting then distributed in written form with the minutes of that meeting to all National Executive members (ie: the same report that

you appended to your letter to us). Of course, further information to that contained in that report may be provided to the investigating committee by Comrade Alex B, or by any other member.

The April 7 NE Secretariat meeting passed two motions (with Comrade Doug L abstaining) relating to dealing with the charges. The first motion – "That Alex B write up his report and this be appended to these minutes and used for information reports to Sydney and other branches about the charges laid and the action taken by the NE Secretariat" – was implemented by the national secretary on April 8, when the charges and report were received in writing from Comrade Alex B.

The second motion – "That the existing investigating commission comprising Lisa M, Dave H and Susan P be designated the investigating body for the charges ...The investigating committee should report back as soon as possible to the National Executive, which will serve as the trial body" – was ratified by the National Executive on April 9. The next day the investigating committee, on behalf of the NE, notified the LPF in writing of the charges against them and that the charges were laid as a result of LPF members' conduct during and around the Sydney AVSN annual general meeting on April 5, 2008.

The letter formally notifying the LPF that charges had been laid also noted that DSP members who have been charged have the constitutional right to submit oral or written statements to the investigating committee. We encourage the comrades to do so, by emailing inquiry@dsp.org.au or contacting any of the committee members by phone to arrange a meeting.

Comradely,
Lisa M, Dave H and Susan P
DSP Investigation Committee

10. Letter from NE to LPF notifying date of NE to deal with charges

[Letter sent to all LPF members individually]

Date: Monday, 21 April 2008 10:50 PM

To: Leninist Party Faction
cc: DSP National Executive

Dear comrades,

We are writing on behalf of the DSP National Executive to inform you that the NE has now set the date of the NE meeting to deal with the charges laid by Comrade Alex B on April 7 against Comrades John P, Marcus P, Owen R, Zoe K and Kerry V, and the LPF as a group. The NE meeting to deal with the charges will be held on Tuesday May 13, at 10.30am.

In preparation for that meeting, the investigation committee appointed by the NE has undertaken to have its report available to NE members by no later than May 10.

Please note that, in addition to the accused members having the right, under Paragraph 11 (c) of the DSP constitution, "to submit oral or written statements to the investigation commission in response to the charges", paragraph 11 (d) of the DSP constitution states: "Where the accused member (or members) does not belong to the DSP body dealing with the disciplinary case, the accused shall have the right to submit a written statement regarding the charges to the meeting of the body which considers the charges. The accused may also request that body's permission to attend the meeting that will deal with the charges."

Comradely,
Lisa M, Dave H, Susan P (investigation committee)
for the DSP National Executive
April 21, 2008

11. LPF statement on disciplinary charges

Date: Tuesday, 22 April 2008 4:31 PM

To DSP NE investigation commission

Statement by the LPF National Steering Committee on disciplinary charges against five LPF members and 'the LPF as a whole' (adopted April 20)

Dear Comrades,

On April 7, DSP National Executive member Alex B brought charges against the "LPF as a whole" (i.e., all of its members) of having violated the following constitutionally specified obligations of DSP membership (Article 4, Paragraph 2):

- "a. To be loyal to the DSP and its aims.
- "b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.
- "c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.
- "e. To conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the DSP into public disrepute."

An identical set of charges has also been brought by Comrade Alex B against LPF members Zoe K, Marcus P, John P, Owen R and Kerry V. Notification of these charges was emailed to each LPF member on April 9-10 by DSP National Executive member Lisa M on behalf of the commission established by the NE to investigate the charges under Article 4, Paragraph 11. Other than this notification, no other communication has so far been sent by this commission to any of the accused members.

The "charge sheet" does not indicate what the specific act/s the five accused LPF members or all of the members of the LPF are alleged to have committed that are in violation of the above clauses of the DSP constitution. However, specific accusations of "violating DSP discipline" and the DSP constitution are made against the five LPF members and the LPF "as a whole" by Comrade Alex B in his "Report to DSP branches about the conduct of LPF members at the Sydney AVSN annual general meeting on 5-4-08" (sent out to all DSP branch secretaries/organisers by DSP national secretary Peter B on April 7 "to be relayed to your branch members for their information about the charges laid today").

In Comrade Alex B's report, the LPF "as a whole" is accused of "organising its members to violate the Constitution of the DSP" because two of the charged five LPF members (Zoe K and John P) are members of the LPF national steering committee. To bring charges of violating the constitution of the DSP against the entire membership of the LPF because of the alleged actions of two members of the LPF NSC is a grotesque example of guilt by association.

In his report, Comrade Alex B accuses Comrade Marcus P of having violated "DSP discipline" because, in attending the April 5 Sydney AVSN AGM, Comrade Marcus P allegedly ignored the decision of the Sydney Central branch executive to "suspend Marcus's assignment to the Lain American Solidarity Fraction" (i.e., participation in this DSP committee, not to "suspend his assignment to AVSN work" as Comrade Alex B alleges in his report).

Comrade Alex B's accusation against Comrade Marcus P ignores the fact that the report on AVSN projections adopted by the April 1 Sydney Central branch meeting (which is a higher decision-making body than the branch executive) explicitly encouraged "everyone to come on Saturday" to the AVSN AGM, not "everyone except Comrade Marcus P". So the allegation that Comrade Marcus P violated "DSP discipline" by attending the Sydney AVSN AGM is false.

In his report, Comrade Alex B accuses Comrade John P of violating “DSP discipline” for attending the Sydney AVSN AGM without having contacted Comrade Alex B to be “briefed on our AVSN projections”, as recommended to all branch members unable to attend the April 1 branch meeting in an email sent to all branch members by branch executive member Trish C prior to the branch meeting.

It is true that Comrade John P did not attend the April 1 branch meeting. Nor did he contact Comrade Alex B to get “briefed” on the branch meeting’s decisions on projections for AVSN work before doing so. However, a written copy of the report adopted by the branch meeting was forwarded on April 3 by branch executive member Adam L to Comrade Marcus P, which he posted on the LPF e-list for the information of all LPF members in Sydney. Comrade John P (as the moderator of this e-list) was therefore fully informed of the Sydney Central branch’s adopted “projections” for AVSN work. What more about the branch meeting’s adopted projections for AVSN work could a “briefing” from Comrade Alex B provide Comrade John P?

Comrade Alex B’s report accuses comrades Zoe K, Marcus P, John P, Owen R and Kerry V of having violated “DSP discipline” because they “voted for” a motion presented to the AVSN AGM that read in part “That this AGM endorse the building of campus AVSN clubs”. Comrade Zoe K however did not vote for this motion as she was not present at the Sydney AVSN AGM when the vote on it was taken (having had to leave the meeting before the vote was taken).

Comrade Alex B’s report alleges that, in presenting this motion to the AVSN AGM, Comrade Marcus P violated “DSP discipline”, and that in voting for the motion comrades Marcus P, John P, Owen R and Kerry V violated “DSP discipline” — because the Sydney Central BM adopted a report that opposed presenting such a motion to AVSN AGM.

It is certainly true that in presenting such a motion to the Sydney AVSN AGM, Comrade Marcus P violated the constitutional obligation of DSP members to “carry out their political activity ... in accordance with the ... decisions of the ... local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions”, i.e., he acted in explicit contravention to the Sydney Central branch meeting decision to reject presenting such a motion to the AVSN AGM. It is also true that, in voting for the motion presented by Comrade Marcus P to the AVSN AGM, comrades John P, Owen R and Kerry V similarly violated their constitutional obligation to “carry out their political activity ... in accordance with the ... decisions of the ... local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions”.

But none of these comrades violated the constitutional obligation of DSP members to “carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national ... governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions”.

In November 2004, the DSP National Committee made a decision that DSP members “try and set up Venezuela solidarity clubs/committees on every campus where they are active” and that, “We should be single-minded about this”. This decision has not been rescinded or overridden by any subsequent meeting of the DSP National Committee or by either of the two DSP congresses held since November 2004, and therefore remains DSP national policy.

The constitution of the DSP (Article 4, Paragraph 6) states that “Decisions by higher bodies shall be binding on lower bodies, and on every member of those bodies.” The accusation that, in presenting a motion to the Sydney AVSN AGM seeking to have it endorse the building of campus AVSN clubs, Comrade Marcus P violated “DSP discipline” and the constitutional obligations of DSP membership is therefore false. So too is the accusation that, in voting for this motion, the other charged LPF members violated “DSP discipline” and the constitutional obligations of DSP membership.

The LPF national steering committee discussed and endorsed, in advance of the Sydney AVSN AGM, Comrade Marcus P’s action in presenting a motion to that meeting that it endorse the building of campus AVSN clubs. As Comrade Marcus P’s action was not a violation of “DSP discipline” and his constitutional obligations as a DSP member, this decision was entirely within the constitutional framework of the DSP. The accusation made by Comrade Alex B upon which he has based his charges against the “LPF as a

whole”, is therefore false.

Comradely,
John P
LPF national convenor
On behalf of LPF national steering committee

12. From Rachel E to Sydney West LPF members re AVSN stall at UWS O-week and suspension of Owen R’s assignment to AVSN

Dear Comrade Owen

The Sydney West DSP branch executive on Thursday (28 February) heard a report about the AVSN stalls that were set up at Bankstown UWS (on Monday 25 February) and Sydney University (Wednesday 27 February) during student orientation weeks.

As you are aware, I was organising DSP comrades for Resistance stalls for Banktown’s o-week. I sent an email to the Sydney West branch email list and texted and rang branch members to get their availability. You did not return my calls. The only LPF comrade to respond to my organising efforts was Barbara Rojas, who texted me saying she was available for Monday and Tuesday’s stalls.

As in eventuated, she did not assist with the Resistance stall on those days. She did help with the Resistance stall for a couple of hours on Wednesday, but staffed the AVSN stall on the Monday.

When I rang on Monday and asked why you were staffing an AVSN stall and not a Resistance stall you hung up on me. When I texted you asking you, formally, to staff the Resistance stall, you did so, but only for 20 minutes according to the comrades on the Resistance stall.

It is incumbent on all DSP members to work in a collaborative way to ensure that the party building line adopted by the January 2008 congress is implemented to the best of our ability. It is not acceptable for the LPF to attempt to implement its line contrary to the majority decisions of the DSP and its leadership bodies. The actions of LPF members in Sydney West branch in this matter, including yourself, represent a serious breach of trust that cannot be ignored.

Therefore, the Sydney West executive decided on 28 february to suspend your assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction to take effect immediately.

The executive will consider reinstating you to this assignment if:

- * you acknowledge the mistake made in organising AVSN campus stalls without collaboration with the LA fraction director, the Resistance leadership or the DSP exec; and
- * you undertake to conduct all future work in the AVSN and in the arena of Latin America solidarity work under the strict guidance of the LA solidarity fraction.

I await your reply.

Comradely,
Rachel E
DSP Sydney West branch secretary
2 March 2008

Dear comrade Owen

Further to the letter I already sent you, I am writing to direct you to hand over to myself and/or Adam L details about all AVSN contacts that you currently have in your possession that you have gathered from Bankstown and any others that come into your possession in the future.

In solidarity

Rachel E
Western Sydney DSP Sydney district secretary
2 March 2008

Dear Comrade Barbara

I have been directed by the Sydney West DSP executive to write to you regarding the AVSN stall that you participated in during Bankstown UWS O-week on 25 February. This stall was organised independently of any formal decision by AVSN or the DSP. Further, it was organised without any informal collaboration with the DSP's Latin America solidarity fraction leadership, the Resistance comrades organising O-week on Bankstown campus, and the DSP Sydney West branch leadership.

This was in direct contradiction to the text I received from you that stated you were going to help with the Resistance o-week stall on Monday and Tuesday.

In addition, while an AVSN stall at Bankstown campus scheduled for Wednesday 27 February (that didn't end up happening) was announced on the AVSN Sydney email list, among DSP members at least, the only people who knew in advance about the February 25 AVSN stall at Bankstown campus were in the LPF.

It is incumbent on all DSP members to work in a collaborative way to ensure that the party building line adopted by the January congress is implemented to the best of our ability. It is not acceptable for the LPF to attempt to implement its line independent of the decisions of the DSP and its leadership bodies.

The actions of LPF members in recent weeks, including this matter in Sydney (organising AVSN stalls at campus O-weeks without direction or collaboration with the DSP's Latin America fraction or the DSP branch leadership), call into question the LPF's stated aim of working as a loyal minority within the DSP.

The branch executive has asked me to remind you that:

* you are not currently assigned to the Latin America solidarity fraction

* while you remain a member of the DSP, you are required to abide by the rules of the organisation, including Article 4, paragraph 2 b) & c) of the constitution which stipulate that members are obliged:

b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.

c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

If you wish to be assigned to Latin America solidarity work, please advise me or another executive member so that this can be discussed by the branch executive. In the meantime, please detail to me any such plans you have already made for work in this area (and who you think might be involved) so that these can be discussed collectively and carried through under the direction of the DSP. Do not make any such plans now before discussing the matter further with me.

Comradely,

Rachel E

DSP Sydney West branch secretary

2 March 2008

13. Letter to five LPF members charged, with Alex B's report

[Emailed to each of the five comrades individually.]

Date: Thursday, 24 April 2008 12:12 AM

Dear Comrades Marcus P, John P, Zoe K, Owen R and Kerry V,

It has been brought to our attention in the "LPF Statement on the disciplinary charges" received yesterday that, while the LPF leadership has received a copy of Comrade Alex B's report outlining the basis of his charges against you and the LPF as a group, you have not been individually sent a copy of Comrade Alex B's report. Please find a copy of that report attached. Please also note that, as explained in our April 15 letter to the LPF national leadership confirming that Comrade Alex B's report is the basis of the charges, "further information to that contained in that report may be provided to the investigating committee by Comrade Alex B, or by any other member".

Comradely,

Lisa M, Dave H, Susan P
DSP Investigation Committee"

[Inserted here was the investigation committee's April 10 letter to the LPF.]

14. Letters from Alex B to Sydney Central members re AVSN O-week stalls and suspension of Marcus P from AVSN work

Date: Sunday, 2 March 2008 7:19 PM

Dear comrade Marcus

The Sydney branch DSP exec on Wednesday heard a report about the AVSN stalls that were set up at Bankstown UWS (on Mon 25 Feb) and Sydney Uni (Wed 27 Feb) during student orientation weeks.

As you are aware, I raised concerns with you about the way these stalls were organised in a telephone conversation last Sunday (24 Feb). In particular, I explained that it was a problem that these stalls had been organised outside of formal AVSN meetings and without collaboration with (or even the knowledge of) the leadership of the Latin America solidarity fraction, the Resistance comrades organising the O-week effort or the DSP branch leadership.

I asked you to acknowledge that organising these stalls in this way was a mistake, which you declined to do.

Further, I asked that you keep me informed of any updates or changes regarding the AVSN stalls on campus.

At the time of our phone conversation, the only stalls that we discussed and the only stalls that to my knowledge had been planned were to be on the Wednesday 27 Feb (at Bankstown and Sydney unis). The next day, however, an AVSN stall was set up at Bankstown Uni by four LPF members: Kerry V, Owen R, Barbara R and Chris A. I'm not sure if you knew about this stall in advance. However, to the best of my knowledge, among DSP members at least, the only comrades that were aware that this stall was to be set up were in the LPF. Certainly the comrades leading up the Latin America solidarity fraction, the Resistance O-week effort and members of the DSP exec were not aware about this stall in advance.

It is incumbent on all DSP members to work in a collaborative way to ensure that the party building line adopted by the January congress is implemented to the best of our ability. It is not acceptable for the LPF to attempt to implement its line independent of the decisions of the DSP and its leadership bodies.

The actions of LPF members in Sydney in this matter, including yourself, represent a serious breach of trust that cannot be ignored.

Therefore, the exec took a decision to suspend your assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction to take effect immediately.

The exec will consider reinstating you to this assignment if:

- * you acknowledge the mistake made in organising AVSN campus stalls without collaboration with the LA fraction director, the Resistance leadership or the DSP exec; and
- * you undertake to conduct all future work in the AVSN and in the arena of Latin America solidarity work under the strict guidance of the LA solidarity fraction.

I await your reply.

In solidarity

Alex B
DSP Sydney district secretary
2 March 2008

Dear comrade Kerry

I have been directed by the Sydney DSP exec to write to you regarding the AVSN stall(s) that you participated in during O-week last week. These stalls were organised independently of any formal decision by AVSN. Further they were organised without *any *informal collaboration with the DSP's Latin

America solidarity fraction leadership, the Resistance comrades organising O-week and the DSP branch leadership.

In addition, while an AVSN stall at Bankstown Uni scheduled for Wed 27 Feb (that didn't end up happening) was announced on the AVSN email list, it seems that among DSP members at least, the *only *people who knew in advance about the Mon 25 Feb AVSN stall at Bankstown Uni were in the LPF.

It is incumbent on all DSP members to work in a collaborative way to ensure that the party building line adopted by the January congress is implemented to the best of our ability. It is not acceptable for the LPF to attempt to implement its line independent of the decisions of the DSP and its leadership bodies.

The actions of LPF members in recent weeks, including this matter in Sydney (organising AVSN stalls at campus O-weeks without direction or collaboration with the Latin America fraction or the branch leadership), call into question the LPF's stated aim of working as a loyal minority within the DSP.

The exec has asked me to remind you that:

* you are not currently assigned to the Latin America solidarity fraction

* while you remain a member of the DSP, you are required to abide by the rules of the organisation, including Article 4, paragraph 2 b) & c) of the constitution which stipulate that members are obliged:

b. To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability.

c. To carry out their political activity to the best of their ability in accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the national and local governing bodies of the DSP, even if they have argued and/or voted against those decisions.

* if you have/had time to help out during campus orientation weeks, the responsible thing to do would be to approach the Resistance and/or DSP

organisers with the offer to help during O-week so that your efforts could help maximise the overall effectiveness of our collectively decided perspectives for O-week.

Since the exec meeting last Wednesday, there is another matter of concern that I need to raise with you, namely your comments and actions after yesterday's AVSN forum at UTS.

I raised the issue of the AVSN stalls during O-week last week and I reminded you that you are not currently assigned to the Latin America solidarity fraction. I informed you that if you would like to be assigned to this area of work, that you would need to approach an exec member so this could be discussed by the exec. In response, you made a comment along the lines of "Assigned? What's assigned? We built this forum. What's wrong with that?".

You also asked if there was anything wrong with building AVSN events.

While there is "nothing wrong" in general with building AVSN events – in fact all comrades are encouraged to do exactly this as part of their regular political activity including, when appropriate, while selling GLW, talking to political contacts and intervening in movement committees, that is not the same as saying that "anything goes". As outlined above, all DSP members are required to place their political work under the direction of the DSP and its leadership bodies.

I also asked you approximately five times to give me the AVSN contact list that you confirmed to me that you had in your bag at the time. You refused to give me the contact list.

I repeat now, as district secretary, that you are required to hand over to me and/or Adam L (Latin America Solidarity Fraction Director) that particular AVSN contact list and any other AVSN contacts/contact lists that you have in your possession.*

Finally, I understood you to indicate yesterday that you are planning to set up more AVSN stalls at Sydney uni this coming week.

If you wish to be assigned to Latin America solidarity work, please advise me or another exec member so that this can be discussed by the branch executive. In the meantime, please detail to me any such plans you have *already made* (and who you think might be involved) so that these can be discussed collectively and carried through under the direction of the DSP. *Do not make any such plans now before discussing the matter further with me.*

Yours in solidarity

Alex B

DSP Sydney district secretary
2 March 2008

Dear comrade Chris

I have been directed by the Sydney DSP exec to write to you regarding the AVSN stall(s) that you participated in during O-week last week. These stalls were organised independently of any formal decision by AVSN. Further they were organised without *any *informal collaboration with the DSP's Latin America solidarity fraction leadership, the Resistance comrades organising O-week and the DSP branch leadership.

In addition, while an AVSN stall at Bankstown Uni scheduled for Wed 27 Feb (that didn't end up happening) was announced on the AVSN email list, it seems that among DSP members at least, the *only *people who knew in advance about the Mon 25 Feb AVSN stall at Bankstown Uni were in the LPF.

While you personally informed me via text message last Sunday (24 Feb) that you would be helping out at O-week, it was not clear that you were planning to staff an AVSN stall. While you spent some time helping out on the Resistance stall, this does not change the fact that the setting up of AVSN stalls without any collaboration with the party majority appears to have been an attempt to implement the line advocated by the LPF but not adopted by the January congress.

It is incumbent on all DSP members to work in a collaborative way to ensure that the party building line adopted by the January congress is implemented to the best of our ability. It is not acceptable for the LPF to attempt to implement its line independent of the decisions of the DSP and its leadership bodies.

Taken together, the actions of LPF members in recent weeks, including this matter in Sydney, call into question the LPF's stated aim of working as a loyal minority within the DSP.

Therefore I would like to remind you that you, like all DSP members, are bound by the obligation to conduct your political work under the direction of the DSP.

Yours in solidarity

Alex B
DSP Sydney district secretary
2 March 2008

Dear comrade Zoe

I have been directed by the Sydney DSP exec to write to you regarding the AVSN stall(s) that you participated in during O-week last week. These stalls were organised independently of any formal decision by AVSN. Further they were organised without *any *informal collaboration with the DSP's Latin America solidarity fraction leadership, the Resistance comrades organising O-week and the DSP branch leadership.

In addition, while an AVSN stall at Bankstown Uni scheduled for Wed 27 Feb (that didn't end up happening) was announced on the AVSN email list, it seems that among DSP members at least, the *only *people who knew in advance about the Mon 25 Feb AVSN stall at Bankstown Uni were in the LPF.

While you spent some time helping out on the Resistance stall, this does not change the fact that the setting up of AVSN stalls without any collaboration with the party majority appears to have been an attempt to implement the line advocated by the LPF but not adopted by the January congress.

It is incumbent on all DSP members to work in a collaborative way to ensure that the party building line adopted by the January congress is implemented to the best of our ability. It is not acceptable for the LPF to attempt to implement its line independent of the decisions of the DSP and its leadership bodies.

Taken together, the actions of LPF members in recent weeks, including this matter in Sydney, call into question the LPF's stated aim of working as a loyal minority within the DSP.

Therefore I would like to remind you that you, like all DSP members, are bound by the obligation to conduct your political work under the direction of the DSP.

Yours in solidarity

Alex B
DSP Sydney district secretary

2 March 2008

To comrade Marcus,

Further to my previous email, I am writing to direct you to hand over to myself and/or Adam L details about all AVSN contacts that you currently have in your possession and any others that come into your possession in the future.

In solidarity

Alex B

DSP Sydney district secretary

2 March 2008

15. From Marcus P to Sydney Central executive re suspension of his assignment to AVSN

Date: Thursday, 6 March 2008 10:33 PM

Dear Comrades,

I hope this helps to clear up a few of the issues raised.

