

To: Usec Bureau

10.5.78

Copy = H.K. - Sekai -

26 MAY 1978

X: (Gus), MA, Jack, Joe,
Doug

Dear comrades,

During my stay in Hong Kong, I had to discuss with REP, YSC and RML comrades, separately, to make a report on the situation in the international and to assist to a general discussion on the fusion question. I want to summarize here the information I was giving and my opinion on the fusion question. I want to do it in this letter, without waiting for my return in Europe, because I both think that the prospects for a quick fusion are better than ever in the past, and that they are still some obstacle that should be - and could be - finally removed to realize a full and quick fusion of all Trotsky's forces in Hong Kong.

I beg your pardon, both for my English and for my hard writing...

I also want in this letter to make again clear, in a written form, ~~emphasize~~ the importance we gave to day in the international for the finalisation of fusions processes on going in several countries and what is my opinion on the present situation in H.K. - two questions I tried to make already clear in our previous discussions here. I asked to be given, if possible, English-written statements from each component of the fusion process to be sent to the Usec Bureau, attached to this report and for its information. It has not been possible. But if one's feel the need to complement

this report ^{or} ~~and~~ to discuss some of its arguments or conclusion, he should send letters or contributions to the User Bureau.

I FAVORABLE PROSPECTS FOR AN OVERALL FUSION

(A) HONG-KONG SITUATION

It is the fourth time I stop in Hongkong and discuss with everybody fusion questions, in a period of five years. One thing appeared very clearly for me: we have never been in a so favorable situation to realize an overall ~~and~~ quick fusion. I do not say, of course, that no obstacles are existing for such a fusion. Of course they exist, the contrary would be rather strange after years of divisions! But I think none of those obstacles, if seriously answered, are of a nature to postpone a full fusion - I shall come back later on this question.

The change of the Chinese situation had some deep effects on our possibilities. First, even if divergences on the interpretation of the 3d Chinese revolution and on the history of the Chinese Trotskyite movement remains very big, those divergences related to "what to do" toward the Chinese question are really narrowing - and this is key. Secondly, because we are the only political current active in HK and able to give answers about what

is happening in China, our political place in now here - control in far left milieus. Third, it helped us to overcome some of the gravest crises we now face - namely the one of the RML, ~~restoration~~ in 76-77, - and to turn toward external propaganda and activities (symptomatic of this is the last summer far left symposium we politically dominated). Fourth, it helped us to expand our mass contacts and our possibilities of mass work (in this respect, for example, the situation is qualitatively better than 2 or 3 years ago). Fifth, its open broad prospect of work as well in Hong Kong, as toward South China (Canton) and South East Asia.

This is a very summarized report on the change of the situation here, which should be substantiated with more information & I cannot give in this letter. But, the implications of this change for the fusion possibilities are deep and obvious - we can finalized a fusion on a stronger political base, we can base the fusion on actual work of intervention in a situation where we can take initiatives, we can consolidate the fusion by the consciousness of the future possibilities of work now opening and avoid the counterproductive fusion is necessary for us to be able to fulfill our new and future tasks. etc.

Finally, I must say that the fusion is to day more easy to realize because the younger generation of militants have mature politically, through several crises, and have

①

understood the importance of this question in a deeper way than in previous years.

② THE NEW SITUATION IN THE F.I.

The prospect for a full and quick peace are all the more favorable because of the turn in the international situation.

In my report on this question, I have underlined the consistency of this turn = the dissolution of the LTF and the IHT are not only a "reasonable" move and are not, we are all convinced of this, a manoeuvrist move. It is a political turn in the situation, prepared by the gradual evolution of the objective situation in several countries and regions (as it is the case in the USSR with the Chinese question) and prepared by political evolution of tendencies, body of the international or sections (as shown by the IHT self-critique on Latin America, the ongoing discussions in Europe, the break of the LTF, the SWP-USA turn toward factory work in answer to the evolving situation in USA etc...).

This should be well taken in account to understand the objectives, the goals, we are now fighting for. We want, in the framework of the 1st W.C., both to clarify what is the present state of agreements and what are the remaining political divergencies in the F.I.

and to overpass in the same more the organizational division of the F.I. ranks.

We have already advance a lot in this direction. Several important documents have been unanimously (or nearly unanimously) adopted by the Usec (the socialist Democracy document, the one on "Eurocommunism" prepared for the discussion with the core ^{F.I.} the women drafts for the next W.C. - with one remaining problem). In the framework of the preparation of the W.C., several other main documents are in preparation, and we are testing the possibilities ~~to~~ of agreements on them (world situation draft for the W.C., Latin American draft, European draft...).

