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New York, N.Y. 10003

April 3, 1970

FOR NC INFORMATION

Dear Comrades,

The attached letters are being sent for your information,
and are not for general membership distribution at this time.

Comradely,

Jack Barnes

Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

International Marxist League
P.O. Box 444
South Sydney, NSW, Australia
February 17th, 1970

Copy to Barry Sheppard, National Committee SWP:

Resolution:

Cde P J Knowles went to the US to the YSA Convention, as a delegate from the IML.

He was elected to go to the US by the Committee of the IML after a fairly sharp dispute on the Committee as to who should be sent. Indeed, a majority of members of the Executive proposed sending another comrade (on the grounds that his visit would be of more use to the organization politically), but, in the face of the extremely bitter protests at the proposal, by Cde Knowles and his members of the Committee, they ultimately voted for Cde Knowles to go to preserve the unity of the organization.

On his return from the US, Cde Knowles and another Executive member within a week of arrival back, opened an intense factional struggle in the youth organization associated with the IML.

These comrades attempted to ramrod through the youth organization proposals which would make the youth organization an almost exact replica of the YSA if carried out, thereby completely discarding the strategy for the youth organization which has been unanimous IML policy since the formation of the IML. (See attached programmatic statement on the youth movement, which was the unanimous theoretical basis of the IML's approach to the youth movement until Cde PJ and the other executive member's recent somersault.) [not available -- R.L.]

We point out that the type of youth group we have built up to date has been developed to meet Australian tactical requirements, particularly those presented by the existence of a mass reformist party here, and our orientation involving both open youth work combined with an orientation to the mass party. The changes to the youth group, now proposed by the Knowles faction, throw into question our whole orientation towards the mass party, which has been one of the major questions dividing us from the Francis section of the Pabloites, the Maoists, the CP, and spontinaists, in factional disputes over the last two years.

Cde PJ and the other executive member now set up an ongoing faction containing both members of the IML and the youth group, and members of the youth group alone. The only underlying political feature of this position appears to be their organizational proposals for the youth group and their determination to struggle for control of the youth group and the IML. A number of the members of this faction are completely inexperienced recent recruits to the youth group. We condemn as strongly as we can:

1): The way in which Cde Knowles has launched the struggle in the youth group, and set up a faction both in the IML and the youth group, without even calling a meeting of the IML executive or the IML -- both of which he is secretary, although IML meetings were requested by several comrades.

Even the most elastic interpretation of the organizational principles of Bolshevism, by which Comrade Knowles and the others, at least in their rhetoric, set such store, demands that before a political turn of such magnitude in the youth movement, thorough political discussion should take place in the IML.

2): We condemn the appeal to political backwardness implicit in the setting up of a tight political faction, straddling the IML and the youth group, containing a large levy of recent recruits to the youth movement and directed primarily at an organizational struggle for control of the youth group.

3): We condemn the appeal to political backwardness implicit in the line of propaganda being extensively used to non-IML members of the youth group by leading members of the Knowles faction, which accuses the other faction of saying that the IML should run the youth group.

In view of Cde Knowles' claim of SWP support for his behavior, (a claim that we do not necessarily take at its face value), the Executive of the IML requests details from the National Committee of the SWP and YSA on whatever discussions they may have had on the Australian situation with Cde Knowles during his trip to the US, which might bear on his reasons for launching this unprincipled faction struggle in this way.

PASSED BY FOUR VOTES TO THREE AT THE COMMITTEE OF THE I.M.L., ALL SEVEN MEMBERS VOTING.