Reply to DSP Sydney executive and the NE letter "Appeal for Unity in Action" regarding AVSN work

1. Why were the campus AVSN stalls organized in Sydney?

Most immediately as part of the outreach work of AVSN particularly with the escalation of US supported aggression economically via EXXON/Mobil and militarily via the Colombian state, against the Venezuelan revolution.

An ongoing reason that motivated building the AVSN stalls on campus was the need to build the AVSN as an independent organization amongst students on university campuses, independent of Resistance and the Socialist Alliance, that can politically inspire students with the example of the Venezuelan revolution in building socialism in the 21st century and involve them directly on campus in building solidarity. It is my understanding that this is the position of the DSP.

The oweek AVSN stalls focused on building the AVSN public meeting on March 1 featuring Carlos Sierra. This meeting was planned and organized at the January 31 AVSN meeting. The fact that the March 1 AVSN public meeting could be built on campus oweeks was mentioned by both comrades Lisa and Adam during the January 31 AVSN meeting. However, my recollection is that neither of them said this should be done, just could be done because the public meeting would be on the weekend following some oweeks. To my recollection neither Lisa nor Adam suggested who might build the March 1 public meeting on campus oweeks. To my recollection no specific decision was voted on saying campus AVSN stalls during oweek should be organized.

2. How were the campus AVSN stalls organized?

Contacting the AVSN contacts and seeking interest, that's one of my assignments in the AVSN. There were commitments to join the stalls on Wednesday February 27 by non-DSP AVSN members. Unfortunately the Wednesday stall at UWS Bankstown did not go ahead because the non-DSP AVSN member was called at late notice the day before the stall to an important PhD meeting. On the morning of Wednesday I decided to focus on the USYD AVSN stall instead because there had already been one stall at Bankstown on Monday February 25.

The AVSN stall on Monday was staffed by comrades Owen R, Barbara R, Kerry V and Chris A. This was always scheduled for the Monday and not moved forward from the Wednesday as Lisa deduced in her appendix to Comrade Peter Bs letter "Appeal for Unity in Action".

3. Response of the DSP leadership in Sydney

On Friday February 22 I rang Comrade Adam L (DSP coordinator of LA solidarity work in Sydney) and told him for the first time that I was organizing the AVSN campus stalls during oweek and reported that non-DSP AVSN members had committed to joining the stalls. Adam said that he thought it was good that I had done that organizing work, he didn't mention any concerns about what I was doing. I suggested to him that we would need a couple of stall banners too – Adam agreed and we discussed what should go on them.

I suggested that I send an email to the AVSN Sydney list to see if anyone else was able to help out – Adam agreed with this. So I did send the email on that Friday night after talking to Adam. I also suggested we would need the leaflet for the EXXON/Mobil protest in Sydney for the two AVSN stalls on Wednesday February 27 – Adam agreed to try and have the location of the protest organized by then and have the leaflet designed by then. Other than these concrete issues Adam had no further advice for how I should go about organizing the stalls. None of the concerns that comrades Lisa M and Alex B raised in the NE letter and its appendix were raised by Adam the first time I called and discussed the AVSN stalls.

Comrade Alex B contacted me on Sunday February 24 (not February 23 as mentioned in Lisa's appendix) and presented a different perspective to Adam. He told me that I had presented the DSP leadership with a fait accompli because I had already organized non-DSP members to help out on them, and; that if I had not presented the DSP with a fait accompli the DSP would not have decided to organise campus AVSN stalls during oweek.

When discussing Alex's concerns I did not claim that Lisa and Adam "had directed" me to organise the AVSN stalls on campus during the January 31 AVSN meeting, as Lisa's February 29 appendix claims. What I said to Alex was that Lisa and Adam had both mentioned that the AVSN March 1 public meeting could be built on oweeks, during the January 31 AVSN meeting. I did point out to Alex that Adam, on Friday February 22, said to me that it was good that I had done the work to organise the stalls.

During our conversation Alex didn't say that the DSP had decided against organising AVSN campus stalls, only that the DSP would not have decided to do this.

There certainly had not been any Sydney DSP LA fraction to coordinate our work this year before oweek.

4. My intentions

The only discussion that I was a part of at the Sydney level to discuss Latin America solidarity was the AVSN meeting on January 31. The AVSN has always supported organizing students to be actively part of the AVSN, the stalls on campus are simply following this logic. Indeed, many AVSN members who could not come to the AVSN campus stalls supported them and wanted to come, none raised any opposition to the campus AVSN stalls – why would they?

Organising ongoing AVSN activities on campuses that involve students in building the AVSN directly on campus as an independent organization is what I will continue to do this year.

As a framework for my campaign activity this seems completely logical to me as I am on campus, not Resistance-aged and I have been assigned to Venezuela solidarity work since its inception in 2004. (That is not to say that one, two or many Resistance members should not also be assigned, but that is up to Resistance members to decide.)

When Comrade Peter B describes what I have done as "resistance, refusal or failure" to follow "direction" from the branch leaderships it sounds like a complete fetish of petty organizational issues rather than a political disagreement with ongoing work to build the AVSN on campus this year as an independent activist organization, independent from Resistance and the Socialist Alliance.

5. What to do next?

In an email from Alex on Sunday March 2, I have been informed of the rapid decision of the DSP Central branch executive on Wednesday February 27 to "suspend [my] assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction to take effect immediately". I acknowledge this and will not attempt to join any meetings of the DSP LA solidarity fraction, unless invited.

The email stated that the executive will consider reinstating my assignment to the DSP LA fraction under two conditions. One, if I "acknowledge the mistake made in organising AVSN campus stalls without collaboration with the LA fraction director, the Resistance leadership or the DSP exec". I do not believe that admitting individual mistakes is a part of our tradition as a political tendency in the Leninist and Cannonist tradition. We can have collective assessment and education but self-criticism sessions are not on the agenda with me and nor should they be for any individual DSP members.

The second prerequisite for the executive to consider my reinstatement to the DSP LA fraction is that I accept the "strict guidance" of the DSP LA solidarity fraction. It is not clear what this means in relation to the AVSN campus stalls as there has been no DSP LA solidarity fraction this year in Sydney DSP branch and therefore no guidance.

As the executive has not decided to ban me from working to build the AVSN I will continue to organise

regular and ongoing AVSN stalls and activities on campuses that involve students in building the AVSN directly on campus as an independent organization.

It would also be appropriate for Comrade Lisa M, who has acted on the authority of the DSP Sydney executive decision to deassign me from the DSP LA solidarity fraction and directed Duroyan Fertl to cancel my ability to moderate the AVSN_Sydney elist, without any consultation or agreement from myself as an AVSN member and without any decision being taken by the AVSN in Sydney, to reverse this directive and ask Duroyan to reinstate my role as a Moderator of the AVSN_Sydney elist. It is important that the DSP does not interfere with the AVSN as an independent organization as Lisa has done in this case by overriding the status quo in how the AVSN in Sydney organizes its elist.

If the DSP does not have a political disagreement with me continuing to regularly organise AVSN stalls and activities that involve students in building the AVSN as an independent organization on campus then I should be reassigned to the DSP LA solidarity fraction rather than this work being uncoordinated within the DSP.

Comradely,
Marcus P

16. Marcus P to Sydney Central executive re motions for Sydney AVSN AGM

Date: Wed, Mar 26, 2008 at 3:52 PM

Hi Alex and executive comrades,

I would like to put the following motion to the April 1 DSP Central branch meeting, unless it has already been suggested or if the executive would like to incorporate it into the report on our AVSN work and our intervention into the AVSN AGM on April 5.

MOTION:

That this meeting of the DSP support the following two motions going the AVSN AGM on April 5.

Motion 1: That this April 5 AGM of the AVSN support AVSN members establishing campus AVSN clubs on university. AVSN clubs that reach out to and involve as many students as possible in spreading word of the example of the Venezuelan revolution and building solidarity with it. Marcus P volunteers to help coordinate building AVSN clubs on campuses in Sydney.

Motion 2: That this April 5 AGM of the AVSN support organising a big AVSN stall at the May Day rally.

Comradely,
Marcus P

17. Reply to Marcus P from Alex B re suspension of assignment to AVSN

Date: Thu, Apr 3, 2008 at 2:44 PM

Dear comrade Marcus,

Following Tuesday night's DSP branch meeting that discussed Venezuela solidarity work, I am writing in response to your 6 March 2008 email reply to my email to you of 2 March 2008.

The DSP organises a Latin America solidarity fraction to ensure that all of our members working in this area are able to collaborate effectively to maximise the impact of our efforts.

Regardless of the merits (or otherwise) of any particular initiative (for instance, the setting up of campus AVSN stalls during orientation weeks), it is essential that all comrades carry out their work in a way that

strengthens and doesn't undermine this collaboration and coordination. This is one reason the DSP Constitution requires all DSP members to "place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP".

Your email doesn't explicitly dispute that the AVSN O-week stalls were organised "without collaboration with (or even the knowledge of) the leadership of the Latin America solidarity fraction, the Resistance comrades organising the O-week effort or the DSP branch leadership". Your email does, however, include detail about your 22 February phone conversation with Comrade Adam L which could be taken as an implicit argument that you collaborated adequately with "the leadership of the Latin America solidarity fraction". However, the key point that this ignores is that the stalls were already substantially organised prior to your phone conversation with Adam L. The party was presented with a fait accompli and you organised these stalls without collaborating with any of the relevant comrades organising O-week.

Your assignment

In your email, you say that you "will *continue* to organise regular and ongoing AVSN stalls and activities on campuses" (your emphasis). Given that your assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction is currently suspended, such activity on your part would directly violate the constitutional requirement of DSP members to "place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP".

I explicitly informed you over the telephone on 12 March 08, and am repeating in writing here, that the decision by the executive to suspend your assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction includes that you not organise AVSN stalls on campus or elsewhere, or organise other AVSN activities, advertise your phone number as a contact point for AVSN, attend AVSN organising meetings or stand for official positions in the AVSN unless you have been requested to do so by the Latin America solidarity fraction director or a DSP branch organiser.

This directive is not motivated by a desire to limit your involvement in Latin America solidarity work (or politics in general) but is necessary to ensure that DSP members involved in Latin America solidarity work are collaborating with other comrades to make our contribution to AVSN in a coordinated way and in a manner that advances the democratically decided perspectives of the DSP and the AVSN.

These decisions by the executive and the general approach have been endorsed by the DSP branch at Tuesday's meeting.

As I informed you on 2 March, the executive is willing to consider reinstating your assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction.

The first condition that was put forward for this to happen was:

"* you acknowledge the mistake made in organising AVSN campus stalls without collaboration with the LA fraction director, the Resistance leadership or the DSP exec".

You responded by writing:

"I do not believe that admitting individual mistakes is a part of our tradition as a political tendency in the Leninist and Cannonist tradition. We can have collective assessment and education but self-criticism sessions are not on the agenda with me and nor should they be for any individual DSP members."

The executive's request was not a means of imposing "self-criticism sessions" on you or anyone else, but rather a means of rebuilding the branch's confidence – which your recent actions have undermined – in your preparedness to conduct yourself in a responsible way, i.e. in accord with the decisions of the Latin America solidarity fraction and other party bodies. However, in order to avoid confusion, on behalf of the executive I withdraw that request.

The second condition is in fact the most important, namely that:

"* you undertake to conduct all future work in the AVSN and in the arena of Latin America solidarity work under the strict guidance of the LA solidarity fraction".

You purport to not understand what this means, however, its meaning is clear: If you are to be assigned to this area or work, you need to agree to act in accord with the decisions of the Latin America solidarity fraction and other party bodies, as all members are required to do. That means that any initiatives you think should be taken in this area of work should be discussed through the fraction, unless there is a good reason why they can't be (ie: an emergency situation, where we don't have time to convene a fraction, for example), in which case you should at the very least discuss it with the LA fraction convenor and, failing that, with a branch organiser before taking any action.

We look forward to a positive response from you on these questions.

Alex B
DSP Sydney district secretary
3 April 2008

18. Minutes of Sydney AVSN AGM

DRAFT MINUTES OF SYDNEY AVSN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held on April 5, 2008, at Casa Latina.

PROPOSED CHAIRPERSON & MINUTER: Lisa M accepted.

APOLOGIES: Adam L, Dick N, Stuart M, Phil B, Annie N

PROPOSED AGENDA:

1. Acceptance of the minutes of Sydney AVSN's 2007 AGM
2. Solidarity campaigns report presented by Susan P
3. Sub-report on the campaign to invite President Chavez to Australia presented by Patrick S
4. Finances report presented by the chair
5. Election of office bearers

A proposal put by Marcus P to include in the agenda a separate sub-report on AVSN's work on campuses, to be presented by him, was withdrawn following discussion.

The committee's proposed agenda was unanimously adopted.

MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Copies of the draft minutes of the 2007 Sydney AVSN AGM were distributed.
The minutes were unanimously adopted as an accurate record of the meeting.

SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGNS

Susan P reported on the AVSN committee proposals for solidarity campaigning in Sydney. Copies of the AVSN's national annual report for 2007 were distributed as supplementary information for members.

Patrick S reported on possible next steps in AVSN's aim to secure an invitation to President Chavez from an institution or elected politician in Sydney.

Following one hour's discussion, the following motions were put:

- (i) Motion from the chairperson to adopt the major proposals in the committee's solidarity campaigns report, including:
 - a) finding an institutional invitation in Sydney for President Chavez to visit Australia;

- b) organising public eyewitness report-backs by the May Day brigadistas when they return to Sydney;
- c) organising, in liaison with NSW trade unions and unionists, a “workers’ control” seminar in Sydney, which looks at the experiences of workers’ control in Venezuela;
- d) building the November-December solidarity brigade;
- e) producing some new public information to raise awareness and understanding of the Venezuelan revolution;
- f) responding better to corporate media attacks on the revolution, and developing stronger relationships with independent and community media (including investigating the possibility of a regular AVSN program on community radio);
- g) holding open AVSN organizing meetings that include a special presentation/guest speaker/film approximately once a month;
- h) doing an AVSN stall at the Sydney May Day rally;
- i) building the Venezuelan embassy initiated event on April 13 to celebrate the anniversary of the overthrow of the 2002 anti-Chavez coup.

The motion was adopted unanimously.

(ii) A motion distributed by Marcus P:

“That this AVSN AGM endorse the building of campus AVSN clubs.

These clubs will be built by democratically involving as many students as possible in learning about the inspiring example of the Venezuelan revolution and building solidarity with it on campus.

Over the next weeks and months AVSN campus stalls can:

- a) build support for a visit by Hugo Chavez to Australia amongst students and academics
- b) promote the May Day brigade to witness the revolution and the report-back meetings
- c) build up a contact list of students interested in the AVSN
- d) aim for a minimum regularity of one stall every three weeks on Bankstown UWS and University of Sydney.

This AGM endorses Marcus P coordinating the establishment of campus AVSN clubs. (Marcus is a full-time student with four years experience of experience bulding the AVSN.)”

was amended following discussion to: delete point c); change “endorses Marcus P coordinating the establishment of campus AVSN clubs” to “endorses Marcus P and any volunteers to coordinate the establishment of campus AVSN clubs”, and add a point e) to accept Nelson Davila’s offer to speak at the University of Sydney, and a point d) invite students to the April 13 anniversary event in Sydney.

The amended motion was lost 5 to 12 with 1 abstention.

(iii) An alternative motion on campus work was put by Susan P: That Marcus’s motion to establish AVSN clubs on campuses be set aside for the time being, and AVSN instead (i) accept Nelson Davila’s offer to speak at AVSN-organised forums for students on the University of Western Sydney Bankstown and Sydney University campuses, and to solicit student union support for these meetings; and (ii) build student participation in the April 13 anniversary event in Sydney.

The alternative motion was adopted unanimously.

FINANCES REPORT

Copies of a statement of Sydney AVSN’s income and expenditure for the last 12 months were distributed.

It was noted that the AVSN May Day brigade has been authorised to purchase “revolutionary merchandise” in Venezuela for the Sydney committee, as part of the committee’s fundraising activities.

The statement of finances was unanimously adopted as an accurate record.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

The following committee positions were elected unanimously:

- (i) Co-conveners – Adam L and Patrick S
- (ii) Treasurer – Merrilyn T
- (iii) Membership secretary – Susan P
- (iv) Patrick S and Merrilyn T be added to the Sydney AVSN bank account signatories, in addition to Adam L and Kiraz J (both current signatories).
- (v) The Sydney AVSN yahoo group moderators be – Adam L, Kiraz J, Lisa M, Margaret A (all current moderators) plus Patrick S.

A proposal from Patrick S to elect a media liaison committee was withdrawn when it was unanimously agreed that the next meeting of Sydney AVSN include an item to discuss media work and establish a media liaison committee.

A motion put by Marcus P that he be elected “campus work coordinator” was rejected 3 to 11 with 1 abstention.

MEETING CLOSE

19. Susan P report on LPF conduct at Sydney AVSN AGM

Date: Thursday, 10 April 2008 11:58 AM

From Susan P

My notes on Sydney AVSN AGM events of April 5, 2008

John P, Kerry V, Marcus P, Zoe K, Owen R from the LPF all attended the AGM. JP, KV and MP each renewed their AVSN membership before the meeting started.

Marcus made a proposal under the agenda item to add a report on campus work, and foreshadowed a proposal he had prepared. In response, Lisa asked whether this item could be discussed under the campaigns report, and that Marcus raise his proposal in the discussion. The meeting approved the agenda. At this point Marcus distributed copies of his proposal, which I have in hard copy only so cannot attach.

After I had delivered the campaigns report on behalf of Adam, and Patrick had delivered the sub report on the Chavez invitation, Marcus was given the call and spoke to his motion. As part of the motivation for his proposal Marcus raised that Melbourne AVSN AGM had adopted a motion to build clubs on campus.

Also speaking in support were Kerry, Zoe, who stated that we had not been able to reach out to students on campus in 4 years, and related a recent conversation with a Venezuelan student at USyd who had never heard of the AVSN. Owen also spoke as part of this discussion, in support of the motion, and reported to the meeting on the stall at the March 16 anti war rally which he had organised. Owen also volunteered to enter names on the AVSN database, as “I still have some contact lists with names on them which I can enter”. John P did not contribute to discussion as far as I recall.

N expressed concern and doubt about the proposal (‘many networks’ and ‘separate organisations’).

I got up and suggested that Marcus’ proposal be set aside and not voted on, but that we reaffirm our commitment to building V solidarity amongst students and workers (multi-sectoral).

Marcus agreed to remove the line "c) build up a contact list of students interested in the AVSN".

W (non member of AVSN), proposed an amendment for a ‘pilot project’ on 1-2-3 campuses, which was incorporated by Marcus.

An alternative way forward was proposed by another participant, to set aside the proposal and to test out the level of interest on campus by committing to building the April 13 celebration at Simon Bolivar Plaza

amongst students, and invite N to speak at campus forums where they could be organised (USyd and UWS).

Marcus 'incorporated' these proposals into his motion, however they were counterposed motions (which was clarified through further discussion and by the chair). Marcus also agreed to add after his name "and any volunteers".

All of the LPF members present at the meeting voted for Marcus' amended motion. 12 other AVSN members voted against it, and there was 1 abstention. Marcus then interjected to the meeting after the vote in a loud voice: "So, no non-DSP members voted against my motion, is that right?", clearly for all to hear.

The report on campaigns work was voted on: 13 in favour, 0 against, no abstentions (from my recollection). Whether any LPF members voted for or against this motion I do not know as I was not able to tell at this point.

On the item regarding the election of officers for Sydney AVSN: After nominations were presented to the meeting for officer positions, Marcus moved a motion that he be confirmed by the AGM as the contact point for campus work for AVSN Sydney. After discussion Marcus insisted that his motion be put to the meeting, stating, "I want to know if I have the confidence of this meeting". The motion was lost. Marcus' motion was lost. I do not know how many of the LPF members voted for Marcus' motion, as many people had left by this stage.

Not voting was independent activist A, who said to the meeting she was "totally confused".

The motion to elect all office bearers was adopted (unanimously I think?).

At the conclusion of the AGM I went over to A to talk to her. Marcus was in discussion with A when I came over, and I distinctly heard Marcus say to A: "...the reason is because members of the DSP don't want me doing this work..."

My discussion with A, where she asked if "party politics" was the cause of the disagreements in the meeting. I took this as an indication that LPF members may have spoken with A prior to the meeting.

Alex also reported that A had asked about Owen: "is the guy with the long hair being expelled from AVSN?", which Alex can provide more detail on.

20. Lisa M report on incidents around Sydney AVSN AGM

Date: Monday, 14 April 2008 7:08 PM

REPORT ON EVENTS BEFORE AND AFTER THE SYDNEY AVSN AGM on April 5, 2008

1. LPF-XY CIRCLE ALLIANCE

A participant at the AVSN AGM reported to me immediately afterward the meeting that two leaders of another solidarity organization (XY) had previously arranged to meet with him before the AVSN AGM. That meeting was not possible so they instead met with him when he arrived for the meeting. I observed their intense discussion, which lasted for about 15 minutes.

He informed me after the AGM that the discussion had been initiated by the XY to persuade him to support a motion that was going to be put to the AGM by Marcus P about AVSN campus clubs. They told him that the LPF, which is very serious about Venezuela solidarity work, is being victimised by the DSP, including that John P has been told to pack his bags and get out of the office after decades of leadership of the party, and that Marcus P was going to be attacked at the AVSN AGM by the rest of the DSP because he wanted to put the motion about AVSN campus clubs.

Neither of the two XY leaders mentioned to me or any other non-LPF DSP member active in AVSN (and they know who those comrades are) their discussions with the LPF member/s before the AGM.

Both XY members left the AVSN meeting early to attend another function, just as the AGM began and just after Marcus P had distributed his typed-out motion to establish AVSN campus clubs and to elect him as campus club coordinator to everyone present. As one of them left, he took me aside and asked how he could indicate before leaving that the XY supported Marcus P's motion. I had no idea at that stage that they had already discussed the motion with the LPF, so assumed he had just read the motion handed out and thought it was a good idea without hearing the main perspectives report to put it into context.

It is clear to me from the information reported that Marcus P and/or other LPF members had a detailed conversation with the XY leaders before arriving at the meeting to get their support for the motion – and possibly to get them to lobby other meeting participants for their support also. That is, the LPF enlisted the support of non-DSP members who do not actively build the AVSN and have historically been politically opposed to the DSP to try to get a motion adopted at the AGM that they had been specifically directed by their DSP branch not to put.