The functioning of the center has been greatly improved, as a day to day collective leadership, and does not depend on past-tendencie lines and boards. In many countries, ~~the~~ national divisions of F.I. ranks have been overpassed (in totality or in big majority) - Spain, Canada, Mexico, Australia, Greece, ... These success process have been key for our development of several very important regions or countries (Central America and Northern part of South America, Spain ...). It has also helped to change the internal climate in several ~~other~~ other sections throun by tendency fights.

Of course, many difficulties remains. The main one is the link to the fact that, up to my departure from Europe, the T.B. had not yet integrated their

move. So the difficulties in the fusion process in Colombia and Peru other countries. Also, in some national sections, internal tendency climate is remaining. But three things should be very clear =

a) The main characteristic of the new situation in the F.I. is the turn toward a new political homogenization and normalisation of the organisational fonctionnement — and not the remaining problems...

b) In each country where our forces are still divided, the only responsible attitude is to back on this international turn to help the advance of our local work, and not to stay on a defeatist attitude, enumerating the existing remaining problems. It is specially true in H.K. where some comrades complained about the effect of the international tendency and fractions fights effects on our local situation. It is certain that this international ~~situation~~ abnormal situation, we have passed through these last 2 years, have objectively make more difficult the regroupement of all Trotskyite forces in H.K. The only possible condensation of this is that the new situation helps this regroupement to finally occur!

c) We (USC) shall do all what we can to finally normalise the organisational situation of the F.I. at the 1st W.C. This imply to be in a position to elect the best possible leaderships and

To build the best possible collective framework of work in the F.I. It also implies that often the 1st W.C. the national and local divided situations can are overcome and that in each country we find ourselves with only one section. We are devoting a lot of our attention on this question. It is a systematic policy of the center = to improve our collective capacity of work on leadership level and to realize real fusion everywhere where our forces are divided. It is true for every country.

What makes the prospect for a full and quick fusion in H.K. so favorable is the combination between the local evidence of our situation and the recent turn in the F.I. This chance - which is without precedent here I think - must be taken.

II THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FUSION

To lose this possibility of quick and full fusion would be very grave in H.K. - as well that to failed in our goals for the 1st W.C. for the F.I. I insist on the turn in the F.I. and on its meaning because of some remarks of some members of the CC of the Rep which make me thinking that they did not fully understood it. I specifically think at Tony remarks about the division of the "proletarian movement" in countries like France or Great Britain, and about

the remaining divided situation in the F.I. Two things must be clear: the division of the so-called "Trotskyist movement" (including in France words in France the LCR, Co, OCT and OCT) has nothing to do with the H.K. situation. In France, out of our section (the LCR), the three other organisations do not recognise the framework of the F.I. — and even one of them does not claim to be Trotskyist (the OCT). We are here faced to a long term problem: the division of the far left. But in H.K. we are faced to the division of forces claiming all to recognise the framework of the F.I., and both the RCP and the RHL has recognise the other organisation as Trotskyist one which should be include in a fusion. And secondly, remaining divided situation of our forces should not be taken as a "example" valid for H.K., or as a pretexts to slow down fusion process. H.K. is in a much better situation to fuse than is some other cases — even than some other cases where the fusion has taken place, and very successfully.

I feel that the key question here is to well understand the importance of a full and quick fusion.

Neither the RCP as such, nor the RHL as such, and of course nor the YSC as such, can fully answer our new and future tasks (in H.K., toward China, and SEA). We need to regroup all our forces and to build a wider collective leadership to be able to operate on all the necessary grounds and to divide among ourselves.

the tasks and responsibilities.

• In all countries, division of F.S. forces has been used by our concurrents and opponents. The danger of such division is all the more obvious in a "town-country" like H.K., where we are facing the most establishment and where we have to combat a deep deformation of the concept of democratic centralism. How to convince of our concept of democratic centralism if we are even not able to fuse and regroup our present forces? How to educate in this conception new layers - and our own militants?

• It has been confirmed and confirmed again that the capacity to overcome our divisions and to retain a unified organisation and work is a very important test of political maturity for organisations. It is true for the F.S. - we have to take the chance of the new situation to educate our militants in an other frame work than the one of tendency ~~groups~~ and fractious bitter fights. It is true for the national and local organisations: we have to prove in practice that we are able to build organisations in which collective work can be developed in spite of unavoidable differences of generations, individual characters and political experiences. If not, we shall never be able to build mass base international and parties!!!

• Fusion is also necessary if we want to improve the relationships between the center and our H.S. work. It is the 4th time it come to H.K. And each time, most of the collective discussions we could have turned around the organisational

situation and the fusion problem! It is very frustrating for every body and it gave a very poor idea of what is the function of an International. Because it is true not only of my trip, but also of other announced trips and of the written exchange between the Centre and H.K.

