

April 13, 1977

To all members of PLP, to my friends in the workingclass movement:

It is with the deepest regret that I am forced to end my eleven year membership in Progressive Labor Party. The unprincipled and vengeful expulsion of Hari Dillon affects only the timing of my resignation; the true causes of my decision are:

- 1) PLP has deviated gravely from Marxism-Leninism.
- 2) There is no serious possibility of fighting to change these deviations from within the Party.

THE DEVIATION S, THOUGH GRAVE, WOULD NOT IN AND OF THEMSELVES, BE CAUSE FOR RESIGNATION, AS LONG AS IT WERE POSSIBLE TO FIGHT FOR CHANGE. But the unjustified expulsion of Hari Dillon and the purge of at least six club leaders in San Francisco make it clear that the NSC plans to smash the Marxist-Leninist opposition organizationally before we have a chance to even develop a debate within the Party.

This is not the place to list in detail in what fashion the PLP has deviated from Marxism-Leninism. We have outlined some of these deviations in a document entitled "The Differences In The Party" submitted to, but not yet published in, the Internal. Aspects of the Party's non-Marxist line were criticized more fully in the "Reply to Observer" published in the November Internal Bulletin, "On the Question of U.S.-Soviet Hegemony" published in the January Internal, and "In Defence of 'Fascism Crushed'" submitted to PL Magazine.

Every process has two aspects and in PLP the "ultra-left" anarchist line was always strongly represented, even alongside the predominantly Marxist-Leninist line and active struggle against the ruling class. In 1967-1968 the Party abandoned the anti-war movement because of revisionist influence within. In that same period the Black Rebellions in Detroit, Newark and the rebellions that followed King's assassination were supported increasingly lukewarmly due to PL's obsession with Black nationalist influence. The Black P anthers received no support, only criticism from us, during their life and death struggle with the police and FBI.

When the Party helped to kill the San Francisco State Strike of 1968-1969, after its 180 degree turn on the question of preferential admissions of minority students, its "ultra left" line veered uncomfortably close to racism. Our scuttling of SDS the following year was another shameful chapter. Within the ~~xxxxx~~ primarily positive contributions of "Road to Revolution III", there were "ultra-left" anarchist and trotskyist "criticisms" of the Bolshevik strategy and tactics and of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union.

I opposed all of these errors in turn within the various collectives to which I was assigned. I never took my criticisms to the membership of the Party because despite these deviations the Party was a generally positive force trying to rebuild a Marxist Leninist International Communist movement. Moreover, the Party made good contributions to the struggle against revisionism, was at the time very active in the fight against U.S. imperialism and racism and agitated boldly for socialism. Later I tried to help the Party constructively correct these errors, particularly on the theoretical front. I wrote four articles for PL Magazine, "On Trotsky", "On Solzhenitsyn", "Fighting Fascism" and "Fascism Crushed", which attempted to refute the "ultra-left" deviation in regard to the strategy and tactics of Bolshevism and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union.

Yet a sectarian line persisted theoretically. The deviation which reduced all contradictions in the world to a question of inter-imperialist rivalry in general, and supposed U.S. decline in the face of Soviet advance in particular, was especially serious. I myself, contributed at first to this wrong line, but when I reversed my view in the face of overwhelming evidence, particularly at the time of the oil shortage hoax of 1973-1974, I was in the minority at the NC. I reserved my differences again for a long period of time and never argued my position outside of the NC.

In the practical work the "ultra-left" deviations of the sixties reappeared after 1974 in a more dangerous and sectarian form. United front tactics were eschewed altogether, the focus on superexploitation of Black workers as the basis of racism was forgotten; the movement for 30 for 40 was quietly ~~xxxxxx~~ abandoned; CAR, which had such a promising beginning, was progressively narrowed. The issuance of the document "revolution -- not Reform" last year took these increasingly sectarian deviations and raised them to a general anarchist line. This anti-Marxist line has now become ^{so} dangerous as to make it imperative that my differences with the majority of the NC no longer remain bottled up within the NC and become the property of the party as a whole. These differences came up sharply in regard to the Camp Pendleton campaign. At first I was perplexed why the Party did so little nationally around the campaign and attacked us so vigorously for the mass movement we built in San Francisco and Oceanside, since we were following Lenin's time-tested guidelines on United Front work. But I came eventually to see that a real mass line around ending racism and freeing the Pendleton 14 was diametrically opposed to the anarchist line of "Revolution -- not Reform." After being dropped from the leadership, theoretically I would be able to fight for a Marxist Leninist position as a rank and file Party member.