2. POST-AGM DISCUSSION INITIATED BY LPF MEMBERS

As soon as the AGM finished, John P, Marcus P and Kerry V initiated a group discussion with non-DSP meeting participants to protest the meeting's decision not to support Marcus P's motion on campus AVSN clubs. This group discussion lasted for about 45 minutes. I heard parts of it, as did Rachel E and Guy G.

Marcus did most of the talking, but John P also participated in support of Marcus P's arguments.

As reported to me by independent participants in that discussion, the main points made by the LPF members were:

- (i) Marcus claimed that the DSP branch meeting the previous Tuesday had agreed that he could put the motion as formulated to the AVSN meeting, and that Lisa M had been present at that meeting.
- (ii) Marcus said he had telephoned all the independent AVSN contacts in Sydney before the meeting, and all had been willing to support AVSN campus stalls and support his proposals at the AGM.
- (iii) Marcus said he had talked (sometime before the February 16 Melbourne AVSN AGM) to non-DSP AVSN member R in Melbourne about getting a proposal for AVSN campus clubs in Melbourne adopted at their AGM, and that R fully agreed with the proposal.
- (iv) When it was raised by others involved in the discussion that building Venezuela solidarity on campuses was just a part of AVSN's overall work and that AVSN members should participate in all AVSN priorities, Marcus replied that he will be doing AVSN activities *only* on campus work.

21. From Adam L re AVSN O-week stall contact lists

Date: Thursday, 17 April 2008 6:39 PM

Dear Lisa, Susan and Rachel,

I believe we have the contacts from Sydney Uni o'week. I never spoke to Marcus about this but the day after the stall I found 2 pages of AVSN contacts some with Sydney Uni email address in the AVSN section of the contact list pile on the GLW / leaflets table. I believe they are the Sydney Uni contacts I remember thinking at the time, either the 2 pages were carefully placed to be left in the office without giving them to AVSN or carelessly left where they could be lost. I made a photo copy and left the originals in the AVSN draw and later gave them to Susan. Three times I have asked Owen for the UWS contacts. He was always polite and expressed his intent to bring in the contacts but as yet nothing.

Adam

Date: Wednesday, 23 April 2008 1:12 PM

Finally we have the UWS contacts I asked Owen again yesterday and he sent these through.

Adam

22. Minor points in LPF Statement on the disciplinary charges

The April 22 LPF statement on the disciplinary charges makes a number of claims that are inaccurate. While these claims are secondary to the main arguments presented in the statement, the investigation committee decided that they should nonetheless be answered.

1. The LPF statement claims:

“Comrade Alex B accuses Comrade Marcus P of having violated “DSP discipline” because, in attending the April 5 Sydney AVSN AGM, Comrade Marcus P allegedly ignored the decision of the Sydney Central branch executive to “suspend Marcus’s assignment to the Latin American Solidarity Fraction” (i.e., participation in this DSP committee, not to “suspend his assignment to AVSN work” as Comrade Alex B alleges in his report).”

The investigation committee rejects these semantics. The evidence shows that Comrade Marcus P’s assignment to AVSN work – not merely to the Latin America solidarity fraction – had been suspended.

This was made very clear in Comrade Alex B’s April 2 letter to Comrade Marcus P, which said:

“I explicitly informed you over the telephone on 12 March 08, and am repeating in writing here, that the decision by the executive to suspend your assignment to the Latin America solidarity fraction includes that you not organise AVSN stalls on campus or elsewhere, or organise other AVSN activities, advertise your phone number as a contact point for AVSN, attend AVSN organising meetings or stand for official positions in the AVSN unless you have been requested to do so by the Latin America solidarity fraction director or a DSP branch organiser.”

Comrade Marcus P acknowledged on April 3 that he had received Comrade Alex B’s April 2 letter, so he was fully aware that his assignment to AVSN work had been suspended.

2. The LPF statement asserts:

“Comrade Alex B’s accusation against Comrade Marcus P ignores the fact that the report on AVSN projections adopted by the April 1 Sydney Central branch meeting (which is a higher decision-making body than the branch executive) explicitly encouraged “everyone to come on Saturday” to the AVSN AGM, not “everyone except Comrade Marcus P”. So the allegation that Comrade Marcus P violated “DSP discipline” by attending the Sydney AVSN AGM is false.”

It is clear to the investigation committee that the basis of the charge that Comrade Marcus P violated DSP discipline is not his attendance per se at the AVSN AGM, but his actions during and immediately after the AGM, which contravened clear and specific branch decisions of which he was fully aware.

3. The LPF statement claims, as of April 22 when it was sent to the investigation committee, that:

“Notification of these charges was emailed to each LPF member on April 9-10 by DSP National Executive member Lisa M on behalf of the commission established by the NE to investigate the

charges under Article 4, Paragraph 11. Other than this notification, no other communication has so far been sent by this commission to any of the accused members.”

In fact, the investigation committee wrote to the LPF via its National Convener on April 15 confirming that, “...the charges laid by Comrade Alex B (on April 7, not March 7) against the five LPF members and against the LPF as a whole are based on Comrade Alex B's report”. A copy of Comrade Alex B's report was attached. That letter added:

“DSP members who have been charged have the constitutional right to submit oral or written statements to the investigating committee. We encourage the comrades to do so, by emailing inquiry@dsp.org.au or contacting any of the committee members by phone to arrange a meeting.”

Then, on April 21, the investigation committee again wrote to all members of the LPF to inform them of the date set by the NE to deal with charges, and reiterating:

“Please note that, in addition to the accused members having the right, under Paragraph 11 (c) of the DSP constitution, "to submit oral or written statements to the investigation commission in response to the charges", paragraph 11 (d) of the DSP constitution states: "Where the accused member (or members) does not belong to the DSP body dealing with the disciplinary case, the accused shall have the right to submit a written statement regarding the charges to the meeting of the body which considers the charges. The accused may also request that body's permission to attend the meeting that will deal with the charges.”

The LPF statement clearly implies that the investigation committee has been unhelpful, if not obstructionist. The committee rejects this and notes that the LPF has been repeatedly encouraged to contact the investigation committee and has had every opportunity to request any further information required and/or to submit further evidence against the charges.

23. Minutes of national Venezuela solidarity fraction at DSP 2008 congress

APOLOGIES: Lara P

ADOPTED AGENDA: To exchange information and brainstorm ideas about how the DSP can actively involve more non-DSP AVSN members and supporters in building the AVSN and Venezuela solidarity more broadly this year.

1. STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

Lisa M reported on some proposals from the DSP LA solidarity work steering committee:

1.1 We should give greater priority to encouraging/organising non-DSP members' involvement in AVSN's *specific projects* this year. These include:

(i) Sandino Carrizales tour – in particular, seeking the active assistance of AVSN supporters in broadening out the sponsorship of the tour, and in organising meetings between Sandino and activists in the environment, cultural and student sectors.

(ii) May Day brigade – in particular, seeking the active assistance of AVSN supporters in widely publicising the brigade beforehand (eg: organising community radio interviews and promotion, getting promo articles into student and union newspapers, and the wide variety of movement newsletters, and onto e-lists, websites and blogs, etc) **AND** in organising eyewitness report-backs by brigadistas to other groups/communities they have contact with (eg: Indigenous organisations, schools and institutes, anti-war groups, etc).

(iii) Chavez invitation campaign – seeking the active assistance of AVSN supporters in getting their own networks/contacts to sign and distribute the invitation, and to pursue more institutional invitations.

1.2 To facilitate more non-DSP members' active involvement in the planning and carrying out of AVSN's activities, propose to AVSN local committees that it hold a city/state-wide AGM in the first few months of the year if possible, organised as political seminars combined with planning/organising meetings.

1.3 Convene DSP Venezuela solidarity work fractions where necessary to deal with differences of perspective within the DSP and/or the local AVSN committee, but in general err in favour of taking as

much as possible of the discussion about AVSN's work directly into AVSN meetings so as to maximise non-DSP members' ownership of and responsibility for AVSN work. This also requires that proper contacting is done to build each AVSN meeting.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1 Propose to AVSN that it do a national mail-out early this year to all AVSN supporters (local committees contacts and the 1480 national list) about the projects for 2008 and encouraging everyone's participation. Approach the ETU to cover the mail-out costs.
 - 2.2 Need to organise the AGMs well, present well-prepared reports and send out invitations to the meeting widely in the left and movements.
 - 2.3 Relaunch the Chavez invitation on campuses, and encourage AVSN members to join with Resistance during O-weeks to build joint AVSN-Resistance Sandino tour.
 - 2.4 Be more tenacious about getting institutional invitations for a Chavez visit.
 - 2.5 Use brigadista eyewitness report-backs much more, but also make AVSN available to do presentations to other organisations, including those we approach to support the Chavez invitation.
 - 2.6 Create "advocate" roles for other AVSN members to push the AVSN projects among their own networks and other areas of activity (especially trade unionists).
 - 2.7 Immediately pursue ALP MPs at every level of government for Chavez invitations, now Labor is in government.
 - 2.8 Use the new film "Now the People Have Awoken" much more extensively in early 2008.
 - 2.9 Approach all Latin America studies departments on campuses to invite Chavez.
 - 2.10 Local committees should consider doing big dinners/fiestas as major fundraising and networking projects (eg Melbourne AVSN's joint fundraiser with the FMLN).
 - 2.11 AVSN needs to work out how it relates to both the FMLN vice-presidential candidate speaking tour in February/March, and the Leonard Weinglass tour for the Cuba 5 in March/April.
 - 2.12 A possible institutional invitation could be obtained by nominating Chavez for the Sydney Peace Prize. Sydney AVSN to contact Stuart Rees at Sydney University.
 - 2.13 In smaller cities, the AGM could be attached to the Sandino tour, to ensure attendance and give the AGM a political discussion focus.
 - 2.14 AVSN should make a concerted push into progressive local government reps for support (practical support such as with hall hire and political support for Chavez invitation).
 - 2.15 Local committees should set up Sandino tour organising committees in their city as a way of involving more people.
 - 2.16 Need to approach local Trades and Labor Councils' international committees to organise Sandino to address TLCs.
 - 2.17 Getting Sandino in to address meetings of various trade unions will be a big help in building the May Day '08 brigade.
 - 2.18 Need to have a political information report/discussion at every AVSN committee meeting to attract and engage more people.
 - 2.19 We need to use the Chavez invitation to develop a "rapid response" network to respond to any attacks on Venezuela (This requires all committees to enter all the names and email addresses into a database). Consider designing the invitation so it is more useful for that purpose.
 - 2.20 Rather than AVSN raising funds for an "aid/development" project in Venezuela, it would be better to focus fundraisers on helping to get an Indigenous activist, or a poor activist from Asia-Pacific region, on the brigade.
3. Lisa to circulate the minutes of this meeting for comrades' use.

24. LPF elist membership at 6-5-08

[The membership information below is publicly available, as it is for all yahoogroups.]

Yahoo!7 Groups <<http://au.groups.yahoo.com/>> Sign In
<<http://login.yahoo.com/config/login?.intl=au&.src=ygrp&.done=http%3a//au.groups.yahoo.com%2Fgroup%2FLPF-list%2F>>

lpf-list · members of lpf

Info </group/lpf-list/>
Settings </group/lpf-list/?tab=s>

- Group Information
- * Members: 62
- * Category: Politics </dir/Government___Politics/Politics>
- * Founded: Feb 7, 2006
- * Language: English

25. LPF NSC reply to NE letter re Max L's blog posting

Date: Sunday, 17 February 2008 10:12 PM

To DSP National Executive

Dear Comrades,

The statement attached below was adopted by the LPF Steering Committee at its meeting February 17.

Comradely,

John P

LPF national convenor

In response to the email sent to the LPF by DSP national secretary Peter B on February 13, the LPF national steering committee:

1. Will not repudiate Comrade Max L's actions because it refuses to be complicit in the continuing suppression of the basic facts of the split in the PRD in Indonesia, both internally among DSP members and before the international left dependent on English-language reports. This suppression of news of the split has been going on now since August 2007, when the NE majority voted against publishing Comrade Max L's initial report and any PRD documents that became available in The Activist. Furthermore, no DSP members outside the NE have even been informed that Comrade Max L wrote such a report, that he had meetings with the full leaderships of both sides as far back as August or the specifics of the motion he put to the DSP NE in August.

Comrade Max L attempted once more to begin an internal discussion of these developments and how the DSP might react by submitting a PCD article to The Activist in the lead-up to the recent Congress, as did Comrade Sam K. The articles were banned with an explanation that no discussion among the membership could start before the leadership had made a "fair presentation" of the issue. The discussion was stopped at the outset.

No mention at all, not even one fact, was presented in any report to the DSP's January Congress. If Comrade Max L had not got the call to speak from the floor, the four days of the Congress would have passed with no information or analysis being presented to the Congress at all.

Comrade Max L used his speaking time to outline the facts of the split and to indicate that solidarity with the Political Committee of the Poor – PRD was already overdue.

Never before in the history of the DSP has there been such suppression of information and discussions. With this history, claims of wanting the party to study the developments in Indonesia lack all credibility.

2. The LPF refuses to be complicit in the fake neutrality espoused by the DSP NE majority. The DSP NE majority has used the excuse of the need to study the situation more in depth before taking sides. However, during the last seven months the actions of the DSP NE majority show that they have no interest in genuinely studying the situation. The sum total of their attempt to "study the situation" has been to:

- a. Suppress all reporting of the facts to the membership for the last seven months.

- b. Vote against the publication of an already existing report and any relevant documents in The Activist.
- c. Send a copy of Comrade Max L's report to the Sari-Jabo PRD group (or so it was decided) but not to the other side in the dispute for those comrades to comment.
- d. Simply wait for the translation of a single document sent to it by the Sari-Jabo PRD group's choice.
- e. Prevent the opening of a discussion among DSP members by suppressing articles submitted to The Activist by comrades Max L and Sam K during the Pre-congress discussion.

During the visit to Australia by Dita Sari and Agus Jabo last October, at the DSP international committee's meeting with Jabo none of the concerns about the nature of the Star Reformation Party raised as early as August in Comrade Max L's report were raised with Jabo.

There were no questions to Jabo about the grossly undemocratic way in which members of the PRD central committee who disagreed with the proposal for Papernas to become part of the Star Reformation Party's electoral ticket were expelled from the PRD. In addition, we note that Comrade Max L is a well-known researcher and commentator on Indonesian affairs both on the left and by the mass media. It would be inappropriate to instruct him in this role to suppress information about developments on the Indonesian left.

3. The LPF will not repudiate Comrade Max L's actions because it also refuses to be complicit in the abandonment of solidarity with the Indonesian comrades struggling to continue to build a party in the revolutionary tradition of the PRD. In July 2007, Comrade Max L wrote to Comrade Peter B urging that materials from both sides be obtained. In August 2007, Comrade Max L put a motion to the NE proposing that the DSP treat both sides equally, not privileging one side's version of the situation over another – a position that the NE majority rejected. The NE majority even rejected the position that the DSP express the hope that the two sides would be able to move quickly towards united action, put in another motion at the same meeting.

For a considerable time now, it has been an incontrovertible fact, obvious to anyone who wants to see, that in order to be able to stand candidates in the 2009 elections, the Sari-Jabo group has: a. Expressed its willingness to merge under the banner of bourgeois parties that are not only reactionary in almost all their policies (e.g., opposing secularism, opposing increase in the education budget, supporting the current ruling regime, etc) but also include those who have used violence against the common people for both extortion and political repression b. Summarily expelled members expressing disagreement with these policies at first attempting to disguise these actions as “allowing them to test out their line themselves”) and freezing branches whose membership refused to be drawn into this.

These are just the two most blatant breaks of the Sari-Jabo group with the PRD tradition. Blind Freddy, let alone the leadership of a serious socialist party, should be able to see that the actions of the Sari-Jabo group have broken with the revolutionary and democratic traditions of the PRD.

The Political Committee of the Poor – PRD, comprising the growing number of PRD members who refuse to agree to this break, are now attempting to ensure that the PRD continues to be built on the basis of its long-term commitment to a mass action strategy, independence from the bourgeoisie, democratic internal practices and a revolutionary perspective.

26. Reply from Max L to Peter B re disclaimer on blog

March 4, 2008

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 3 March, which I note is your first direct correspondence with me on the question of a disclaimer on my blog.

Like you, I am very keen to make it very clear indeed that my views and analysis of Indonesian politics and the Indonesian Left are not the same as the current DSP leadership (noting that the party membership has not had the chance to study developments because of your suppression of internal discussion of these developments.) Because of this I moved early to include a disclaimer in the masthead of my blog to ensure this.

This is not the disclaimer at the bottom of the blog which you mention but the disclaimer that appears at the top of the blog, in the masthead, directly under the name of the blog. Placed where it is, it applies of course to the whole of my blog's contents, including, for example, my comments on East Timor, which clearly also do not represent the current DSP leadership's views. The disclaimer is very clear, stating: “Notes,

reports and speculations by Max L on Indonesia, East Timor and politics. All analysis here are my personal views and are not the views of any university, institution or organisation with which I am affiliated.”

I was therefore surprised to receive your email on this issue still demanding a disclaimer. I could not believe that such a clear and prominent statement made several weeks ago would not have been noticed by you.

I therefore checked around and discovered that some browsers, e.g. FIREFOX, cuts out this text, unless the screen font size is decreased. I therefore have concluded that this time the misinformation – i.e., that there was no disclaimer on my blog – in the material that you sent to NC members and branches was not intentional. However, I would still insist that you also circulate this letter to all NC and NE members and branch secretaries so that the misinformation can be corrected.

Meanwhile, as the browser problem will continue, I will do two things:

(a) add the DISCLAIMER in the right hand column of the blog.

(b) include the DISCLAIMER which is in my masthead in the body of the text of the article which I want to clarify are not your views, both at the bottom and top of the text, i.e. twice.

As I stated above, I certainly also want everybody who is aware of my membership of the DSP to be clear that the DSP leadership – at least the current one – indeed does not agree with the views I have expressed. (For your information, only a tiny portion of the readership of my blog would be aware of my party affiliation – my blog is now the top hit non-technical blog hosted by the US.)

I will not raise my general views on the developments on the Left in Indonesia and the DSP’s current mishandling of this issue, including the suppression of internal discussion among the membership and the continuing attempt to suppress public discussion, as these matters have already been covered in my PCD articles, my Blog article and the recent statement of the LPF.

Comradely,

Max L

PS I agree also that it is inappropriate to give the impression that *Green Left Weekly* was interested in publishing the very good journalistic report of the launch of KPRM-PRD in Jakarta. So I will make that clear and remove all mention of *GLW*.

27. Declaration of the Leninist Party Faction (January 2006)

[The following declaration was issued by the Leninist Party faction during the closed session of the DSP’s 22nd congress in January 2006.]

In accordance with the right of members of the DSP as set down in Article 4, paragraph 1 (i) of the DSP Constitution, we hereby inform the 22nd DSP Congress of our decision to form a faction that aims to restore the DSP as a publicly functioning Leninist party by fully rectifying the mistaken and failed party-building line adopted by the 21st DSP congress in December 2003, a course that has increasingly undermined the DSP’s ability to implement the Leninist strategy of building a revolutionary Marxist cadre party as the key to advancing the struggle for socialism. That party-building line was to build the Socialist Alliance, rather than the DSP, as our party and to convert the Democratic Socialist Party into an internal tendency within the Socialist Alliance with the aim of transferring the political and organisational acquisitions of the Democratic Socialist Party to the Socialist Alliance.

The 22nd DSP congress has approved the line of a new resolution on the DSP’s orientation to the SA that recognises that the SA cannot be built as a party in the existing conditions of the Australian class struggle and the DSP should cease to attempt to function as a purely internal tendency of the SA, reverting again to operating as a public revolutionary socialist organisation. However, the congress majority has also adopted a DSP perspectives report presented by the NE majority that proposes continuing with the mistaken line adopted by the 21st congress of building the SA, rather than the DSP, as our party, though without the formal aim of transferring the political and organisational acquisitions of the DSP to the SA.

While the resolution on DSP-SA relations adopted by the 22nd DSP congress advocates that the DSP again become a public revolutionary socialist organisation, the report on DSP perspectives adopted by the congress proposes that the DSP’s public face will be that of an organisation that sponsors, jointly with Resistance, some public Marxist educational seminars, i.e., that reduces the DSP’s public face to being a

Marxist educational association, rather than a publicly functioning Leninist party, seeking to present a Marxist-Leninist political line to the radical working-class public.

In practice, at both the national and local level, the SA has become the public face of the DSP, with non-Resistance DSP members carrying out all their public political activity solely as members and representatives of the SA. The DSP has publicly “rebadged” itself as the SA, publicly presenting only the non-revolutionary “class-struggle” (i.e., left-reformist) politics of the SA to the radical working class public. This course has resulted in the liquidation of the public presentation of the DSP’s revolutionary Marxist politics.

The majority tendency’s liquidationist political course now threatens to be extended to Resistance through the adoption by the 22nd DSP Congress of a youth work report that projects to make the main campaigning activity of Resistance the fight against the federal Coalition government’s Work Choices legislation and which downgrades the presentation of Resistance’s revolutionary socialist politics as a “narrow propagandistic approach”. Implementation of this course will result in the “rebadging” of Resistance as the de facto SA youth organisation, thus further liquidating the public presentation of our revolutionary socialist politics.

It is now clear that there is a sharp divergence between party-building perspectives advocated by the two major tendencies that have emerged in the DSP in the pre-congress discussion for the 22nd DSP congress over how the DSP should deploy its cadre forces so as to expand and strengthen them organisationally and ideologically. In our view, it remains the central task of the DSP, as a small Marxist-Leninist party, to recruit, educate and train Marxist cadres through:

* Consistent propaganda advancing revolutionary socialist ideas around the major issues arising within the class struggle, above all, promoting in a pedagogically appropriate manner the central idea of Marxism that the road to socialism is possible only through a working-class revolution, i.e., through the organisation of the working class as the ruling class, as the state.

* Appropriate and timely agitation directed to the mass organisations of the oppressed for mass actions to fight for progressive reforms under the capitalist system and participation in such actions in order to demonstrate the superiority of Marxist tactics in fighting for such reforms.

* Persistent attention to the organisation of the party itself, particularly the development of professional revolutionary propagandists, agitators and organisers educated in Marxist theory, strategy, tactics and methods of organisation, i.e., the development of Marxist cadres.

While the majority tendency acknowledges the need for the “re-cadreisation” of the DSP, it views the problem of the “de-cadreisation” of the DSP as an organisational problem, rather than a problem stemming from a mistaken political line, from the majority tendency’s liquidationist party-building line of building the SA, rather than the DSP, as our public party.

In the discussion period leading up to the 22nd DSP congress, the NE minority tendency has functioned as just that — a loose association of like-minded comrades who have collaborated on an informal basis to present to the DSP membership our criticisms of the majority tendency’s mistaken party-building line and to offer an alternative party-building line.