The normalisation of the organisational situation - specifically in the new FI contexts - is a pre-condition to really change this ugly situation. We need to discuss fully a lot of other matters: Chinese case, HK work, South East Asia regional work, political general documents like the Socialist democracy one, - the FI leaderships must be in a position to learn more about all this and your activities, you must integrate yourself more in our international life and our regional work. If not, internationalism will be feel as much to formal. We have to ameliorate the collective functioning of the centre for this. But the organisational situation in H.K. must be normalised also.

One must state clearly to day that our main present task, our most urgent responsibility is to regroup all our rank and file and leadership capacities, all Trotskyist militants and force, as quickly as possible to be able to answer and fulfill our new tasks and responsibilities.

This must be the starting point of our approach of the fusion process. Any difficulties must be table with in this framework - the question is how to solve them. And I am convinced it is possible to solve those existing difficulties.

III. NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

Many difficulties remain of course on the path of the fusion. RML, majority of the CC of the CCP comrades, majority of the CCP comrades, all comrades pinpoint some difficulties, even if in different frameworks. Also, several members of the majority of the CCP said I was loudly speaking for fusion but it was not understanding the nature of the difficulties and I was giving no concrete answers to the concrete problems they were underlining. Better not to escape real problems and not to draw a rosy picture, hiding effective difficulties, if you want ~~conclude~~ a real fusion, was their conclusion. I do not think this approach is efficacious. So I shall try to be clear in this report on how I see the nature of the difficulties and the concrete answers we can give to them.

A/ NATURE OF THE FUSION

Several CC majority CCP members putted in question the nature of the fusion the Vsec Bureau was forecasting. One of them said that all previous splits occurred as a direct result of FI division and clearly implied that members of the center encourage them. Several CC CCP members more specifically accuse namely Jim of a backhand work with the CCP minority, acting at a split in the CCP and a separate fusion ~~with~~ with the RML.

Two things should be here very clear:

a) The situation of the FI in the past period made more difficult regroupement processes in H.K. But,

None of the disputes and splits was ever "organized" by members of the Centre. If Wu, then Johnny and today Yip Nin and Cheung Kwai began to oppose to the RCP CC majority, it is for an other type of reasons than a series of machiavelical interventions of Usec Bureau members or IEC members! The successive oppositions which appeared between the older and younger generations of comrades are posing an other type of problems: how to unify on the long term those different political generations in one same organization? Several examples shows that it is possible, and it is exactly what we are trying to do presently.

a) We fight for a overall, full, quick, simultaneous fusion of all Trotskyist forces ~~and~~ in H.K. It means a fusion between the RML and the RCP fully involving former members of the Chinese ~~Revolutionary~~ I.W.P. and YSC comrades. We seek for this overall fusion process - as we were seeking for it few years ago at a time the RCP ~~was~~ CC was only seeking for the reunification with individualities (Wu, Way, Cooy, ...) and not with organisations (like the SL) or currents. We have not change our approach for all the reasons enumerated in part I and II.

This is the fusion we want. And I think it was always very clear in the Usec Bureau letters that was sent to the RCP on those matters.

PROGRAMMATIC
B/ ~~CONSTITUTIONAL~~ BASE FOR A FUSION

Everybody recognise that every body has its place in the F.I.E. Both the RHL and the REP recognise one another as Trotskyist organisations. So they should be no principal programmatic obstacle for fusion.

Between November 77 to February 78, a clarification discussion was organized on this question, and the general opinion I was express is that this discussion confirmed the existence of a broad principal programmatic base for a fusion.

On this question, some members of the REP cc majority said that might be some ~~remain~~ remaining important differences, while recognising that some of the past divergences on the present situation in China has narrowed. They specifically pinpointed the fact that divergences existed on the analysis of the 3d Chinese revolution, and the history of our movement during it, and on the present stage of evolution of the agricultural and peasant situation (divergence which seems to lead to differences of opinion on the slogans we should raise toward the agricultural problems).

I do not think that those type of divergences should harm the fusion process. It is quite possible to continue the discussion on those issue in a common organization. I would even suggest that a public discussion could be organize in our press on those questions, with discussion articles and documents from our past activities and from the

F-I. resolutions on China.

C/ "PARTY-YOUTH" AND DEMOCRATIC-CENTRALISM

The main obstacle for fusion, in the eyes of the RCP-CC majority, is the very crisis of the RCP itself. This crisis opposes the RCP majority and the RCP minority. The RCP majority feels that the minority is now acting quite independently on its youth work, and that decisions like the absorption of the former RCY into the YSC was taken against the will of the CC majority. The minority argue that they were some compromise built in the recent past that which is now forgotten. But they recognise the existence of the problem. They just argue that the very existence of this problem is due to the ~~political~~ complete inability of the CC majority to politically lead the youth work and the replacement by the CC majority of political leadership by administrative leadership.