Unfortunately, the ability of a PL member to fight for a position in opposition to the NSC has become progressively weaker over the years. True, the NSC publishes a lot of material in the Internal Bulletins. But the true test of democracy is how the opposition is treated organizationally. And here the Party's record is not good. A very democratic Leninist Party Constitution became a dead letter within three years after its adoption in 1965. Most PL members today are not even aware the constitution exists. A whole series of very capable Marxist-Leninist Party leaders were expelled or forced to quit because they disagreed with the NSC line and saw ~~xxx~~ ~~noxx~~ serious way to fight to change the Party's line. These include, among others, Bill McAdoo, Bridges Randle, Jeff Gordon, Eric Johnson and John Levin. Even where the NSC's line was primarily correct and opposition groups like the May 2d Movement leadership, the Bill Epton group and the Puerto Rican Socialist League were basically wrong, the Party was unable to function in a way to avoid a split. With each split the Party became more monolithic, the internal workings less tolerant of an opposition, and the members more slavish toward the narrowing circle of entrenched leaders. Thus Hari Dillon and I found ourselves in a position unable to fight for Marxist-Leninist theory or tactics from within the Party. The improper expulsion of Hari is the last turn of the screw as far as I'm concerned. I cannot in good conscience remain as a member when all Hari's "Crimes" are mine as well. This has nothing to do with my friendship with Hari, but is a matter of putting Marxist-Leninist principle before organizational loyalties.

I still consider myself a friend of the Party and will do nothing to harm the Party. I wish the Party and all its members well in our common struggle against U.S. imperialism; I hope we can find ways to work together on issues of common concern.

In the future the International Communist Movement will be rebuilt. Marxist-Leninists who have rejected both modern revisionism and the inevitable "ultra-left" reaction to modern revisionism are regrouping in India, Mexico, Poland, Italy, Argentina, Ethiopia, Palestine and elsewhere. A new International will be created from among those forces in the world who have the proven ability to lead millions in class struggles and from those who confront the genuine question posed by Marxist-Leninist theory in this era. No one party can proclaim itself THE Marxist-Leninist Party at this point. The coming revolutionary storms and the international debate among Marxists will decide these questions and will bring forth an International much stronger for having gone through the difficult times we now live in.

I hope to be part of that process. I believe many PL members and leaders will also be part of that process. I look forward to our renewed revolutionary association in the future.

Comradely,
Jim Dann

P.S. The promises that were made to us to wit, that all relevant material on these differences would be published in the Internal were violated. The letters of Barbara and her friends were all published, but the letters written by Hari, Kitty & I, by Charmaine, by the S.F. Teachers Club, by the Davis club and others, refuting her slanders were left out of the April 5 Internal. Similarly several letters refuting the C-D editorial of March 17 were likewise suppressed. In all 19 critical letters to the internal were not printed by the NSC. Time could not have been a factor for this material was all in the hands of the NSO by March 21. The Internal was dated April 5. Incidentally this Internal contained the news that Hari was expelled by the S.F. leadership. This expulsion, however, took place later on April 11. We had the interesting situation that a meeting, purportedly called to vote on Hari's expulsion, was given an Internal announcing that the expulsion had already taken place. So much for democracy.

PP.S. A personal note to my friends in the Party. MY immediate personal plans are to be active in the Camp Pendleton 14 Defense Committee, to help set up Marxist-leninist Study Groups in the Bay Area and to continue to study and write about some contemporary questions posed by Marxist theory. In the coming period I want to work on these topics:

1. A study of the mechanisms of imperialism in the latter half of the twentieth century.
2. A study of the process of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and China.
3. A comparison of the contemporary anarchist deviation with the classical anarchism that Marx and Lenin fought.

I sincerely welcome correspondence from all friends on these or other topics.