We now consider it is necessary for us to form a faction, i.e., a disciplined caucus based on a definite platform, in order to act in an organised and responsible way to ensure that there is unity in action among DSP members in testing out the line approved by the 22nd DSP Congress and to collaborate in an organised way in preparing documents and reports expressing our views for presentation to future meetings of the national leadership bodies of the DSP.

We also feel it is necessary for us to form a faction because false accusations have been made by leaders of the majority tendency that the supporters of the NE minority platform have been operating as a secret, i.e., undeclared, faction in contravention of the constitutional provisions of the DSP. These accusations have been based solely upon the fact that supporters of the NE minority platform have communicated their political views to each other. These actions in no way contravene the constitutional obligations of DSP members. The constitution of the DSP (Article 5, Paragraph 5) states that “The time, form and limits of discussion within DSP bodies shall be determined by these bodies.” It does not empower any party body — branches, the NC, NE — to determine the “time, form and limits of discussion” between individual members of the DSP *outside* of meetings of party bodies.

The claim has also been made that there is some DSP “organisational principle” prohibiting members of the DSP on pain of disciplinary action from directly communicating their personal political views to other individual DSP members, including members in other branches. This is false. There is no such organisational rule in the DSP. Such an organisational rule is contrary to the Leninist organisational

traditions that our party has taken from the US SWP when it was led by James P. Cannon. This “organisational principle”, however, was later introduced as a *party law* into the US SWP under the leadership of Jack Barnes in the early 1980s (see our book *Building the Revolutionary Party: An Introduction to James P. Cannon*, pp. 51-62.).

Platform of the Leninist Party Faction

The platform of the Leninist Party Faction is:

1. For approval of the general line of the following documents:
 - a. “The revolutionary process in Venezuela” (report adopted by the October 2005 NC plenum);
 - b. The report on the Australian political situation and our campaigns presented to the 22nd DSP Congress by Max L;
 - c. The report on DSP party-building perspectives presented to the October 2005 NC plenum by John P;
 - d. The report on DSP perspectives presented to the 22nd DSP Congress by John P;
 - e. The report on DSP tasks presented to the 22nd DSP Congress by Marce Cameron;
 - f. The report on the DSP’s tasks in the Socialist Alliance to the 22nd DSP Congress by Roberto J;
 - g. The report on DSP youth work presented to the 22nd DSP Congress by Zoe K.
2. For reaffirmation and defence of the Program of the Democratic Socialist Party.
3. For the restoration of the constitution of the DSP as it was prior to the 21st DSP congress.
4. For a change in the composition of the national leadership bodies of the DSP to assure a majority committed to implement a party-building line based on the above cited points.

Structure of the Leninist Party Faction

1. The Leninist Party Faction has a national steering committee consisting of Marce Cameron, Zoe K, Max L, Doug L and John P.
2. The national steering committee is empowered to act in the name of the faction, to direct the political activities of members of the faction within the framework of the discipline of the DSP and to appoint convenors of the faction in DSP branches.
3. Members of the faction are required to observe faction discipline within the four-point platform listed above and within the framework of the discipline of the DSP as codified in the constitution of the DSP.

How to join the Leninist Party Faction

1. Send an email to John P () indicating agreement with the platform of the Leninist Party Faction and willingness to abide by the discipline of the faction within the framework of the discipline of the DSP.
2. The national steering committee of the faction will decide on applications for membership of the faction, notifying applicants whether they have been accepted or rejected.
3. If your application is accepted, the national steering committee will notify the DSP national executive and your branch secretary of this fact.

28. Report on DSP NE’s February 18 decision on the PRD split

[The February 18 DSP NE asked Comrade Peter B, DSP national secretary, to report to the membership on the DSP’s decision regarding relations with the Indonesian People’s Democratic Party (PRD). Below is the report.]

In July 2007, a political dispute erupted in the leadership of the People’s Democratic Party (PRD) in Indonesia, a party with which the DSP has enjoyed a collaborative relationship since its formation. The dispute centred on the next steps in its attempt to participate in the 2009 elections following the failure of the new political party initiated by the PRD, the National Liberation Party of Unity (Papernas), to meet the extremely onerous demands of restrictive electoral laws.

The majority of the PRD leadership wanted to explore participating in the elections through a coalition with smaller bourgeois parties that were also disenfranchised by the electoral laws, with which they were able to agree on a common, anti-imperialist platform. They argued that the 5th Congress of the PRD in 2005 had mandated such a course. But a minority opposed this and demanded that the PRD hold an Extraordinary Congress.

The PRD leadership majority declared a “temporary split” in the PRD arguing that both sides could test out their lines. They argued that this was necessary because otherwise the PRD would be locked into an ineffective election intervention because of persistent divisions over electoral participation that had marked

the organization since at least the 1999 national elections.

However, the split has become more permanent since then with some expulsions from the PRD, the suspension of a couple of branches and in November 2007 the formation of a new group, the Political Committee of the Poor –PRD (KPRM-PRD), which was publicly launched in January 2008. The KPRM-PRD has published the first issue of a newspaper which took the name *Pembebasan* (“Liberation”), the name of the PRD newspaper. *Pembebasan* had not been published in hardcopy for two years (because of financial constraints) but had come out in digital form.

This first issue of the KPRM-PRD’s *Pembebasan* attacked the PRD as “opportunist and parliamentarist”.

Its editorial declared:

An (alternative) politics of the poor has been the political position of the Peoples Democratic Party (PRD) since it was established. This was a politics with the perspective that any changes and any victory to be won by the poor must be based on the people’s own strength, on the strength of the movement. This perspective has been abandoned by a section of the leadership of the PRD – those calling themselves the majority in the PRD – in accord with their interest in liquidating themselves (ideologically, politically, organisationally) into an electoral unity with a fake reformist party, an ally of the government, a government which is the agent of imperialism. All this in order [to] have the opportunity to get into parliament.

In August 2007, Comrade Max L reported the split to the DSP National Executive and indicated that he supported the then PRD minority, which he argued had been *de facto* expelled from the PRD without democratic process.

After discussing Comrade Max L’s report on August 27, 2007, the DSP NE decided, *unanimously*:

1. To write to the PRD leadership to make clear that the DSP was not taking sides in their internal dispute/split. Our policy is not to interfere in the internal affairs of overseas parties we are collaborating with and we expect the same in return. We recognise however that these relations are based on mutual political assessments and that is why we are interested in studying the various positions in the division in the Indonesian party. If there are judgments the DSP ought to make on these matters it can do so after careful study. In due course, this may influence what groups in Indonesia we work with and in what way.
2. To send a copy of the report that Comrade Max L prepared for the DSP NE on the split to the Indonesian party’s majority leadership and invite them to respond to the questions raised in this report.
3. To write to the minority to request a statement of their position in the dispute and to explain to them that the DSP had not taken a position on the dispute in the Indonesian party and therefore should not be represented as supporting the minority.
4. That Comrade Max L and Comrade James B (based in Indonesia and assigned to collaborate with the PRD on certain internet publication and translation projects) should be scrupulous about not doing anything that might be construed as interference in this dispute.
5. That Comrade Max L should ask the minority leadership not to use his name or that of the DSP in their campaign for support from the ranks of the Indonesian party.

We then wrote to both sides of the dispute in the PRD, with the knowledge and agreement of the PRD leadership, and asked for their positions. Both sides agreed to send us their positions.

Material started coming in from the minority and was distributed to DSP NE members for study. A position paper from the PRD minority responding to a PRD majority position paper (which we had not yet received) was sent to the email addresses of a number DSP NE members (including Peter B, John P and Max L) on October 9. However, that email from the minority did not get through to me (Peter B). When Comrade Max

L sent a copy of this email on November 9, it was promptly circulated to the DSP NE.

In this email, the PRD minority made it clear that it was seeking a DSP intervention into the dispute in the PRD:

“We are sending this letter in the framework of providing assistance to our international comrades in arms in order to take a position against the injustice and unconstitutional conduct that is currently taking place within the PRD. The attached document is material that should be extremely useful in conducting a careful examination of the facts in the dispute, so as to prompt comrades NOT to take a neutral position or remain silent in the face of the situation that we are currently facing.”

The DSP NE received a 39-page PRD majority position paper on November 29, 2007 but it was in Indonesian. Comrade Vanessa H agreed to take on the translation of this document into English.

The translation of the PRD majority position paper was completed and passed it to the National Secretary on January 13, 2008. It was promptly distributed to DSP NE members. At its January 21, 2008 meeting, the DSP NE Secretariat scheduled a discussion about the split in the Indonesian party at the first meeting of the DSP NE in 2008 on February 18.

In this discussion on February 18, 2008, the DSP NE noted the criticisms of the KPRM-PRD (supplemented by the material written by Comrades Max L and Sam K, including Comrade Max L’s February 7 public attack on the PRD in his blog) and the explanation of the political reasons for the PRD majority’s attempts to use the united front tactic towards smaller bourgeois parties to participate in the 2009 elections.

In its position paper, the PRD leadership majority explained the importance of participating in the 2009 elections in this way:

The most important question in the context of tactics for the next period is whether the decline in democratic achievements, including the strengthening influence of conservative politics, has closed off opportunities to resist imperialism, imperialism being the basic problem of the Indonesian people today? We all agree that this is not the case. The opportunity to resist imperialism continues to be open, whether in the parliamentary or extra-parliamentary arena...

... imperialism’s attacks and the hopelessness of the government have spread dissatisfaction and helped create consciousness to resist. The number of mass actions has not decreased and the range of demands is increasing, showing that imperialist economic exploitation is affecting more and more sectors. However this quantitative developments have not overcome the basic weakness of the entire resistance, namely fragmentation and lack of political orientation. Most resistance is spontaneous and not reached by movement elements, so this resistance is being dragged into bourgeois politics, in terms of demands, methods and compromises.

...The realisation that the electoral and parliamentary arena are important to enter has appeared among sections of the movement, although this consciousness is still at an early stage. The signs can be seen from the setting up of political instruments such as the People’s Union Party (Partai Perserikatan Rakyat – PPR), BP3OPK (WALHI’s political wing) etc. However the lack of a commitment to unite, as well as the dominance of the movement elements who are still hesitant in their political orientation has weakened the potential of these elements in becoming a much-needed political alternative.

The PRD’s initiatives to intervene around a democratic platform, a decision taken at its fifth congress in 2005, included the formation in February 2006 of the forum of the United People’s Movement Conference (Konferensi Persatuan Gerakan Rakyat – KPGR).

....We then tried to consolidate these elements through the KPGR, with a range of meetings at the offices of the Central Leadership Committee of the PRD, the Walhi office as well as the Secretariat of the Agrarian Reform Consortium (KPA – Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria). The key agenda of KPGR was to identify

political – (one of which was our offer to construct a joint response to 2009) and organisational issues which are faced by the movement today, and to plan a national meeting involving movement organisation representatives from national as well as regional levels. However KPGR struck problems in its development. The main factor was the low level of commitment (organisationally as well as financially) from the NGO wing (Walhi, Gerakan) as well as from the movement elements themselves (PRP, which was given the mandate to lead operationally the work of forming KPGR). Our offer of a solution, to suggest that financial constraints be faced together was also not enacted. Only PRD obeyed in paying their pledge. Other political ideological problems were that a section of the movement (the leadership of SBTPI, PRP, KASBI and Eli Salomo and co.) do not consider as yet the importance of consolidating the multisectoral movement or to respond to the 2009 political momentum. They choose to consolidate sector by sector as their priority agenda, as shown by their response, from May Day to the national congress of ABM (Aliansi Buruh Menggugat, Workers' Demand Alliance). Before, in the pre-KPGR meetings, it was concluded that the slowness and stagnation in attempts of uniting the movement were due to the temporary nature of the cooperation built between political forces (the response towards the regime's policies and short term political developments), and also due to the fact that there is a still a high level of sectarianism in each sector. With these facts on the ground, do we not consider it important, do we leave the question of what is the process towards unity? Over the previous years, did we not engage enough in collaboration with the movement elements in question? Over the course of the months following the failure of the KPGR project, we tried to work with elements of KPGR to try to continue the project in another garb (Indonesian People's Deliberation – Musyawarah Rakyat Indonesia – MRI) after having been liquidated (excluded completely) from the process... The MRI Forum also failed from taking place.

...When faced with such responses, we realised the importance of acting based on the reality that we faced. The elements which agreed to build a united party, we gathered these into KP Papernas (Preparatory Committee of Papernas). We continued to comb through the movement elements and other democratic forces as our method of approaching these. The reason we pushed for the formation of the Papernas Preparatory Committee was the urgency to undertake political work (campaigning on the program, etc) and organisational tasks (the expansion of the structures)."

The decision to try to intervene in the elections through coalitions with some smaller bourgeois parties followed the failure of Papernas (and many other small parties) to meet the restrictive and undemocratic conditions of new electoral laws forced by the major bourgeois parties in Indonesia, GOLKAR and the PDIP. While a whole range of smaller parties had been disenfranchised or prevented from fielding candidates in their own name, Papernas faced the additional barrier of a concerted campaign of violent attacks and disruptions from anti-communist militia groups linked to forces in the Indonesian military.

Despite this campaign of violence, Papernas grew from 40 branches in 18 provinces to 134 branches in 23 provinces with hundreds of bases at the sub-district level, in just four months. But this was still far short of the electoral law's requirement of branches at 66% of provinces, 50% at the sub-district level and 75% of districts. The law also requires that parties provide an upfront 5 billion Rupiah deposit in order to run in elections. So by July 2007 it was clear that Papernas would not be able to run in the elections in its own name.

...The fundamental difference lies in the our attitude or response to the developments in the objective situation: whether we would continue the struggle in the electoral arena if an opportunity arose for that (through a coalition and/or other options) after Papernas failed to go it alone as a contestant in the 2009 General Elections? Would we take advantage of the platforms available in that arena to campaign on the urgent tasks, including to flood the bourgeois electoral arena (which is always a desert) with people's mobilisations bringing forth this or that demand? Is taking this step a political capitulation, betrayal of the program and betrayal of the mass actions? If there is a concern of a possible compromise in terms of the program, or other forms of propaganda, then it is possible to do (what we have done) so long as we do not leave behind principles which have been shared and realised together...

The PRD majority position paper also explained and weighed up the compromises that were being considered and the challenges such a coalition would involve. We noted the detailed description of the attempts by those comrades to negotiate such coalitions on a clear political basis (the "Three Banners of

National Unity: 1. Repudiation of the foreign debt! 2. Nationalise the oil and mining industry! 3. Build the national industry for people's prosperity") while preserving their political independence by continuing to organise Papernas as an independent political stream within any electoral coalition they entered.

The DSP NE believe that we should not adopt, from afar, a position on the correctness or otherwise of these electoral tactics of the PRD at this stage. Instead we should continue to follow the matter taking into account both the arguments and the actions of the PRD, Papernas and KPRM-PRD.

What political principles should guide this assessment?

The DSP does not share the idea of some on the left that unprincipled for socialists to enter into alliances (including electoral alliances) with capitalist parties. Such alliances are often a necessary part of the struggle by socialists to win political influence and leadership of the working class and its allies. But if such alliances are to advance the struggle, the political basis of such alliances should be clear and the political independence of the socialists needs to be preserved.

We should also be guided by our approach to capitalist parliamentary politics. This approach was well summarized by Comrade Maurice Sibelle in our pamphlet *Revolutionaries and Parliament: The Bolshevik experience*:

One of the greatest obstacles to winning working people to the perspective of a socialist revolution is the widespread and deeply ingrained illusion – inculcated in their minds day-in and day-out by the capitalist rulers – that through the institutions of bourgeois democracy, particularly parliament, working people can defend and advance their interests. Historical experience has shown that socialists cannot destroy this widely-held illusion simply by presenting arguments against it. On the contrary, the working masses can only be convinced that parliament is an instrument of capitalist rule when this argument is backed up by their own experience. That is, the masses of working people will have to go through the practical experience of struggles in which they can test the limits that the parliamentary system places on their activity before they can be convinced of the necessity of overthrowing this system and replacing it with genuinely democratic political institutions – a centralised system of elected committees or councils of working people's delegates like the Russian soviets of workers' deputies that emerged in the 1905 revolution and again in 1917.

So our judgment about the ongoing (and at this stage inconclusive) coalition negotiations by the comrades from the PRD majority leading Papernas cannot be settled conclusively with stories of how rotten or corrupt the leaders of this or that small capitalist party are. Indeed, we should hold and foster no illusions about "clean" capitalist politicians.

Our judgment should also be based on a study not only of the polemics by the parties in dispute but also on the basis of their political actions, including their interventions into the movements, their political mobilisations, etc.

On the question of the manner in which the split was carried out, the DSP NE declined to judge the Indonesian comrades' actions on the basis of the rights of factions that we have adopted under our constitution but which many other parties we collaborate with, including the PRD, have not adopted.

As the late Comrade Jim P explained in "Preparing The Party To Meet the Crisis", our approach to such parties which don't recognise the same rights to factions as we do is informed by the understanding that: "there is no invariable ratio, there is no set of rules that can tell us what to do. Our statutes are clear, our constitution is clear. We have the right to form factions, the right to form tendencies. But we say clearly that that right is subordinated to the majority's right to regulate when, how, and in what way these factions or tendencies operate... That is a judgment that a party has the right to make. There is no absolute right to anything except the right of the majority to run the party and decide how to proceed." (Report to NC plenum, October 1982, reprinted in *The Activist*, Vol. 17 No.7, p.24)

In the light of this, the DSP NE meeting of February 18 decided by overwhelming majority that the DSP

should not accept the demand by the KPRM-PRD to take their side against the PRD majority leadership. It decided to continue the existing relationship with the PRD while also continuing to receive positions, arguments and reports of actions from the KPRM-PRD.

The DSP NE has correctly, democratically and responsibly resisted all attempts by the Leninist Party Faction (LPF) to rush the DSP into characterising the PRD as having “broken with [its] revolutionary and democratic traditions” and into supporting the KPRM-PRD in its attacks on the PRD leadership for alleged “opportunism”, “parliamentarism”, “liquidationism” and “Stalinism”.

On December 3, last year, the DSP NE excluded discussion of the PRD split from the last pre-congress discussion because the positions from both sides of the split were not yet available to comrades to study. This decision was published in *The Activist*, Vol. 17 No.17.

The LPF charges the DSP leadership “banning” discussion simply to “wait for the translation of a single document sent to it by the Sari-Jabo PRD group’s choice”. However, this document is the sole detailed explanation of the majority position available to us. To have a discussion without access to this would be to do so with only one side of the political dispute available to our membership.

The attempts by LPF members to force the DSP to intervene in the dispute among the comrades in Indonesia on the basis of one-sided material, and the subsequent attempts by LPF comrades to scandalise this within the DSP and beyond, comprise a serious attack on party democracy and go completely against the principles, traditions and practices of the DSP in its conduct of relations with left parties we collaborate with, as previously well summarised in the article by Comrade John P in *Links* 15, “International left collaboration and socialist renewal”:

“For our times and circumstances, when reach-out and rethinking are needed, we need relations between parties that are multilateral, relations based on mutual respect and non-interference, with no factional meddling. We need a framework where we can have comradely and useful debates, a real international discussion. We need to emphasise solidarity, comradely collaboration, and non-selfish help where it’s possible. We need a network.”

The DSP NE also noted that other collaborating parties in our region such as the Socialist Party of Malaysia (PSM) and Laban Ng Masa in the Philippines have also not rushed in to intervene in this split. Indeed, the DSP NE also noted that, because of undemocratic electoral restrictions, the PSM had previously and was about to contest elections under the logo of capitalist opposition parties.

If the comrades in the LPF disagree with the decision of the DSP leadership majority on how to respond to the split in the PRD, they have the right to argue their case in appropriate party bodies. However, in their external political interventions all DSP comrades are bound to defend and advance the DSP majority line. The NE rejected the LPF’s claim that Comrade Max L’s position as a “well-known researcher and commentator on Indonesian affairs both on the left and by the mass media” exempts him from the responsibilities shared by all members of the DSP. All members of the DSP are obliged to act in accordance with this decision whatever private views they have on the split. Any public intervention by a DSP member in support of the KPRM-PRD against the PRD breaches the constitutional obligation on all DSP members to place all their political activity under the direction of the DSP and its elected leadership bodies. (Printed in the *Activist*, Vol 18, No 1.)

29. References to PRD split in DSP 2008 congress reports

From the International Situation and Our Tasks report summary:

“...Comrade Max L raised the question of the People’s Democratic Party (PRD) in Indonesia and the split. The NE decided not to rush in with a premature assessment of this, its particular rights or wrongs, but to seek to collect the information from both sides of the dispute to study it and make a proper assessment.

“Right now, the main document for the PRD majority is being translated. This means the NE will be able to

have a discussion with the relevant information available. This is the right approach to take. It would be wrong for us to rush in to take a position on a split in another revolutionary party in another country – especially in regards to a party – the PRD – that we have had nearly two decades of close collaboration with.

"One of the factors that has guided the NE's approach to this question is the respect we have for other left groups internationally, for our international comrades, and the principle of mutual non-interference.

"I think if we had adopted the approach advocated by Max, and also requested of us by the PRD minority [KPRM-PRD] which wanted us to publicly campaign on their behalf, it would have amounted to interference and it would have been seen by international forces as us intervening into an internal tactical dispute of another party.

"Of course this question is ultimately political, and the argument by Max, and the PRD minority, appears to be that the PRD is no longer a revolutionary force – it has betrayed its revolutionary program. That program and tradition, as Max argued, is being continued on now by the minority group.

"We will study this but we are not about to rush in to denounce a party we have had such good relations with for 12 years or more. The Trotskyist movement is full of one international group denouncing another international group as "betraying the revolution" often without any real understanding of the concrete situation that might dictate certain tactical moves. And anyway, there are tactical moves which, even if they prove to be a mistake, do not automatically amount to a revolutionary group ceasing to be revolutionary.

"This is not our tradition of how to conduct international relations and it isn't something we wish to start adopting now.

"Our response is the responsible one, and from what we can gather it is the same response being adopted by other revolutionary groups in the region such as the Malaysian Socialist Party and the comrades in the Philippines. They too are also not rushing to take sides in the PRD's internal dispute."

From the Organisational Principles and Constitutional amendments report summary:

"...I reject the claim that comrades were banned by the NE from submitting their contributions to the written PCD. The NE simply wanted to have all documents relating to the split in the PRD (from both sides) translated and read by the NE, before publicly sharing these with the membership, which is an entirely reasonable way to proceed. And we will do this in the New Year as the resolution that was published in The Activist (Vol 17 # 17) made clear. And if comrades feel it is necessary, then we will have a separate and open discussion on these issues in The Activist also..."

30. Letter #2 from NE to LPF NSC re Max L's blog on the PRD

Date: Thursday, 21 February 2008 10:50 PM

February 21, 2008

To LPF Steering Committee

Dear Comrades

On February 18, the DSP National Executive discussed your response to the email sent to the LPF by DSP national secretary Peter B on February 13 on behalf of the DSP NE Secretariat.

The overwhelming majority of the NE considers your response a collective refusal by the LPF leadership to abide by party democracy and to recognise in practice the duty of all DSP members under Article 4, paragraph 2b: "To place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP and to engage in the work of the DSP to the best of their ability".

Any loyal faction of the DSP has the duty to respect the higher discipline of the DSP constitution and the decisions of its elected leadership bodies. Even the declaration of the LPF states: "Members of the faction

are required to observe faction discipline within the four-point platform listed above and within the framework of the discipline of the DSP as codified in the constitution of the DSP.” (Declaration of the Leninist Party Faction, The Activist Vol 16 No 2).

The NE asks the LPF leadership to urgently reaffirm its willingness to work within the framework of the discipline of the DSP as codified in the constitution of the DSP, and to demonstrate that willingness by instructing all its members, including Comrades Max L, James B and Sam K to abide by the clear directions from the DSP National Executive on the conduct of our relations with the comrades in Indonesia.

It is noted that, to date, Comrade Max L has not even carried out the latest direction (February 13) to “promptly add a statement to his February 7 blog posting making it clear that the posting expresses his personal views on the split in the PRD and not that of the DSP or Green Left Weekly; and to cease making public attacks on the PRD and to abide by DSP leadership direction on this matter as expressed in several emails to comrade Max L from the national secretary on behalf of the DSP NE.”

As an earlier direction (November 18, 2007 – see copy below) from the DSP NE Secretariat pointed out to Comrade Max L:

“Given your position as a member of the DSP national executive and the central role you have played in our relations with the PRD over many years, any public comment from you on this dispute must be within the framework set by the DSP’s elected leadership.”

In its attempt to justify and support Comrade Max L’s clear refusal to follow the repeatedly conveyed political direction of the NE Secretariat on this matter, the LPF Steering Committee has sought to scandalize the responsible decision of the DSP national leadership, endorsed by the recent 23rd Congress under two reports, to delay discussion of the split in the PRD until the positions of both sides of the split (in their own words rather than second-hand from a DSP member) were available in English to the DSP leadership.

But the facts are clear on this, as all DSP comrades can see for themselves.

The DSP NE had its discussion as soon as the 39-page PRD majority position paper, only received by the DSP leadership on November 29, 2007, was translated and read by its members. Comrade Vanessa H did this huge translation (despite work and the Congress) and passed it to the National Secretary on January 13, 2008. It was promptly distributed to the NE list (as was done with all the minority/KPRM-PRD materials we have been sent, Comrade Max L’s original report and related correspondence). The NE Secretariat (of which Doug L, a leader of the LPF, is a member) took a decision at its January 21, 2008 meeting to schedule a discussion about the split in the Indonesian party.

In this discussion on February 18, 2008, the NE noted the criticisms of the KPRM-PRD (supplemented by the material written by Comrades Max L and Sam K, including Comrade Max L’s February 7 public attack on the PRD in his blog) and the detailed explanation of the political reasons for the PRD majority’s attempts to use the united front tactic towards smaller bourgeois parties to participate in the 2009 elections. We noted the detailed description of the attempts by those comrades to negotiate such coalitions on a clear political basis (the “Three Banners of National Unity: 1. Repudiation of the foreign debt! 2. Nationalise the oil and mining industry! 3. Build the national industry for people’s prosperity”) and while preserving their political and organizational independence.

The PRD majority position paper also explained and weighed up the compromises that were being considered and the challenges such a coalition would involve.

The DSP NE believe that we should not adopt, from afar, a position on the correctness or otherwise of these tactics of the PRD at this stage. Instead we should continue to follow the matter taking into account both the arguments and the actions of the PRD, Papernas and KPRM-PRD.

On the question of the manner in which the split was carried out, the DSP NE declined to judge the Indonesian comrades’ actions on the basis of the rights of factions that we have adopted under our constitution but which many other parties we collaborate with, including the PRD, have not adopted.

As the late Comrade Jim P explained in “Preparing The Party To Meet the Crisis”, our approach to such parties which don’t recognize the same rights to factions as we do is informed by the understanding that: “there is no invariable ratio, there is no set of rules that can tell us what to do. Our statutes are clear, our constitution is clear. We have the right to form factions, the right to form tendencies. But we say clearly that that right is subordinated to the majority’s right to regulate when, how, and in what way these factions or tendencies operate... That is a judgment that a party has the right to make. There is no absolute right to

anything except the right of the majority to run the party and decide how to proceed.” (Report to NC plenum, October 1982, reprinted in *The Activist*, Vol. 17 No.7, p.24)

In the light of this, the DSP National Executive meeting of February 18 decided by overwhelming majority that the DSP should not accept the demand by the KPRM-PRD to take their side against the PRD majority leadership. It decided to continue the existing relationship with the PRD while also continuing to receive positions, arguments and reports of actions from the KPRM-PRD. A letter will be written to the PRD and KPRM-PRD advising them of our current position.

It was totally responsible to wait for the translation of the PRD majority position paper. The LPF statement charges the DSP leadership of “Simply wait[ing] for the translation of a single document sent to it by the Sari-Jabo PRD group’s choice”, but this document is the sole detailed explanation of the majority position available to us. To have a discussion without access to this would be to do so with only one side of the political dispute articulated.

The DSP National Executive has correctly, democratically and responsibly resisted all attempts by the LPF and by Comrade Max L and Sam K to rush the DSP into characterising the PRD as having “broken with [its] revolutionary and democratic traditions” and into supporting the KPRM-PRD in its attacks on the PRD leadership for alleged “opportunism”, “parliamentarism”, “liquidationism” and “Stalinism”.

These attempts to force the DSP to intervene in the dispute among the comrades in Indonesia on the basis of one-sided material, and the attempts by LPF comrades to scandalize this within the DSP and beyond its membership, have been an attack on party democracy and go against the principles, traditions and practices of the DSP in its conduct of relations with left parties we collaborate with, as previously well summarized in the article by Comrade John P in Links 15, “International left collaboration and socialist renewal”:

“For our times and circumstances, when reach-out and rethinking are needed, we need relations between parties that are multilateral, relations based on mutual respect and non-interference, with no factional meddling. We need a framework where we can have comradely and useful debates, a real international discussion. We need to emphasise solidarity, comradely collaboration, and non-selfish help where it’s possible. We need a network.”

The DSP NE also noted that other collaborating parties in our region such as the Socialist Party of Malaysia (PSM) and Laban Ng Masa in the Philippines have also not rushed in to intervene in this split.

Comrades in the LPF may disagree with the decision of the DSP leadership majority and they have the constitutional right to argue their case in appropriate party bodies. The NE does not agree with the LPF’s claim that Comrade Max L’s position as a “well-known researcher and commentator on Indonesian affairs both on the left and by the mass media” exempts him from the responsibilities shared by all members of the DSP. All members of the DSP are obliged to act in accordance with this decision whatever private views they have on the split. Any public intervention in support of the KPRM-PRD against the PRD by DSP members is a breach of discipline.

I also repeat the request for an updated list of members of the LPF, as required by the DSP Constitution under Article 4, paragraph 1(i): “The faction’s platform shall clearly spell out the faction’s aims, its basis for membership, its structure including its leadership bodies and the powers of those leadership bodies. The faction shall inform the national DSP bodies of its platform, its members and leaders at the time of its formation, and of any changes to these after its formation.”

Comradely

Peter B

DSP National Secretary

On behalf of DSP National Executive

Appendices (2 – Decisions of DSP NE February 18, 2008, Copy of email t Max L November 18, 2007):

Motions on our approach to split in the PRD (adopted by DSP NE 18-2-08):

1. That we endorse the approach previously taken by NE on this matter:

a. Reaffirmed that our relations with the PRD, and other left parties we collaborate with, must be based on mutual respect and non-interference, with no factional meddling.

b. Recognised that these relations are based on mutual political assessments and that is why we are interested in studying the various positions in the division in the Indonesian party. We should continue to study the arguments and actions of both PRD-Papernas and KPRM-PRD. If there are judgments we in the

DSP ought to make on these matters we can do so after careful study. In due course, this may influence what groups in Indonesia we work with and in what way.

2. That at this stage our assessment is that we should maintain our longstanding collaborative relations with the PRD and Papernas.

3. At this stage our relations with KPRM-PRD are only an agreement to receive information about their political views and activities.

4. DSP members who disagree with this approach may make their case and present evidence in support of it to the DSP National Executive and raise it in appropriate national leadership meetings and when the next pre-congress discussion is opened.

5. The main documentation on the split should be made available to members of the National Committee with the explicit instruction that material only made available by the PRD leadership to the DSP leadership should go no further.

6. The national secretary should urgently prepare a report on the National Executive decision and send to branches and be published in the Activist, respecting the confidentiality requested for certain documents, especially those of underground parties.

7. Green Left Weekly should report the split but the coverage should be measured, balanced and in line with the position adopted by the DSP National Executive on this matter.

8. All members of the DSP are obliged to act in according with this decision whatever private views they have on the split. Any public interventions in support of the KPRM-PRD against the PRD by DSP members will be a breach of discipline. That letters be written to James and Max to ask them to abide by discipline.

* * *

November 18, 2007

To Max L

cc DSP National Executive

Dear Max

The NE Secretariat last Monday (November 12, 2007) discussed your email of November 5 and decided to:

1. Write a letter to you instructing you not to attack the PRD in writing for publication or in public fora.
2. Write to LPF leadership requesting that it instruct you to abide by this instruction.
3. Write to PRD leadership notifying that we have received a position paper from former PRD CC minority and requesting a position paper from PRD leadership.

I hereby convey the instruction that you not attack the PRD in writing for publication or in public fora.

You have explained your view that the PRD leadership is on a “right-wing and parliamentarist” course. That is your assessment and not the position of the DSP, which is still awaiting material on the dispute in the PRD from the PRD leadership.

Given your position as a member of the DSP national executive and the central role you have played in our relations with the PRD over many years, any public comment from you on this dispute must be within the framework set by the DSP’s elected leadership.

Comradely

Peter B

for DSP National Executive Secretariat

31. Sam K’s posting to Marxmail on PRD split

Date: Tue, 4 Mar 2008 09:35:54 +1030

Indonesia: Information on the split in the PRD

Earlier this year I spent one month in Indonesia to study Indonesian political developments and the split in the People’s Democratic Party (PRD) – Indonesia’s revolutionary Marxist party. I also wrote some news articles for Green Left Weekly. The articles included that which first reported the split in the PRD <http://www.greenleft.org.au/2008/738/38186>, as well as an unpublished Green Left article earlier sent to

this list see <http://kprm-peoples-democratic-party.blogspot.com/2008/02/indonesia-reject-parliamentarism-and.html>.

As there is not yet much analysis available in English on the split I will make some points to provide readers with background to the situation.

People following the PRD split threads on this list would know that the Split (which began July 2007) occurred ostensibly over how to approach the Indonesian elections scheduled for late 2009. The majority of the PRD's central leadership committee expelled those members of the committee that did not agree with the majority approach. This preceded further expulsions from the PRD and its allied organisations including the expulsion of whole branches and districts where a majority of the members did not agree with the PRD majority's approach to elections.

Why force a split over a tactical question like how to relate to a parliamentary election? The PRD minority (now called the Political Committee of The Poor – People's Democratic Party – KPRM-PRD) argues it is because the differences are not really just tactical – but that the PRD majority has taken an opportunist turn to the right. They say this can be seen in part by looking at the majority approach to the 2009 elections.

So what are their election tactics?

In short the PRD majority's election work consists of trying to form a coalition between their own PRD led broad left party (National Liberation Party of Struggle — PAPERNAS) and one or another bourgeois party that can meet the electoral registration requirements (i.e. will be allowed to compete in the 2009 elections).

PAPERNAS failed to get registration in its own name — that is what triggered the split last year.

Dita Sari is the Chairperson of the PRD majority (now PRD-PAPERNAS). In her own words to a Green Left weekly interview in October 07; "Before we were focusing on campaigning among the social movements. But we found the social movements were very fragmented and sometimes very sectarian and apolitical. What we are trying to do now is campaign for our program among the mass bases and structures of this Islamic party that we are targeting for a coalition... building a coalition with another party, which is not left, revolutionary or progressive, but to some extent can accept our program. "

see <http://www.greenleft.org.au/2007/735/38075>

That party is the Star Reform Party (PBR).

I was able to attend all of Dita Sari's presentations at the Latin America – Asia Pacific International Solidarity Conference (LAAPISC) in Melbourne in Oct 2007. She was an invited guest of the DSP along with another leader of the PRD majority Agus "Jabo" Priyono.

In their workshop *The Indonesian left before and after Suharto's 'new order' regime* Sari stated her basic justification for an electoral coalition with one or another bourgeois electoral party:

"From 1998 to now, platforms proposed by the left have already been accepted. An Anti neo-liberal platform is already accepted by centrist groups including academics. Anti militarism is also accepted by student and bourgeois political groups. Also anti feudal and anti corruption demands are also widely accepted."

"So the challenge is not how to get our platform accepted – it is already. The challenge is to create momentum."

Later in the same workshop Sari stated:

"PRD-Papernas also see people in [the] centre, centrist groups who need to be moved [into action] because the anti-neo liberal platform is already accepted" by them.

However it is difficult to find any evidence that the Star Reform Party (PBR) had any agreement with the PAPERNAS three point program. I phoned Dita Sari for an interview for Links Magazine while I was in Jakarta but she declined the interview, stating that if I had any questions about PRD-PAPERNAS position I should refer to the PRD majority's official position statement sent to the Democratic Socialist Perspective (my party) – however this is not publicly available.

The PAPERNAS program is

1. Abolish the foreign debt!
2. Nationalise the oil and mining industry!
3. Build a strong national economy for the benefit of the people.

The Star Reformation Party (PBR) has never mentioned that program or those demands publicly.

PBR is an Islamic party with a reactionary landlord base in some areas. PBR has opposed increasing the budget allocation for education to 20% of Government expenditure (as stipulated by Indonesia's constitution of 1945), opposed the campaign on foreign debt cancellation, and pushed for Islamic Law in many provincial representative bodies.

In Labuhan Batu and West Sulawesi PBR elite land owning politicians actually directly clashed with peasant mass organisations aligned with PAPERNAS. For example in West Sulawesi the chairperson of PBR hired thugs to evict peasants belonging to the National Peasants Union (STN) from his estate.

On October 30, 2007 an interview was published in the Rakyat Merdeka newspaper with Bursah Zarnubi, the chairperson and boss of the PBR. He openly slates that he is also involved in negotiations with the Concern for the Nation Party (PKPB) set up by Suharto's eldest daughter Tutut Suharto and her favourite pro-Suharto generals. This public statement did not cause PRD-PAPERNAS to change their policy which is to seek a coalition with PBR.

The Concern for the Nation Party (PKPB) is chaired by Raden Hartono, a former Suharto army commander. He is quoted as stating during a campaign rally in March 2004 that "With an extraordinary boldness I want to affirm that I am a Suharto lackey". Tutut Suharto was chosen as the PKPB's presidential candidate in the last elections.

While PRD-PAPERNAS has not been put off by the apparent reactionary nature of the PBR, it seems the PBR has been less interested in forming an alliance with PAPERNAS, so the PRD-PAPERNAS leadership have had to look for other coalition possibilities if they wish to run in the elections.

The second party publicly flagged by PRD-PAPERNAS as a coalition target is the Democracy renewal Party (PDP) which was a split from ex-president Megawati Sukarno Putri's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P). The PDP party was founded and until late last year lead by Laksamana Sukardi a millionaire businessman who served as Minister for State Owned Enterprises in Megawati's cabinet From August 2001 until late 2004. Sukardi was also put in control of the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (IBRA) for most of that time.

Sukardi's appointment in 2001 followed the so called "Asian" economic crisis of 1997-8 which brought massive IMF intervention into the Indonesian economy. The IBRA was the government agency given control of all "bailed out" i.e. bankrupted and then nationalised bank assets resulting from the economic crisis. It was second collection of state owned enterprises controlled by Sukardi whose office controlled more than 150 companies ranging from oil exploration to shipping to telecommunications as well as many banks.

Sukardi's policy was simple – sell off as many state assets as possible to raise enough cash to meet the IMF loan re-payment schedule. This IMF / Megawati / Sukardi policy, also accelerated foreign capitalist take over of the Indonesian economy by offering bargain basement fire sales of Indonesia's national wealth at a time when mostly only foreigners had the cash to bid.

All the main international financial press seems to have been happy with the choice of Sukardi for this job: Asia Today on August 27, 2001 Decided that :

"With the recently concluded IMF agreement, things are looking up for Indonesia. Standard & Poor's upgraded the country's long-term sovereign ratings from negative to stable, reflecting its confidence in the new administration. One of Megawati's first acts as President was to shift control of IBRA from the finance ministry to the state enterprises ministry, headed by Laksamana Sukardi. Investors will most likely approve of the decision, given Mr. Laksamana's background as a former Citibank executive." see http://www.asiasource.org/news/at_mp_02.cfm?newsid=59951

The Far Eastern Economic Review (Eastern edition). Reported on August 14, 2001

"Mr. Sukardi said he would initially focus on quickly raising more revenue by consolidating the portfolio of state companies under the control of his ministry with IBRA's roster. At the height of the 1997-98 financial crisis, the agency took over assets with a face value of some \$60 billion.

"When you combine state-owned enterprises and IBRA, you get a big stock of companies, and then you can pick and choose which to sell for the best result," Mr. Sukardi said. He said that Indonesia has to meet its commitment to the International Monetary Fund to raise 27 trillion rupiah (\$2.96 billion) for this year's budget from IBRA asset sales, and another 6.5 trillion rupiah from other privatization efforts."

Maggie Ford in her article Laksamana's in-tray keeps growing (Wall Street Journal, Sept 2001) cautioned

that:

“The pile of assets on the desk of Laksamana Sukardi, Indonesia’s new minister for state-owned enterprises, has multiplied to include the whole of the country’s public sector and a substantial chunk of the private sector. Getting those assets off his desk again will not be easy.”

Ford tells us:

“Telecoms and banking are likely to get Sukardi’s immediate attention as he struggles to meet targets for asset sales under Indonesia’s support programme with the IME. Few believe he can meet the target of R6.5 trillion rupiah (US\$765.5 million) from privatization sales and R27 trillion from IBRA – funds needed to support the budget deficit this year.”

It appears that overall Sukardi was able to do a reasonable job of raising cash to send to the imperialists. According to the Letter of Intent Sent by Indonesia to the IMF on June 11, 2003:

“IBRA continues to make good progress toward achieving its annual asset recoveries target. Results from the recently completed loan sale program were encouraging, and IBRA has recently launched the sale of virtually all of its remaining asset holdings. The bank divestment program is also advancing; we have completed the sale of Bank Danamon, have announced our plan to launch the majority sale of Bank Lippo this month, and have advanced preparations for the divestment of BII.”

So it is unclear exactly what Dita Sari is referring to when she says that the potential coalition partners “to some extent can accept our program” when the PAPERNAS program calls for nationalisation and “abolishing” (i.e. refusing to pay the foreign debt).

Sukardi is currently being investigated for alleged corruption in selling two oil tankers for US\$184 million in 2004 – a price which according to the attorney general was well below the market price of that year.

According to the Media Indonesia newspaper (February 25, 2005) Sukardi’s personal wealth went up during his time as minister from Rupia Rp26,103 billion to Rupia 42,473 billion.

With coalition partners like that it may be difficult for Indonesian workers, peasants, urban poor and students to detect a difference between the PRD-PAPERNAS and the rotten Indonesian capitalist political elite. Under Indonesian election laws PAPERNAS will not be able to use its own name in any such coalition.

This question was posed by Ric Reyes, a revolutionary Marxist leader of the united left coalition in the Philippines Laban ng Masa Ric Reyes. Reyes was also visiting Melbourne last October for the LAAPISC conference. Speaking on the same platform as Sari during the session *Movements of Resistance in the Asia Pacific* Reyes Stated:

“Our young people have been over exposed to corrupt politicians. They enter into deals and alliances with anybody and sometimes the left makes the same mistake.

This can be overcome by a concerted effort to come up clean. To reject everything that is associated with traditional politics – money etc. There is an increasing trend in the Philippines to think that left tactics is similar to those of the traditional politics.”

At the LAAPISC conference and in Green Left Sari downplayed the strategic importance of base building work at the grass roots and counterpoised that to election work.

On the contrary the expelled wing of the PRD – the Struggle Committee for the Poor (KPRM-PRD) see Indonesia’s massive and sustained mass movement – the popular response to neo-liberal / IMF policies – as the strategic orientation for the revolutionary left in Indonesia today. KPRM-PRD argues that conditions are beginning to ripen making it easier today to relate to these struggles.

The KPRM-PRD see the task of relating to a large layer of non party social movement activists as the key bridge to the masses. They argue there is a significant layer of well placed and now quite battle hardened activists who have gone through a rigorous ideological education over the last 10 years of “democratic” capitalist decline and national crisis. Many of these activists – having battled it out as social movement activists for years – are now in the process of forming new pre party or proto-party revolutionary groupings.

There are now in Indonesia several streams describing themselves as revolutionary Marxists or as Marxist-Leninist. These groupings are led by activists whose political activity pre-dates the fall of Suharto and are now in the leadership of spontaneous mass campaigns, trade union groupings or student organisations. The mass bases of Marxist or semi-Marxist groupings outside the PRD are now significantly larger than those

of either the KPRM-PRD or the PRD-PAPERNAS. The KPRM-PRD's medium term tactical orientation is to unite with these groups – thereby uniting the most politically advanced elements of the Indonesian mass struggle.

I managed to interview some of these trade union and student leaders when I was in Jakarta. Time permitting I will be able to translate and transcribe the interviews from two key trade Union leaders and make them available in English.

The orientation of the KPRM-PRD itself is explained in detail in an almost finished interview with Zely Ariane from the International Relations Department of KPRD-PRD.

Solidarity,
Sam K

32. Max L's blog posting on the PRD split

An important Development on the Indonesian Left
By Max L

In this article, I want to report and analyze on one of the most important developments on the Indonesian Left. These developments began in Indonesia in July 2007, seven months ago now. I apologize to all those readers who have been reading my English language articles as a means of following the Indonesian left. I have been unfortunately constrained over the last seven months, and even now

In July, 2007 a majority of the current leadership of the PRD voted on a leadership body that a small number of leaders, who disagreed with current political perspectives should exercise their "democratic rights" to "go their own way" to test out their own line. Members of the PRD were to be informed of this decision and all those who did not support the perspective of the current majority would be invited to join those "going their own way". In other words, all those with differences were being de facto expelled. Formal expulsions of Jakarta based members and the freezing of branches whose membership's rejected the current leadership's perspectives took place later in the year.

The differences

In 2005, the PRD decided that it was a priority to intervene or respond to the 2009 general and presidential elections. After a failed but brief series of discussions with other groupings in the broad left activist milieu in order to organize a conference that might lead to a party of the united activist Left, the PRD initiated the formation on PAPERNAS (Party for National Liberation Unity). PAPERNAS evolved as a party comprising the PRD and an extensive section of the PRD's periphery and past contacts. While some other non-PRD organizations joined the PRD at its foundation, by 2006 it was clearly the PRD plus its friends and supporters.

This was a result of a fantastic effort on the part of the PRD cadre and represented a real expansion of the number of activists that were being coordinated by the PRD.

However by the end of 2006 it was also clear that PAPERNAS would not succeed in meeting the criteria to achieve official registration as a political party and an electoral participant. Laws passed by the Indonesian parliament, dominated by the major bourgeois parties, required proof of branches and memberships in two thirds of all provinces and two thirds of all districts within provinces. There would also need to be proof of membership of fixed percentages of the population, which would include provision of phot ID. Physical offices, and local government statements that such offices existed, in all these areas was also required.

Despite the impressive growth of the PRD-PAPERNAS organized network of activists, it was still a small force unable to smash through these undemocratic obstacles.

Coalition and merger for seats

In late July, 2007, a position paper was circulated internally in the party which set out a proposition for a

merger with another party which already members on the parliament and therefore might not need to go through the electoral registration process. This was the Star Reformation Party (PBR). PBR was a split from the Soeharto era, pro-Soeharto Islamic United Development Party (PPP). It was anti-communist, anti-secular and anti-pluralist. It was led by anti-Left activists from the late 1990s in combination with local elites, including Islamic fundamentalist elements.

While posited as a "coalition" in this paper, the proposal amounted to a merger proposal. PAPERNAS would take 5 seats on the PBR national leadership council; would campaign under the PBR name; would stand candidates and campaign only in electorates where the PBR was not strong; would change its name to drop any reference to it being a party; and would accept the watering down of some of its slogans. On the latter, for example, "nationalization of oil and gas" would be restated as "protecting national sovereignty in resources".

At the same time, the paper insisted that PAPERNAS would retain its independence as a separate organization, although affiliated to PBR. The proposal was being supported by PRD chairperson, Dita Sari and PRD Secretary general Agus Jabo.

It was not clear at the time whether the PBR had actually agreed to this proposal or whether it was just the wishes of the PRD leadership.

A few days after this paper was circulated, these proposals were presented for a vote on the main leadership body. A small number of four leaders voted against it. Following this vote, another discussion and vote was taken resulting in the majority vote that those with differences "go their own way".

The emergence of The Political Committee of the Poor-PRD

In the months since this decision was taken, the majority forced split has spread throughout the party and its affiliated mass organizations in almost the whole country. As members dismayed at and opposed to the course of merger with the PBR discussed among themselves why this had happened and what they must do, a consensus emerged that the leadership was taking the party on a parliamentarist and opportunist path.

On January 31, they declared publicly the existence of a new grouping The Political Committee of the Poor-PRD (KPRM-PRD). Even before this, also in January, the KPRM-PRD had carried out public protest actions, demanding the nationalisation of oil and gas industries and the lowering of prices, both in Surabaya, Jakarta and other cities.

The KPRM-PRD has also restarted the publication of the PRD's old paper PEMBEBASAN (LIBERATION) which has not appeared in hard copy for more than two years, while the party devoted 100% of resources on trying to achieve electoral registration.

Supporters of KPRM-PRD included a central leader at the PRD's founding, Danial Indrakusuma, as well as the former Political Secretary of PAPERNAS; the former secretary-general of the National League of Democratic Students (LMND), the secretary-general of the National Peasants Union, and a former Secretary-General of the PRD, Zely Ariane, and until recently the head of the PRD's International Committee. The overwhelming majority of the membership of three branches: Jogjakarta, East Java and East Kalimantan is supporting KPRM-PRD.

The KPRM-PRD has outlined a political perspective emphasising a mass action strategy and emphasising the necessity of prioritising efforts to unite the huge numbers of sections of the people currently engaged in protest mobilisations and campaigns. It argues that the pro-merger PRD-PAPERNAS has abandoned any orientation to the protest movement and broader Left for an orientation for bourgeois parties, which it has described as "the popular bourgeoisie".

The KPRM-PRD points out that the PBR not only openly advocates campaigning against communism and secularism, but has also opposed increases in the budget for education. In the regions, its leaders are involved in campaigns to establish Islamic law as well as being engaged in mobilising thugs against farmer

activists. At its main national assembly in 2007, it invited President Bambang Susilo Yudhoyono as its keynote speaker.

More recently, through PAPERNAS documents, it has become clear that earlier warnings from critics of the pro-merger perspective that even the merger proposal itself was no more than a reflection of the opportunist dreaming of its supporters are being confirmed as accurate. While complaining that despite all the efforts of PAPERNAS, negotiations for merger with PBR have not proceeded far, Dita Sari and the PAPERNAS leadership have started discussion with officials of the Democratic Renewal Party (PDP), a clique split away from Megawati Soekarnoputri's PDIP. The central leader of PDP is millionaire businessman, Laksamana Sukardi, currently under investigation for corruption during his period as a minister in the Megawati government before 2004. (Meanwhile the PBR itself has turned to talks with The Concern for the Nation Functional Party (PKPB) which stood Suharto's daughter, the infamous Tutut Soeharto, at the last elections.)

United front possibilities on the Left

In contrast with the pro-merger PRD-PAPERNAS's perspective of seeking anybody, no matter how rotten, that might help them stand candidates in the 2009 elections, the KPRM-PRD has quickly moved to begin discussions and collaborations with several of the key components of the activist Left that has steadily grown since the fall of Suharto in 1998. As reported in the news item written for Green Left Weekly (see below), those sending representatives to the KPRM-PRD's January 31 declaration included The meeting was attended by representatives of like minded leftist organisations including the Indonesian Student Union (SMI), Indonesian Federation of Transport Workers (FBTI), Poor People's Alliance (ARM), Left House (Rumah Kiri), Alliance for Workers Demands (ABM), National Student Front (FMN), Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI), and the Independent Journalists Alliance (AJI).

Discussions are underway among some of these organizations, including the KPRM-PRD, about possibilities of more consolidated campaign alliances. This is a very positive development, but the formation of such an alliance or alliances will probably require a long process of dialogue, debate and confidence building.

Struggle for the PRD tradition

The KPRM-PRD's rejection of coalition and merger with small, right-wing and corrupt parties in order to be able to stand in elections as parliamentarism and opportunism is consistent with the long-term tradition of the PRD that was consolidated during the 1990s. Its emphasis on building campaigns at the grass roots around the pressing demands of the people is also consistent with that tradition. Its perspectives on how to approach intervening in the electoral processes are also consistent with this tradition.

The KPRM-PRD is arguing that a more unified approach from more of the activist formations, uniting the hundreds, probably thousands, of mobilisations now occurring in a very fragmented way, could quickly subvert the current domination of the public political arena of the narrow and deceitful agenda being promoted by all the bourgeois parties. (This would result in an even further deepening of the alienation of the mass of the population from the bourgeois parties which is represented in some poll results indicating that 70% of the population don't like any of the parties in the current parliament.) The KPRM-PRD points out that the PRD made a major and extremely effective intervention in the 1997 general elections when it was still an underground party, through a campaign of mass leaflet distribution and mass mobilisation around key political demands.

As I write it appears that "Politics of the Poor" wings of most of the student, women's and peasant organizations under the leadership of the PRD are also emerging publicly in many parts of the country. This is also happening in the worker sector and the Indonesian Front for Labor Struggles (FNPBI). In this area, the struggle is more bitter with the "majority" threatening members that their enterprise union's registration with the Ministry of Labor will be withdrawn if they support the KPRM wing.

However, it appears that the KPRM-PRD is likely to be successful in saving the tradition of the PRD and

ensuring that the radical and consistent politics of the party in the past will be continued.*

33. Letter #1 from NE Secretariat to LPF NSC re Max L's blog on PRD split

To the National Steering Committee of the Leninist Party Faction of the DSP

Cc Comrade Max L

Dear Comrades

The February 11 meeting of the DSP National Executive Secretariat discussed Comrade Max L's public attack on the PRD-Papernas in his February 7 blog post "An important development on the Indonesian left" <http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/maxMax/Lintlasia/mMaxL.html>.

Comrade Max L also posted a link to this blog posting on the Marxism List. This is a public attack on a party the DSP has had and continues to closely collaborate with and it defies specific directions to Comrade Max L on how he should act in the current split in the PRD.

On August 29, at the instruction of the DSP national executive, I directed Comrade Max L and Comrade James B in Indonesia: "Specifically, I am formally requesting a commitment from you to abide by the careful approach unanimously decided by the last NE, which:

"1. Reaffirmed that our relations with the PRD, and other left parties we collaborate with, must be based on mutual respect and non-interference, with no factional meddling.

"2. Recognised that these relations are based on mutual political assessments and that is why we are interested in studying the various positions in the division in the Indonesian party. If there are judgments we in the DSP ought to make on these matters we can do so after careful study. In due course, this may influence what groups in Indonesia we work with and in what way.

"If you think the issues in this dispute in the PRD are such that we should break from this approach and intervene now, then you need to say so explicitly and make your case, while abiding by the decision of the NE."

Comrade Max L's action on February 7 clearly breaks this explicit direction.

Comrade Max L's action follows an attempt by Comrade Sam K, also an LPF member, to publish an article entitled: "Indonesia: Reject Parliamentarism and Opportunism" in *Green Left Weekly*. *GLW* co-editor Stuart M explained to Comrade Sam K that the article would not be published pending a NE discussion of the PRD split on February 18. Comrade Max L published Comrade Sam K's article on his blog, describing it as an article "written for *Green Left Weekly*". This, together with the fact that Comrade Max L is a member of the DSP national committee and is widely known as a leading DSP member, is likely to give the impression to many readers that Comrade Sam K's article and Comrade Max L's blog posting express the view of *Green Left Weekly* and the DSP on the split in the PRD.

This is an example of such confusion on the Leftist Trainspotters list:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/leftist_trainspotters/message/86766.

The DSP National Executive Secretariat:

1. Calls upon the LPF leadership to repudiate Comrade Max L's blatant refusal to place his political activity under the direction of the DSP (as is constitutionally required). As the constitution makes clear, while comrades can have different views and argue for them under the provisions of party democracy, the DSP requires of all members the strictest unity in political action. This unity in action includes public interventions in the area of the DSP international work.

2. Calls upon the LPF leadership to discipline its members to abide by

the constitutional requirement to place all their political activity under the direction of the DSP and its elected leadership bodies, noting that one of the declared conditions of membership of the LPF is:

"Members of the faction are required to observe faction discipline within the four-point platform listed above and within the framework of the discipline of the DSP as codified in the constitution of the DSP." (Declaration of the Leninist Party Faction, *The Activist* Vol 16 No 2).

3. Directs Comrade Max L to: promptly add a statement to his February 7 blog posting making it clear that the posting expresses his personal views on the split in the PRD and not that of the DSP or *Green Left Weekly*; and to cease making public attacks on the PRD and to abide by DSP leadership direction on this matter as expressed in several emails to comrade Max L from the national secretary on behalf of the DSP

NE.

The National Executive is scheduled to discuss the PRD split at its February 18 meeting and will also consider any further responses to this current breach of discipline by a leading member of the LPF.

Under the terms of the constitution (Article 4, paragraph 1(i)), I also request an updated list of members of the LPF, noting that the LPF did not advise the National Executive of the resignation of Comrade Margaret P from the LPF last December.

Under Article 4, paragraph 1(i) “The faction shall inform the national DSP bodies of its platform, its members and leaders at the time of its formation, and of any changes to these after its formation.”

Comradely

Peter B

DSP National Secretary on behalf of National Executive Secretariat

34. NE Secretariat letter #3 to LPF NSC re Max L’s blog on PRD split

Date: Monday, 3 March 2008 4:11 PM

To the LPF steering committee

Cc John P, Max L

Dear Comrades

The DSP National Executive Secretariat discussed the March 2 email from LPF National Coordinator John P.

We acknowledge receipt of the list of current members of the LPF.

However, the NE Secretariat was not satisfied with the argument that Comrade Max L’s blogsite already has a disclaimer in its masthead. This is a disclaimer relating to the US only. It says: “The views expressed on this blog are those of the respective authors and not those of the US.”

The NE Secretariat decided to formally direct (see below) Comrade Max L to:

- a. Immediately place a disclaimer on his blogsite indicating that his comments on the Indonesian left are his own, and not those of the Democratic Socialist Perspective. If Comrade Max L continues to delay this action he will be regarded as being in breach of DSP discipline.
- b. Remove all references to *Green Left Weekly* from the article by Sam K article “Indonesia: Reject Parliamentarism and Opportunism”, published on Comrade Max L’s blogpost.

These are the minimum steps required to make it clear to any readers of this blogpost that the views of Comrade Max L and Comrade Sam K on the split in the PRD are not those of the DSP or *Green Left Weekly*.

We urge the LPF leadership to instruct Comrade Max L to abide by this direction and NE Secretariat requests the LPF steering committee to respond to this direction from the NE Secretariat by March 10, 2008.

Comradely

Peter B

DSP National Secretary

on behalf of DSP National Executive Secretariat

Appendix: Email to Max L 3-03-08

To Comrade Max L

Cc LPF steering committee, John P, Doug L

Dear Max

The NE Secretariat formally directs you to:

- a. Immediately place a disclaimer on your blogsite indicating that your comments on the recent split in the Indonesian left are your own, and not those of the Democratic Socialist Perspective. If you continue to delay this action you will be regarded as being in breach of DSP discipline.
- b. Remove all references to *Green Left Weekly* from the article by Sam K article “Indonesia: Reject

Parliamentarism and Opportunism”, published on Comrade Max L’s blogpost.

The standard disclaimer at the bottom of your blogsite, which reads: “The views expressed on this blog are those of the respective authors and not those of the US” only serves as a disclaimer relating to the US.

What the NE Secretariat directs you to do are the minimum steps required to make it clear to any readers of this blogpost that your views (and that of Comrade Sam K) on the split in the PRD are not those of the DSP or Green Left Weekly.

Comradely

Peter B

DSP National Secretary

on behalf of DSP National Executive Secretariat

35. Reply from Peter B to Max L’s letter re disclaimer on blog

March 5, 2008

Comrade Max L

Cc LPF, John P, Doug L

Dear Max

I write to acknowledge your addition of the disclaimer “(All analysis here are my personal views and are not the views of any university, institution or organisation with which I am affiliated.)” on your February 7 blogpost “An important development on the Indonesian left (revised)” following my letter of March 3, 2008.

That letter, written on behalf of the DSP National Executive Secretariat, had repeated an explicit February 13 National Executive direction emailed to the LPF steering committee, yourself, John P and Doug L:

“Directs Comrade Max L to: promptly add a statement to his February 7 blog posting making it clear that the posting expresses his personal views on the split in the PRD and not that of the DSP or *Green Left Weekly*; and to cease making public attacks on the PRD and to abide by DSP leadership direction on this matter as expressed in several emails to comrade Max L from the national secretary on behalf of the DSP NE.”

On February 21, I sent another email to the LPF steering committee (of which you are a member) which included the following:

“It is noted that, to date, Comrade Max L has not even carried out the latest direction (February 13) to ‘promptly add a statement to his February 7 blog posting making it clear that the posting expresses his personal views on the split in the PRD and not that of the DSP or *Green Left Weekly*; and to cease making public attacks on the PRD and to abide by DSP leadership direction on this matter as expressed in several emails to comrade Max L from the national secretary on behalf of the DSP NE’.”

On March 1, I sent another email, “Appeal for unity in action”, to the LPF steering committee (of which you are a member):

“We note with disappointment that Comrade Max L, a leader of the Leninist Party Faction (LPF), has failed to act on the National Executive’s direction (February 13) to ‘promptly add a statement to his February 7 blog posting making it clear that the posting expresses his personal views on the split in the Peoples Democratic Party (PRD) and not that of the DSP or *Green Left Weekly*’.”

Therefore, the March 3 email to you was the fourth written direction about adding a disclaimer to your February 7 blogpost “An important development on the Indonesian left (revised)”.

The first I heard of the insertion of a general disclaimer on your blog masthead was in an email of March 2, 2008, from LPF National Coordinator John P. Several comrades on the NE Secretariat have been checking your blogsite to see if you had added the requested disclaimer on your February 7 blogpost and could not see the disclaimer you inserted on the masthead. This is explained by the fact that it appears in Internet Explorer but not in Firefox browsers.

I also acknowledge your undertaking in your March 4 email:

“I will not raise my general views on the developments on the Left in Indonesia and the DSP’s current mishandling of this issue, including the suppression of internal discussion among the membership and the

continuing attempt to suppress public discussion, as these matters have already been covered in my PCD articles, my Blog article and the recent statement of the LPF.”

However, I also note that LPF member Sam K has only yesterday contravened DSP National Executive directions by publishing a post “Indonesia: Information on the split in the PRD” on the Marxism list (see below).

Further, it will be clear to anyone who examines the full sequence of events that the DSP National Executive has not mishandled this issue of our stance on the PRD split. On the contrary, the actions taken by the DSP National Executive to prevent you and Comrade Sam K from rushing the DSP into intervening in the split on the side of the former PRD minority/KPRM-PRD without access (in English) to the position papers of both sides of the dispute have been totally responsible.

The position papers of both sides were only available to the DSP leadership by late November and substantial translations were completed by Comrade Vanessa H in mid January. These documents have been made available to all DSP National Committee members and can be read by DSP members in the branches.

Having studied and discussed these documents and the articles by yourself and Comrade Sam K published externally (in breach of DSP directives), the DSP NE decided not to intervene on the side of the KPRM-PRD in their attack on the PRD leadership as parliamentarist, opportunist, liquidationist and Stalinist. It also decided:

* That at this stage our assessment is that we should maintain our longstanding collaborative relations with the PRD and Papernas.

* At this stage our relations with KPRM-PRD are only an agreement to receive information about their political views and activities.

DSP members, such as yourself, who disagree with this decision may make their case and present evidence in support of it to the DSP National Executive and raise it in appropriate national leadership meetings and when the next pre-congress discussion is opened. However, all members of the DSP are obliged to act in accordance with this decision whatever private views they have on the split. Any public interventions in support of the KPRM-PRD against the PRD by DSP members will be a breach of discipline.

The DSP is an organisation for revolutionary action, not a discussion club which debates interminably on any and all questions at any and all times without reaching a binding decision. The purpose of its internal discussions is to reach decisions for action. Once a decision has been made, all members are required to loyally implement it. This ensures that the DSP maximises the effectiveness of its efforts and fully tests out its decisions.

Comrades holding minority views are not asked to give up their views. They must simply await a new opportunity to present their views when internal discussion is again authorised by the official party bodies.

Once again, on behalf of the DSP National Executive Secretariat I appeal for unity in action and cooperation from you and the rest of the LPF leadership in ensuring that its members abide by discipline and collectivity, not least by setting a responsible example.

We have much to do in the period ahead, including the beginning of campus year, the Climate Change-Social Change Conference and the May solidarity brigade to Venezuela. To maximise these important projects we need all DSP members to be firmly united in action.

I will send a copy of this exchange to all DSP National Committee members and DSP branch secretaries.

Comradely,

Peter B
DSP National Secretary

Appendix: Sam K’s March 4 Marxism List Post (circulated to you yesterday)
<http://www.marxmail.org/msg38023.html>

36. Report from Pip H on exchanges with James B re ASAP digest

In December 14, 2007, I forwarded James B an appeal sent to us by PAPERNAS for posting on the ASAP news digest list and on the ASAP website under “Solidarity”. The ASAP news digest was established out of collaboration between members of the PRD and the DSP.

No reply and no action was taken by James.

I sent the same email, including the PAPERNAS appeal, again on December 17. He did not reply, nor did he post the appeal.

On January 3, James emailed Peter B to ask if he could have the appeal again. It was sent to him the same day but it was not put on any of the lists.

I sent James an email on January 8, 2008 asking how things were with him, mentioning the outdatedness of the ASAP website and asking why he had not yet put up the PAPERNAS appeal. He sent an email saying he was going to Aceh for a couple of weeks, and that it would be good to update the ASAP site. No mention was made of the PAPERNAS appeal.

I sent him an email on February 2 asking why the appeal was not up on the site. He has not replied.

Following is a compilation of the correspondence between James B and Pip Hinman (Dec 2007- Feb 2008)

————— Original Message —————

Date: Fri, 14 Dec 2007 09:05:36 +1100

From: Pip Hinman

To: James B

Dear James

Can you please forward this appeal to the ASAP digest?

Thanks

Comradely,

Pip

PAPERNAS appeal for solidarity

Dear friends,

On behalf of The National Liberation Party of Unity (PAPERNAS) I would like to thank you for your concrete and ongoing support for our struggle for democratic rights and to build an alternative party for Indonesian people to overcome the economic and political crisis.

As we informed you earlier, PAPERNAS intended to organize a mass gathering in December. Unfortunately, we have had to postpone this until early January 2008 because of security and financial problems.

Most of our work involves mass organizing, including organizing discussions and educationals and preparing to organise funding for our work from among our members.

We are aiming to organise a mass gathering on December 17, 2007, and hoping to involve 3000 members, mostly landless farmers from two regions.

West Nusa Tenggara, where Newmont Nusa Tenggara owns 81% of the region's mines, remains the poorest province in Indonesia. It has an infant mortality rate of 81 per 1000 people. Poverty and poor health facilities contribute to this situation: 30% of its 4.5 million people live under the poverty line. The region has only 16 mid-facility hospitals available for the population, and it is estimated that one doctor is available to serve 113 people. The poor education facilities and unaffordable cost of education contribute to 21.32% illiteracy rate.

For the last two months 3000 PAPERNAS members, organized by West Nusa Tenggara branch, have been working towards a mass gathering in the capital of the province producing banners, distributing leaflets and collecting their transportation dues. So far, they have raised enough money to transport 2100 people.

We are writing to ask for your help to allow 900 more people to join the mass gathering. You can help us to bring them to mass gathering by organizing both organization and personal donation, and send it to following account: ***

In solidarity,

Agus Jabo Priyono

Chairperson

Nationalize the mining and oil industries

Repudiate the foreign debt
For a national industrialization program for people's welfare
Free health and education service for all

2/1/08

From: James B

Date: Wed, 2 Jan 2008 11:15:02 +0000 (GMT)

Dear Pip,

I don't have a copy of the Papernas appeal so I'll ask comrades to e-mail it.

Comradely, James.

PS: Happy new year

[Pip's Note: Peter B emailed James a copy of the PAPERNAS appeal on that same day or a day later.]

PPZ wrote:

Dear James

I noticed that you still have not added the PAPERNAS appeal to the ASAP website, nor posted it on the Indoleft list.

If you have some objection to doing this, please let me know. Otherwise, can you please put it up under "What's on". The Pakistani appeal that is currently there is no longer current (although there may well be a new one soon), and it could go in there.

Happy new year!

Comradely,

Pip

8/1/08

Dear James,

I'm going to work on some text to update some of the ASAP site (much of which is very out of date) and bring it a little more in line with what we are able to prioritise in Oz right now – such as the People's Power Fund Appeal, an appeal for the Pakistan LPP, and PAPERNAS. (I noticed that you have still not uploaded the PAPERNAS appeal. Did you receive it from Peter a few days ago?) You can tell me if you think what I produce is OK. ASAP could also be used to profile the upcoming /GLW/ Social Change, Climate Change conference in Sydney in April.

We've just finished a sober and political congress, and comrades are keen to get into the work in 2008. I do hope we can communicate a little more this year.

Regards,

Pip

8/1/08

Hi James,

Can you please put this message [from the Socialist Party of Malaysia] up on to the ASAP website under "Solidarity"

Thanks,

Pip

[Pip's note: This PSM statement *was* uploaded to the ASAP site.]

12/1/08

Dear Pip,

Sorry, meant to get back to you sooner but have been busy with some big translation jobs and at the same time trying to sort out a new visa.

Good to hear that you're going to do some updates on the ASAP website — some of the sections such as the 'What is ASAP' and the local contact names are very out of date and desperately need updating.

On Tuesday morning I'm going to Aceh to do the "meet the parents" thing so what with the translation jobs (the last one is due Sunday) and other preparations I'm not sure I'll be able to do much to the web site over next few days. Also don't know what the internet access will be like in Aceh so the news updates and Indoleft will probably also have to take a short holiday. But at least that will give you time to make the changes you mentioned and I can upload it to the site when I get back.

Am going to try to meet up with comrades in Aceh and if anything useful comes out of it we might be able to use it for a Green Left article.

Comradely, James

14/1/08

Dear James,

Thanks for your news – sounds serious with your Acehnese friend. Hope it goes well.

You didn't say why you haven't put up the PAPERNAS appeal on the website. Can you please put it up? It's below [the December 2007 appeal was appended].

I'm thinking about the ASAP site more broadly as it is so out of date and doesn't fulfill our current needs.

Comradely,

Pip

6/2/08

Dear James,

Can you let me know why the PAPERNAS appeal is not up on the ASAP site?

Thanks,

Pip

[Pip's message to James of 14/1/08, including the Papernas appeal text, was appended here.]

The only postings to the ASAP-Sydney list regarding Papernas in 2008 have been done by Pip (who does not have posting rights to the larger ASAP digest list that James manages).

37. Lisa M report to NE on LPF members' conduct in Venezuela solidarity work

The following documents a series of actions over the last month by members of the Leninist Party Faction assigned to the AVSN that contradict decisions made by DSP bodies (including the last DSP congress, the national fraction on Venezuela solidarity work at the congress, and branch leaderships) regarding Venezuela solidarity work on campuses during orientation weeks.

The DSP's perspective for members' intervention in O-week is to prioritise building Resistance. O-weeks are one of the most important opportunities each year for Resistance to recruit new members, build its profile and strengthen its political leadership of students.

This general perspective was discussed and concretised at the national fraction on the DSP's Venezuela solidarity work held at the congress, which decided that during O-weeks our members should "encourage AVSN members to join with Resistance during O-weeks to build joint AVSN-Resistance Sandino tour" (from the fraction minutes).

While the Sandino Carrizales tour was subsequently cancelled, a proposal put to the national fraction by LPF members that we organise separate AVSN stalls on campuses during O-weeks was explicitly rejected. Following the cancellation of the Carrizales tour, that proposal was not re-raised on either the DSP national fraction yahoo group or for the AVSN National Hook-up (AVSN's national decision-making body).

In this context, the following actions by some LPF members reveal a systematic lack of willingness to collaborate with other DSP members and abide by decisions of the DSP in our Venezuela solidarity work. Indeed, they indicate that LPF members assigned to AVSN work are attempting to implement the LPF line that was presented to, and rejected by, the last DSP congress.

1. ADELAIDE

On February 10, without attempting to discuss it first with either the DSP or Resistance branches in Adelaide, or with Adelaide branch's Venezuela solidarity work convener, Comrade Simon B, Comrade Sam K sent the following email to B (non-DSP member of AVSN) and Simon B, asking that it be forwarded to the local AVSN committee:

"Dear Venezuela Supporter,

University orientation weeks are approaching. They take place late February. As part of Australia Venezuela Solidarity Network's (AVSN) ongoing push to build a vibrant solidarity movement with the Venezuelan revolution we will need to have a high profile on campus this year especially on orientation weeks.

We already have built up some good contacts on campus and hopefully will be in a position to do more ongoing Venezuela solidarity work on campus this year.

Anyone on this list who would like to help out during University orientation weeks or can provide contacts or assistance please be in touch with me or any members of the committee. I will return to Australia (from Indonesia) on Feb 14 and can help co-ordinate campus work after that.

Solidarity,

Sam K"

A February 12 Adelaide branch executive discussion about the problem of Sam K's lack of collaboration with the DSP branch leadership about our O-week intervention assigned branch secretary Ruth R to meet with Sam K to ask him to carry out his AVSN assignment in close collaboration with the DSP branch, and send the following letter to him:

"Sam,

cc. Adelaide branch exec

The exec met tonight and, amongst other things, discussed your previous email to the branch regarding AVSN work on campus. We adopted the following motion unanimously:

'In accordance with paragraph 2b of the DSP constitution which obliges members to "place all of their political activity under the direction of the party and to engage in the work of the party to the best of their ability" we expect comrades to adhere to internal party democracy and raise proposals and disagreements with the branch leadership between branch meetings.'

This decision will be reported to the branch meeting this Thursday 14th.

The branch has had extensive discussion around our perspectives for rebuilding Resistance in Adelaide and our AVSN work. To date, there has been no proposal requesting that you email the AVSN list about activities during o-week. I will inform you if such a proposal arises from the democratic discussions of the branch.

I would like to meet with you as soon as possible upon your return to discuss your assignments, specifically as well as being assigned to AVSN work (under the direction of the DSP fraction in this area) the exec has previously voted on a proposal that you head up a sales team consisting of Ty, Mel and myself.

As regards branch emails to you "stopping" when you have been out of the country, you have to the best of my knowledge received all emails which have been sent to the whole DSP branch. Generally, communication between branch members has occurred over the phone and in meetings. I am more than happy to fill you in on discussions and events on your return, including the Resistance initiated protest outside BHP.

I am available before the branch meeting on Thursday from 5pm or on Friday evening for further discussion.

comradely

Ruth"

Ruth R organised a meeting with Sam K following his return to Adelaide, but he did not show up, give

apologies or attempt to reschedule it. He did, however, attend an AVSN meeting held half an hour after the meeting with Ruth R was supposed to occur.

At the February 14 branch meeting, and despite voting for the report presented by the executive, Sam K argued that the position put in the report – that the DSP branch should prioritise helping with Resistance stalls and recruiting during O-weeks – was sectarian and that the branch should give equal weight to Resistance and AVSN interventions during O-week.

A week later, on February 22, Sam K sent an email to the national AVSN activists yahoo group and the Melbourne AVSN google group with a fact sheet on ExxonMobil stating that the leaflet might be useful “on orientation week stalls”.

Because Sam K had already contacted non-DSP members about supporting an AVSN O-week stall at Adelaide University, the DSP branch leadership decided not to direct Sam K to cancel the stall, and it went ahead on February 25 (with B and another non-DSP AVSN activist, J).

2. SYDNEY

On February 22, Comrade Marcus P sent the following email titled “Volunteer for helping AVSN at UNI Orientation Week” to the 200 plus Sydney AVSN members, supporters and contacts yahoo group (of which he is moderator):

“From: “Marcus P”

Subject: [AVSN_Sydney] Volunteer for helping AVSN at UNI Orientation Week

Date: Friday, 22 February 2008 9:39 PM

Dear friends of Venezuela,

A number of volunteers have already got together to take news of the Venezuelan revolution onto the University of Sydney and UWS Bankstown next week to build awareness and support for the revolution. If you would like to join us please call. Its the first week of the university year and a great chance to introduce the thousands of new students to what the AVSN is about.

The focus will be publicising the March 1 public meeting being organised by AVSN, featuring Carlos Sierra from Venezuela, and the protest in Sydney on February 29 against EXXON’s blackmail against the people of Venezuela (check the website for details www.venezuelasolidarity.org)

On the University of Sydney there will be an AVSN stall on Wednesday February 27 between 10am and 3pm near the Fisher Library, this one is being organised by Owen (0425 249 996).

On the UWS Bankstown campus there will be another AVSN stall also on Wednesday February 27 between 10am and 3pm outside Building 1, this is being organised by Marcus (0400 986 709).

In Solidarity,

Marcus P

Australia Venezuela Solidarity Network

0400 986 709

www.venezuelasolidarity.org”

The decision to organise these stalls was made by Marcus P (Sydney Central DSP branch member) and Owen R (Sydney West DSP branch member) without any discussion with either of the two DSP branch leaderships, or Sydney Resistance branch, or the Sydney district Venezuela solidarity work fraction, or Sydney AVSN.

Both Owen R and Marcus P attended the only Sydney AVSN meeting so far this year (January 31) and neither even raised the possibility of AVSN O-week stalls. Neither did they raise the possibility of AVSN O-week stalls for consideration by the AVSN National Hook-up on February 10 (which decided to prioritise for February/March organising propaganda and actions around the March 6 international day of action on Colombia and the ExxonMobil attacks on Venezuela, among other ongoing tasks). The AVSN National Hook-up decisions and priorities were communicated within a week to all DSP members assigned to AVSN, including Marcus P and Owen R, via the DSP national fraction yahoo group.

Adam L (DSP Sydney district Venezuela solidarity work fraction convener and the Sydney AVSN committee convener) was informed by Marcus P on February 22 that the AVSN O-week stalls had been organised, *after* Marcus P and Owen R had done extensive phone contacting of non-DSP AVSN supporters in Sydney to participate in the stalls. At least one DSP member, Sydney West branch provisional member CC, was organised by them to work on the AVSN stall, rather than the Resistance stall, at Bankstown UWS

campus – something only discovered when Sydney West branch secretary Rachel Evans contacted CC to help on the Resistance O-week stall on that campus.

When asked on February 23 by Sydney district secretary Alex B about these breaches of party discipline and disrespect for the AVSN committee's decision-making, Marcus P denied he had done anything wrong and lied, claiming that I and Adam L had directed him to organise campus O-week stalls for AVSN.

Because extensive contacting of non-DSP members had already been done by the LPF members for the two AVSN campus stalls, the DSP district leadership decided the stalls could not be cancelled without damaging the AVSN. However, the LPF comrades then decided to move the Bankstown UWS stall from February 27 to February 25. No notice of this change was sent to the Sydney AVSN yahoo group and, again, non-LPF comrades assigned to AVSN work were not informed. The Bankstown UWS stall was staffed by LPF members Owen R and Barbara J (Sydney West DSP branch) and Kerry V (Sydney Central DSP branch). No non-DSP AVSN members participated.

These comrades' availability for and participation in the Resistance O-week rosters was minimal, the AVSN stalls clearly being their priority (see accompanying letter from Resistance's Bankstown UWS work organiser Guy G).

3. OTHER EXAMPLES OF NON-COLLABORATION

Other recent indications that these comrades are attempting to "privatise" their Venezuela (and other Latin America) solidarity activity, or at least keep it at arms length from the AVSN, as well as the DSP, include:

(i) In early February, Owen R set up a personal blogspot (<http://no-other-road.blogspot.com/>) on which he posts English translations he has done of articles/speeches about Venezuela originally published in Spanish. Neither the AVSN nor the DSP Venezuela solidarity fraction (in Sydney or nationally) were informed about his plans for or the existence of the blog (other DSP members assigned to Venezuela solidarity work found out about it when Owen R started posting articles he had translated to the AVSN's national members/supporters/contacts yahoo group, with his blog URL inserted at the end), let alone invited to consider how it could be most useful for building Venezuela solidarity. As of 28 February, the blog included a link to Revolucion Bolivariana, but not to the AVSN website or Green Left Weekly. (At my request, Owen has now agreed to make these links).

(ii) A March 12 film screening organised by Sam K on Adelaide University is billed by him as being organised, not by the AVSN or the AVSN Adelaide University Club, but by the "Venezuela Solidarity Club". There was no discussion with any other DSP member assigned to AVSN in Adelaide about establishing a "Venezuela Solidarity Club" on that campus.

(iii) As well as providing only his own and Owen R's personal email addresses and phone numbers (rather than Sydney AVSN's contact details) for people to get in touch to volunteer for the AVSN O-week stalls at Sydney University and UWS, on February 16, Marcus P sent an email to the 200+-strong Sydney AVSN mailing list that included an invitation for subscribers to contact him at his personal email address or phone number if they wished to subscribe to Venezuelan ministries' e-newsletters. Had Marcus P collaborated with other comrades assigned to AVSN work about doing this, it would have been suggested that he instead direct Sydney AVSN members to join the national AVSN information elist, to which these newsletters are posted, along with other solidarity information it is useful for all Sydney AVSN supporters to receive.

(iv) Owen R unilaterally assigned himself to the Cuba 5/Leonard Weinglass tour organising committee in Sydney, without any discussion with the relevant national, Sydney district or Sydney West branch leaderships. This was revealed on February 12, when Owen R gave as his apology (via Rupen S) for the Sydney West DSP branch meeting that he had to attend a meeting of the Cuba 5 tour committee. Comrade Marce C had been assigned to this work by Sydney district until his move to Melbourne branch in early February, and I can only assume that he decided to "hand over" the assignment to Owen R, without discussion with the branch.

38. Correspondence re Venezuela film at Griffith University

Date: Friday, 14 March 2008 4:13 PM
To Hamish and Gonzalo
CC: Marg, Jim, AVSN work coordinators;
CC: Lauren C, GU coordinator;
CC: DSP Exec

Dear Hamish and Gonzalo,

As DSP and Res organisers, we are writing to express serious concerns on discovering that you two have been organising a Venezuela film at Griffith Uni, without the knowledge of comrades heading up AVSN work, nor the key comrade on the campus, nor any of the DSP or Res leadership. This is in no way carrying out political activity under the direction of the DSP – which is a basic requirement of our constitution.

At Griffith Uni on Wed (Mar 12), comrades Lauren, Dom and Paul received an excellent response campaigning around Palestine, selling 38 GLWs. We discussed that a Palestine film would likely be a good follow up for the Res club to organise. When we saw supportive Palestine activist H, we asked him about getting a room for us to screen the Palestine film “The Iron Wall”.

H was very supportive. But we were completely surprised when H asked if this was separate to the Venezuela film. When we asked what Venezuela film, he said that Gonzalo had asked him about screening a Venezuela film on Griffith next week.

Such an initiative had not been discussed with any of:

- The Res organisers, nor anyone on the Res exec
- the comrade leading up our GU work, Lauren
- The DSP organiser, nor anyone on the DSP exec
- Comrades heading up our AVSN work

When Paul spoke with Gonzalo yesterday (Mar 13) regarding this, Gonzalo stated that Hamish had requested he organise a room for a Venezuela film at Griffith Uni.

To discover 3rd hand that comrades are organising a screening on a uni they are not on, and not collaborating with the comrades on that uni, nor the comrades that regularly carry out our Res work there, nor comrades heading up AVSN, is highly problematic.

Indeed, the 10-strong Res meeting of that day scheduled the Palestine film for next Wed (Mar 19) at 1pm. Upon ringing H to follow-up on the room booking, he mentioned that this was the very time that Gonzalo had asked for the Venezuela film!

Imagine if the branch had /not /learned about the Venezuela film, and we ended up next Wed with clashing events – a Palestine film and Venezuela film – organised by DSP and Resistance members! This shows just how unconstructive such a lack of collaboration and separate organising can be.

Building Resistance is a key priority for /all/ comrades. We have made some great early gains on GU, and all comrades have the responsibility to support that work, and collaborate with comrades involved.

Undermining such work (or any of Resistance’s work) is totally unacceptable.

As DSP branch secretary and Resistance organisers, we direct you both to:

- a) Collaborate with the Res organisers and comrades on GU, about any initiatives on GU (and through the Res leadership for work on campus in general, and through comrades heading up AVSN for any AVSN work).
- b) Ensure any Venezuela film on campus is coordinated with the Res and campus leaderships. The Res club meeting has now scheduled the Palestine film, and that will occur next Wed (Mar 19) at 1pm. Res comrades, in conjunction with AVSN, can look to a Venezuela film screening in subsequent weeks. If either of you wish to help with such an event that’s fine, but it /must /be in collaboration with the Res comrades on the uni, as well as DSP/Res leaderships and comrades heading up AVSN.

A further minor point regards assignments. While Gonzalo is assigned to AVSN work, Hamish never has been assigned by the branch nor exec to AVSN work. One reason for this is that a key assignment for Hamish is Stop the War work, which meets on the same evening (Monday) as AVSN. We also already have a solid assignment of comrades to AVSN work.

However, this is a minor point – regardless of assignments, the actions that occurred on GU (organising without the knowledge and behind the backs of the DSP, Res and AVSN leaderships and comrades on the campus) are not in line with our constitutional requirement for political work to be under the direction of the branch.

comradely

Paul B, DSP Branch Secretary

Ewan S & Dom H, Res co-organisers

Date: Thursday, 20 March 2008 1:29 PM
To Paul B, Ewan S & Dom H
CC: Marg, Jim, AVSN work coordinators;
CC: Lauren C, GU coordinator;
CC: DSP Exec

Dear comrades

In response to your email 'Letter to Hamish and Gonzalo re AVSN film organising on Griffith'.

1. At the January 28 AVSN meeting Jim told the meeting that UQ was the priority "but it would be nice if any comrades were able to do things on Griffith."
2. Hamish merely asked Gonzalo to look into room availability for a *possible* film screening for AVSN. There could not have been a clash because we would have approached Jim and Marg *once we knew we could do it*.
3. Hamish is assigned to AVSN. Before the antiwar fraction at the DSP congress in Sydney Paul B went over the areas Hamish was working in; antiwar, Aboriginal rights and trade union and Paul asked Hamish if there was anything else he'd like to do. Hamish said he'd like to do AVSN to which Paul agreed.

Comradely

Hamish C
Gonzalo V

39. Adam L report on LPF and Sydney AVSN work

In the four conversations outlined below with Marcus P, Owen R, and A, [a non-DSP] AVSN activist, I have tried to use the same language from the original conversations but it may not be exact. I am however confident that the sentiment expressed during those conversations is the same.

I haven't added many of my own observations or analyses of these conversations.

On the 12.3.08, 3:36 Tony called me to say that Marcus was photocopying an AVSN leaflet on the DSP photocopier. Tony was unsure what to do because he knew that Marcus had been designed from the AVSN fraction and had been working outside the direction of the DSP. I don't remember if Tony knew what was being photocopied but he was concerned about which photocopy code Marcus was using. Tony told me that Alex had just spoken to Marcus by phone directing him to stop these activities. Members of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition were at this time in the office, which includes members to the not so friendly left, making it difficult for Tony to challenge Marcus directly.

I called Marcus at 3:40 to get an understanding of what he was doing and to put forward my point of view.

Marcus informed me that he had put together a new leaflet for the AVSN AGM and was photocopying it (I assumed for campus stalls). Neither he nor Trish could find originals for the existing AGM leaflet that I produced a week earlier. I told Marcus that the originals were in the AVSN draw and that the file was saved in the AVSN file, and that he could have called me.

I told Marcus that he should stop what he is doing. That sense organising the stalls at o'weeks out side of the DSP he had lost peoples trust and that he should be trying the regain that trust, and that what he was doing at the moment he was making the situation worse.

Marcus told me that Alex had also just told him to stop but he would not because the situation and the politics surrounding it 'is terribly confusing', that 'many people were confused'. And that until he had a response in writing to his letter of reply to his disassignment from AVSN he would continue what he was doing.

I told him again and a number of times that this would only be taking a step backwards and make it harder for people to trust him. His reply was that he was prepared to take that step. I made some arguments about why it was politically wrong to put his desired amount of resources in to building AVSN on campus at the moment because Resistance needs more resources and that this was the direction that came from the DSP congress.

Marcus was still claiming that it was all too confusing and he wouldn't stop until it was in writing.

Clear that the conversation would progress no further I told Marcus that he would get it in writing.

I talked to Alex about this and Alex was going to write a reply to Marcus's letter on March 6. (As far as I know that never happened)

I had a brief chat with Owen after the CS meeting on Sat March 1. Not much more than a hello how are you but at the end I asked him for the contact list from Bankstown o'week. He said that he had meant to bring it in and that he would email to me. I said that would be great.

Owen called me at 8pm on the Friday before the Palm Sunday No War Rally on March 16. Giving me the impression that AVSN activist A asked him to organise a stall for the coming rally. He was asking me if it was OK for him to do an AVSN stall with her.

I told him that I wasn't organising DOL of the day and that he should talk to who ever that was, because it should be worked out based on our priorities for the day, I also said that we didn't have much material that warranted a separate stall, and that A could just go around with leaflets for the April 5 AGM and the Invite Chavez petition.

Owen told me that A wanted to do a stall and (I think he said something like) he would like to work with her. I agreed that if A wanted to do a stall than we should support her on that.

I said won't be at the rally but I would get the stuff ready but that it wouldn't be much more than a contact list, the Chavez Invite petition, and the leaflets for the AGM. He said that he would come into the office early because he would be meeting A before the rally.

Again I asked Owen for the contacts from o'week, he apologised for not emailing them and said that he would bring the hard copy in. I said that would be good because we need to keep the DB centrally. (As far as I know it hasn't come in.)

After photocopying I called A to let her know that we didn't have a lot of stuff for a stall and suggested that she could just go around with leaflets and a petition. She asked if that was ok with Owen, that she was happy either way. I said ok than maybe just work it out on the day.

Later in the conversation A told me that Owen had called her and that were meeting up at 1230 before the rally.

40. Emails from Paul B to Kathy N re Brisbane IWD

Dear Kathy,

I'm writing to express concern at the lack of communication between yourself and the DSP branch and leadership, in regards to our political intervention into the IWD committee and work. The exec is aware

that you have put considerable effort and energy into IWD work. However, our concerns are that your intervention has essentially been outside of any direction from DSP leaderships or the branch. The branch exec twice requested you attend an exec meeting to discuss our IWD work, in order that we could have the strongest branch support for such work (the emails you would have received are forwarded below).

Despite the emails making clear that we welcomed your attendance, or notes on the intervention if that was not possible, you neither came to either of these execs, nor sent any notes on the intervention, nor even responded to the requests. You also have failed to attend (or give apologies to) any 2008 DSP branch meeting nor the branch conference at the start of this year.

The problem of this lack of a collective approach was shown with the Abortion rights rally against the pro-life gathering. While this was, overall, a positive rally, the fact that we weren't able to have a collective discussion beforehand, nor even did we receive an email to the exec on plans for the rally, meant our intervention was far weaker than it could have been. On top of this, we were not even able to act in a collective manner on the day, to deal with the tactical twists and turns, since you refused to speak to non-LPF members of the branch leadership.

This was just one example of the non-collective approach weakening this area of work.

Last Sat (Feb 23) Katelyn and I received, for the first time, a leaflet advertising an IWD Palestine forum with fellow DSP member Kim B coming up from Melbourne to Brisbane to speak, on March 10. Presumably you were involved in organising this forum. While this seems like a useful political initiative, it was not communicated to any DSP leadership or branch body nor even mentioned to anyone on the leadership – for us to collectively discuss, to consider as part of our political calendar, to promote at OWeek, etc – prior to it being decided on at an IWD meeting. Indeed, the first publicity we saw for the forum was receiving a leaflet from a Solidarity leader.

You are aware that all DSP members are obligated “to place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP”. I'd urge that you do so, and specifically:

- a) Liaise closely with comrade Katelyn M, who is also assigned to IWD work
- b) Ask that you come to the next DSP exec, Tues March 4, for our final IWD discussion. If you are not able to make it, you could instead write up a report on final plans for IWD and ideas for our women's liberation work post IWD.

comradely,

Paul B

[February 25, 2008]

Date: Mon, 21 Jan 2008 15:39:07 +1000

Hi again Kathy (CC: DSP Exec)

Our next exec is likely to be this Thursday, Jan 24. As previously mentioned, it would be good if you could attend at the start of the exec to report on IWD.

Could you let us know if you are able to make it to report on the campaign and ideas for our intervention?

Thanks, comradely cheers

Paul

Date: Mon, 14 Jan 2008 12:08:24 +1000

Hi Kathy (CC: DSP exec),

It would be useful if you were able to give a report on IWD to an upcoming DSP exec.

We have our first exec for the year on tomorrow night, and you'd be welcome to come to that to give a report at the start of the exec meeting. However, that is obviously short notice, so the alternative would be the next exec which is likely to be held on Thursday Jan 24.

Could you let us know if you are able to make one of those execs to report on the campaign and ideas for our intervention?

Thanks, comradely cheers

Paul

41. Correspondence between Stephen O and Perry B

Date: Saturday, 1 March 2008 3:34 PM

Dear Peter

Please find attached correspondence with Comrade Perry.

Comrade Perry did not attend the branch conference held on Wednesday 27 February and no apologies were received.

Simon bumped into him on 27 February and they spoke briefly. Perry said that he wouldn't attend the branch conference and added that he expected to be forced out of the DSP because he had been doing work in Rising Tide for the previous month.

We saw him, from across the street, in Hamilton today but he made no approach to any of the comrades selling.

He ceased his pledge auto deduction last November.

Comradely

Stephen O

Newcastle Branch Organiser

Sent: Wednesday, 27 February 2008 7:32 AM

Dear Perry

Your accusation about "orchestrated" campaign of marginalisation is a new one. If you sincerely believe this to be the case then you should place your evidence of this before the NE.

Please be reminded that DSP members are obligated "to place all of their political activity under the direction of the DSP".

You have only attended two DSP meetings since you resigned from the branch executive in May, the last one being in September. We have hardly seen you since then.

I'd urge that you attend the branch conference this Thursday.

Comradely

Stephen

Sent: Tuesday, 26 February 2008 12:52 PM

Stephen,

You seem to fail to understand that comrade Geoff P's attempt at an apology was unacceptable to me. As the injured party in this affair it is up to me to decide whether to accept or reject his apology, not to have other people tell me how I should react. I don't know how many times I have said this and I will tell you now that this will be the last time I will say it. His apology was flippant, disingenuous and unprofessional.

The problem has not arisen out of a clash of personalities as you seem to suggest, but I believe that it was an orchestrated attempt by comrade Geoff P and you to marginalise me within the branch because of my affiliation with the minority opposition in the DSP. Comrade Geoff P's attack on me was intentional and made for political reasons. If this situation cannot be resolved by comrade Geoff P offering me a proper and professional apology, then I can see no point in continuing this dialogue.

Comradely,

Perry B.

Dear Perry

Thanks for your email. However, I should clarify that the NE has made no directive to the branch. The NE suggested that Geoff apologise to you and this he has done. Obviously there is some misunderstanding here which I hope we can clarify.

We all know that situations in branches can get tense personally. It's easy for any of us to be unintentionally rude and give offense. No one is blameless. The important thing is that we sort out such

problems and move on.

After all we're in the party so that we can work together united against the boss, and have the maximum chance of liberating humanity and saving the planet.

I am happy to meet you again if you think this would help us find a way to move forward.

Please come along to the branch conference, rejoin the team, and participate in keeping each other informed of our political activity.

You as part of our team, could do really good work right now helping educate the new Resistance comrades on socialism, Venezuela's revolution and the importance of anti capitalist solutions to climate change.

Comradely

Stephen

Sent: Monday, 25 February 2008 11:45 AM

Stephen,

My resumption of work within the branch remains conditional on the terms which I have previously stated and of which you, as branch organiser are fully aware.

My offer to work with comrades remains open and is something that I wish to be able to be fulfilled. However, it is not my choice that this state of affairs has been allowed to continue.

I look forward to a resolution of this issue on the terms that I have requested and on the terms that have been given to the branch by the DSP National Executive directive. I do not believe that there has been a genuine effort by the branch leadership to achieve resolution of this issue.

I would also request that this reply to your email be made available to all members of the branch.

Comradely,

Perry B.

Perry

Can come along to the Branch Conference next Thursday?

This will be an important meeting for coordinating our work and supporting the reestablishment of a Resistance branch.

Your contribution would be valued.

Comradely

Stephen

42. NE motion on relations with MSN (CLASS)

July 6, 2006

To all DSP branch secretaries

Dear Comrades

On Tuesday July 4, the DSP National Executive discussed our relations with the Marxist Solidarity Network, the grouping formed by the six comrades who recently resigned from the DSP. The recommendations put forward in the report and discussion were adopted unanimously. These are summarised in this letter and should form the basis of reports to executives and branch meetings.

The NE had previously responded to the comrades' letter of resignation by sending them a letter urging them to reconsider their decision and pointing out that splitting and forming yet another left group, especially in Melbourne, was not going to help the socialist movement and would only damage the struggle by giving yet another example of disunity on the left.

The MSN comrades have now posted two documents on their website: a response to the NE letter and a

letter of resignation from Socialist Alliance by Camilo J, Gillian D, Roberto J and Trish R. Despite the MSN's call for "comradely collaboration", these documents make a number of poisonous attacks on the DSP leadership. These letters charge that the DSP's "national leadership clique" has "buried the political discussion", is on a "sectarian and liquidationist road" and has an "administrative approach to politics".

Despite accusing us of liquidationism the SA resignation letter puts forward the thoroughly liquidationist idea that the party question will be solved in the course of the revolution. It points to Venezuela as the supposed proof of this. Of course, if Lenin had entertained this conception of party building the October revolution would never have happened. And the reference to Venezuela actually exalts a real weakness of the revolution to date, i.e., the lack of a unified revolutionary party.

We all know the six comrades who left and many of us enjoyed cordial and comradely relations with them. Further, while we continue to work together in some movements, including in AVSN, DSP comrades must understand the MSN is clearly an opponent political formation. Therefore:

* Political relations of DSP members with the MSN, as with any other political grouping, must be under the control and direction of the DSP leadership. Any substantive dealings with any MSN members must be reported to the party leadership.

* Of course, this is in no way a ban on personal relations with the MSN comrades but we should all remember that the elementary obligation of all DSP members at all times is to defend the party in public and in encounters with other political forces.

* In particular, we should not discuss our internal affairs with them (or any other external political forces). They are now ex-members of the DSP and no longer have any rights of access to or participation in our internal deliberations.

Please give me a call if you have questions about this matter.

Comradely

Peter B
DSP National Secretary

43. Justine K report on Ian J's threat at MUA national conference

Date: Sunday, 13 April 2008 11:38 AM

On 7.4.2008 I received a phone call from W (not a member of the DSP) in relation to a comrade in the LPF. He was quite offended due to an altercation with Ian J at an event attached to the MUA National Conference. He told me that Ian J had been quite drunk, followed him and repeatedly questioned him as to "What is going on?" W repeatedly stated that he did not know what he was talking about. Ian J went on to say that the DSP were going to expel him. W continued to tell Ian J he did not want to discuss the issue with him. Ian J then went on to say he had been building this organisation (the DSP) for 37 years and we didn't have the right to take it off him. He then stated "if I go down I am taking the rest of them with me". W asked him to clarify what that meant. Ian J said he had dirt on us and he was taking Sam down (referring to comrade Sam W), that he could make Sam's life hell. W became agitated with Ian J and said if he was referring to jockeying for political position he didn't care and has no interest in politics but he doesn't like threats. W stated that he would have to tell me (Justine K) about it. Ian J said he didn't care and he wanted W to tell me (W's partner) about it. W took this as an insinuation of a threat towards me and became angry telling Ian J that he was not to threaten me. At that point other MUA Conference delegates broke up the conversation because it was quite heated. As far as I understand other conference delegates were present throughout the conversation.

I spoke to W 8.4.2008 and he said he really felt uncomfortable being caught in some thing he don't really understand or have any interest in. He also said that Ian J had spoken to him sheepishly and said that he

couldn't remember some of last night.

Comradely
Justine K
DSP Perth

44. Graham M and Tony I reports on Ian J conduct at Sydney ABCC rally

Date: Wednesday, 9 April 2008 8:34 PM

Dear Comrades,

I attended the protest this afternoon against the ABCC. A contingent from the MUA national conference, including CC, CJ and DSP members Mick B, Graham W and Ian J were part of the contingent. At the end of the rally, after saying hello to C and C I tried to sell to others in the contingent. I was accosted by Ian J, to whom I was polite. He railed at me at the top of his voice on the street, regarding expulsion. I suggested that he heed an Indian speaker's call for workers' unity. He continued ranting for a few minutes.

In my opinion, Ian J was attempting to create a public scene, particularly with C and C present.

While Ian J was belligerent and had obviously whipped himself into a frenzy, he was not physical, although he was very "in your face". After I made it clear that I wouldn't be baited, he moved on to Tony I.

Comradely,
Graham

Date: Wednesday, 9 April 2008 6:05 PM

Hi Lisa

Just for the record, at the ABCC rally today, Ian J decided to confront me about the party's internal situation in front of an audience of trade unionists & activists from across the left spectrum most of whom I didn't know. He basically accused me of "plotting & planning" to bring about expulsions of the "comrades who are building the party" or something like that. I was not happy at being drawn in to a discussion about internal party stuff in front of such an audience, so didn't say much beyond "huh? what?" & saying that no-one would be expelled for holding a political position. However, I don't think any of the people around were interested or taking anything they heard seriously.

comradely,
Tony

45. Andrew M email re SA resignation

At a meeting on April 30 between Comrades Dick N and Jenny L and R to discuss R's resignation from the Socialist Alliance, R reported that he had received many emails from comrades asking him to reconsider his resignation. However, he also reported receiving an email from Comrade Andrew M congratulating him on resigning from SA and saying that now R could spend more of his energies on Venezuela solidarity instead.

46. Ian J non-collaboration in AVSN and trade union work

Date: Saturday, 3 May 2008 12:30 PM

Dear comrades,

I am reporting an incident involving Comrade Ian J that is indicative of LPF members' refusal to collaborate with and work under the direction of the DSP's national and local bodies in the area of

Venezuela solidarity work.

On May 3 I heard from Comrade Jody B that he had just been told by non-DSP activist R that Comrade Ian J was organising presentations on Venezuela by himself to MUA meetings around the country after he returns from the AVSN May Day solidarity brigade. Neither the AVSN (except for R) nor the DSP's LA solidarity work coordinators knew about this until we heard it second-hand via R.

While it is undoubtedly useful to have a brigadista do report-backs to MUA branches to build solidarity, for an experienced DSP member to not inform the comrades assigned to the national coordination of this work (either the Venezuela solidarity work or the trade union work) clearly shows an unwillingness to collaborate.

Cmdly,
Lisa M
DSP Latin America solidarity work coordinator

47. National Committee calls to dissolve the faction

(i) From the DSP NE's Party Building report adopted by the National Committee in May 2006 (presented by Peter B)

"In contrast to the faction leadership, the DSP leadership majority has held back for a while from rushing to a sweeping characterization and condemnation of the faction. We took their assurances at the congress that they would conduct themselves as a loyal opposition at face value, adopted an inclusive approach in national leadership elections. We gave them a chance to demonstrate a constructive role. But on the basis of the evidence at hand we now need to politically characterize the trajectory of the LPF at this NC...

From the May 2005 NC, it was clear that there were different assessments about the value of Socialist Alliance within the leadership of the DSP. But this is a difference that we should have easily and constructively dealt with if the LPF leadership had kept a sense of proportion and responsibility about their differences. Instead, they chose to exaggerate and manufacture theoretical differences...

They misled the party about their true position on SA, including the resolution, in the minority platform when they have shown that they are totally opposed to building the SA. This introduced the element of unprincipled combination to the minority faction from its very beginning. This is evident in the minority contributions to PCD last year, their contributions during the congress, their actions at branch and national levels since the congress and it is explicit in the leaked LPF material.

This unprincipled combinationism was compounded when they began organizing as a secret faction in the period leading up to and during the [2006] congress, beginning the e-list network... Last year, John, Doug, Marce and Maria denied in writing to the NE that such a list/s existed but that lie has now been totally exposed...

What are the political consequences of the unprincipled oppositionism of the LPF? Irreparable breakdown of comradely relations, undermining of duly elected leadership bodies, the systematic mistreating and miseducation of comrades in our revolutionary politics and traditions, and the end of collective leadership bodies where free and frank discussion can take place....

The NC should call upon the LPF leadership to pull back from this dangerous course immediately. Of course, they have a right to their different views and positions and the right to argue openly for these. They have a right to organize a faction, we recognize that. But we say the politically responsible course is to dissolve the faction, disband it and join other comrades in loyal implementation of the party's democratic decided line, thereby helping the party as a whole test out its perspectives. In the next pre-congress discussion period, organize openly and transparently for the advancement of your positions, if you still hold different positions then.

If the LPF persists in its current form... some LPF comrades will probably soon start leaving the DSP (as some are already openly canvassing). Others will be tempted into serious breaches of party discipline and the constitution. Sooner or later we will end up with a damaging split that weakens the revolutionary forces in this country...

Far better than the LPF's abstentionism is constructive discussion, serious and sincere advancement of alternatives, and openly declared disagreement where that is held. That's better than the faction-driven nosing out of differences, petty-point scoring, "sharp" questions in meetings etc, and *en bloc* abstaining under faction discipline...

The DSP leadership has demonstrated great tolerance and restraint over several months in its dealings with this hostile and destructive faction. At the congress, the delegates acted on the assumption (a wrong one as it turned out) that the minority was prepared to operate in a loyal and constructive manner. We supported the inclusion of LPF members on all national leadership bodies. But this inclusiveness was met with the LPF comrades excluding themselves from collective leadership. You cannot include people who don't want to be included in a leadership team.

I will be proposing in the election item that we give inclusiveness another go with these comrades - take a chance that their approach will change... If the comrades in the LPF do not take this last chance, we know we are headed for a split. We know we cannot indefinitely sacrifice an NE based on a commitment to team leadership. You've seen LPF members lose respect as leaders in the branches already. The national leaders of the LPF are also fast destroying their own authority in the party."

(ii) From the DSP NE's Party Building report adopted by the DSP National Committee in April 2007 (presented by Sue B)

"Although our party has experienced many political differences over the years, we've always acted in unity. That unity in action has meant that our party has usually managed to have an influence well beyond our size. Our revolutionary unity has been the reason why we have always been able to pull off projects that much bigger parties haven't been able to achieve such as launching *Green Left Weekly* as a broad paper, organising some of the big conferences that we have organised, and an impact beyond our size in some of the movements...

However, it is undeniable that the lack of unity in the DSP has made it difficult to implement decisions from the 2006 DSP Congress across the board, and the lack of unity in implementing the decisions means that the line hasn't been fully tested.

Our actual experience of having an ongoing faction in the party since the congress has been that it has seriously weakened our revolutionary unity, and it has miseducated a range of comrades about our norms of organization which have been built up over the last three decades.

I will list some aspects of how the Leninist Party Faction has operated which have weakened our revolutionary unity, even if that was not the intention:

- The practice of separating the faction from the rest of the party by organising separate discussions and separate Marxist education classes on issues where there was no disagreement raised at the congress. The LPF has run its own separate classes on the Marxist Theory of the State in some cities instead of requesting that the branch run such classes for the whole branch. This breaks down the collective unity of the party.
- The organization of separate discussions of political issues which are not related to the original difference has led to the possible development of new differences. For example, at the May NC last year, the LPF abstained in block from voting on a resolution reaffirming our longstanding position of support for the right of self-determination for West Papua. Pre-caucusing on issues which have not been in dispute breaks down the unity of the party and prevents the party from having a collective discussion involving all comrades.

- The practice of circulating detailed notes of discussions in national leadership bodies and other meetings such as branch meetings and branch fractions to a select group of members – LPF members - nationally, fosters a sense among some LPF members of being separate from the party and privileged from other comrades as they have information about other branches and the leadership discussions that other members don't have.
- The practice of either not passing on or only selectively passing on information to the relevant party bodies. There have been examples of information regarding campaign interventions being passed on to LPF members around the country but not to other comrades involved in that same campaign intervention.
- There was an example of an LPF member publishing a written position paper and distributing it in the union to people who weren't in the DSP, without discussing it with the other assigned comrades or proposing to the other comrades that there be a fraction to work out a common DSP point of view...
- The functioning of the LPF as a separate party within a party can only have the result of seriously weakening the DSP if it continues for a long period of time. The longer this separate functioning goes on, the more difficult it will be to find a resolution to the differences, regardless of the facts.
- This separate functioning also miseducates younger LPF comrades who can forget what organization they should be recruiting to. For example, during the first half of 2006, there were some examples Resistance stalls where LPF comrades only recruited to AVSN and didn't mention Resistance. I think this practice stopped later on in the year but it indicates how the factional situation confuses comrades. The point is that we should be recruiting to Resistance and also seeking to involve people in our Venezuela solidarity work...
- Other signs of the disunity are examples of people who aren't in the DSP, including non-DSP Resistance members being told that Socialist Alliance is dead, with a view to discouraging them from joining Socialist Alliance. Sometimes this has worked, sometimes it hasn't.
- There have been attacks made against branch leaderships for carrying out the perspectives of the 2006 congress. One such example was a very successful joint SA/GLW environment film festival in Brisbane which made a lot of money for both GLW and for SA. It was an initiative of the SA branch and several non-DSP SA members played an active role in organising it. A very successful event. The branch leadership was attacked over SA's involvement in the project.
- Another aspect of LPF functioning in some branches has been to seize on some problems in a particular branch and whip up a sense of crisis about the branch and the branch leadership rather than calmly make constructive suggestions about how to resolve problems. Our whole tradition has been one in which we seek to work out proposals forward rather than blame comrades.
- There are examples of people who have been very interested in joining the DSP but then they attend a branch meeting and see the heavily factionalised debates in branch meetings and decide that the DSP is not for them. In some of the most factionalised branches, attendance at branch meetings has also dropped as a result of the faction debates.

The party constitution stipulates the right of members to form a faction. This is a very important right which we need to defend. But we need to think about the role of factions in a revolutionary party.

Given that a revolutionary party isn't a debating club but a political organization that discusses in order to act, factions are a means by which a revolutionary party can resolve differences without being convulsed by ongoing factionalism.

Having such a tightly organised faction as the LPF might be preventing the resolution of some of the differences from our 2006 congress on the basis of our experience since the congress. Factional point scoring prevents a discussion about how to do things better because it locks people into positions rather than having a free-flowing discussion. The factional atmosphere in branch meetings can make comrades reticent to be frank about their opinions because they know that the factional atmosphere means that what they say is likely to get interpreted in a factional way. Comrades are inhibited from having a free discussion about SA because of this locking down of positions.

Lenin argued that there is a "right to faction" but comrades also have to think about whether or not a faction actually advances the party...

One important aspect of party building is the question of leadership.. In a 1991 NC report, Jim Percy outlined four core elements of leadership in our tendency which had created strong leadership in the DSP: 1. Team leadership; 2. Democratic, i.e. elected, recallable and inclusive; 3. A leadership that trains others to lead, ie. an inclusive leadership; and 4. A leadership that is the real leadership, not just rewards for past service....

Despite the intensity of the debate at the last congress, we adopted an inclusive approach to the election of the leadership because in our past experience the building of an inclusive team of leaders has made the DSP a very strong and united party, even when we've had our differences...

However, since the congress, the LPF comrades on the leadership have deliberately excluded themselves from the collective leadership team. They are still physically present on the national executive and the national executive secretariat but they don't participate in the discussion in the wholehearted way that they would have done prior to the development of the faction. Often they don't say a word in discussion around a report and then vote against it or abstain, leaving other comrades wondering why....

In the agenda item on the election of the national executive at this national committee meeting, the outgoing national executive will propose that the current national executive be elected again, with the addition of Jim M. However, we appeal to the LPF comrades to fully participate in the leadership team.

This report appeals for unity. It calls on the LPF to think about the damage that is being done to the party with the ongoing factionalism. We call on the LPF to dissolve the faction until PCD [pre-congress discussion] begins. We're not saying that you should give up your opinions and thoughts, but we appeal to you to dissolve the faction for the unity of the party. Then when PCD opens, we appeal to you to look at the debates afresh and not just rehash old differences but to look for what we agree on and then look at what we disagree on so that we only debate the actual differences and not all questions....

I want to repeat the call for the faction to disband for us to try to work out a way to resolve these differences. We don't want comrades to leave the party. We don't want to end up with two separate parties. We want to try to find a way of resolving the differences and this separation of the faction out from the rest of the party makes it very difficult to heal those differences and to have a rational discussion because new issues keep being raised as differences. It doesn't help us resolve the differences and test out whether the line is the correct line or not."