In the eyes of the RCP/CC majority, the situation is extremely grave. It is a de facto split, which can lead soon to a formal split and the transformation of the YSC in a third organization in H.K., competing with both the RCP and the RHL.

In consequence, they have decided the convocation of an extraordinary convention in early August for them, this RCP crisis touch a principal question (i.e. democratic centralism), so this crisis of the RCP must be settled before the fusion as a guarantee on the future.

fonctionnement of this common organisation. They argue that the convention will give a chance to the minority to gain the majority. If not, then democratic centralism will have to be applied, or they shall be a of open split situation. The question to clarify first, in their eyes, is the "party - youth" relationships.

So the August convention should have two points at its agenda - a) Party - Youth question, b) fusion question.

I must say first that I am very afraid of the dynamic implied by this approach of the problem. Due to what the CCP/CC majority and minority said, it could lead very easily to a split situation, or with for the worse \Rightarrow three Trotskyist organisations competing in HK and for the best only a partial fusion process, while we are seeking for an overall fusion.

Secondly, to put the question as in general the question of "party - youth" relationship seems to me irrelevant. There is no existing "party" and "youth" in H.K. which would make of the question a central issue. And this way of posing the problem might lead to hide what is the present crucial problem - the regroupement of all existing Trotskyist forces in HK to stabilise an organisation able to answer fully our new tasks.

Democratic centralism is of course a very important issue. But the CC majority should, I think, take in account three facts = a) the argument of the minority that

The present crisis is due to the RCP weaknesses and could be much easily ~~overcome~~ overcome in a fused and stronger organization, b) that it is the third time that a major break occurs between the majority and its main young militants, so it is a question which poses more broader problems than the bad behavior of the present minority, c) that the consequence of a third ~~split~~ split (or exclusion) of the young from the RCP would have devastating consequences: it would not allow a full fusion to occur, it would cut the RCP from nearly any capacity of actual mass work, it would harm gravely future possibilities of the RCP to recover an active base in the youth. The third crisis could be the last one!

These consequences are too grave for RCP comrades and for all the F.I. to be underestimated.

It is why my proposal is:

- To pose the principal question of demo. cent. in the framework of the future fused organization, to answer by this way to the worries of the minority. But to ask here a clear statement from the ~~present~~ present minority on this question.

- To use the fusion as the mean to overcome the present RCP crisis. In fact it is clearly the only hope to overcome this crisis! And not to based on the crisis to postpone the fusion perspectives.

o To change in this framework the agenda of the convention (August) and to put as first point the fusion question. If not, this point, which is without doubt the most important, might well just disappear from the agenda if there is no agreement on the "Youth-Party" relationships.

D/ MASS WORK

Both the RCP and the RCP/CC minority feels difficult to combine the mass work (specifically in the youth, with the YSG).

Also, the RCP/CC minority state that there is a big divergence with the majority on the conception of party building and mass ~~work~~ work.

They feel that the RCP/CC majority conception is essentially harmed by "clandestinité" and inactivisme (or mere propagandisme).

This is today not clear for me: the RCP/CC majority comrades have several times stated that they fully supported the mass work of the YSG and the RHE. And the future organization is foreseen as publicly leading this active mass work. If there were big divergences here they should be cleared up openly.

But in general, I must say that there are much less grave divergence of orientation between the diffe-

rent components of the Trotskyist movement in HK. Now it was the case in several countries where the fusion was successfully achieved.

So I think, the best is to put in practice what have already been proposed:

- To have regular discussion between RML and YSC comrades on the situation in HK and mass activities, and to fully involve in those discussions all RCP comrades.

- To prepare commonly interventions in the mass field, and to accept a "moral discipline" between all RCP-RML-YSC Comrade, precluding the future organisational discipline of the fused organisation.

- To fuse programmatically RCP and RML magazines (October Review and Equator).

The key question here is the political conviction of the leaderships of each organisation of the need, the absolute need, for the fusion. In this framework, I am convinced that the capacity of common work will improve quickly and lay the ground for a effective fusion. If not, concurrence in mass work will lead to concurrence between organisations and will make the fusion more difficult.

~~All the~~ RCP/cc majority and minority, RML and YSC stated they will to fuse. The RCP/cc minority stated that the overall majority of YSC comrades are for such a perspective. The RML has already collectively confirmed his will for a quick and full fusion process to be ended in August.

IV CONCLUSIONS

It is decisive to accelerate the path to full and quick fusion in H.K. Delaying this process could lead to a deepening of the division and of the cause of the RCP.

The fusion perspective must be taken as the mean to overcome present difficulties (RCP crisis, man work) and to improve our capacity to answer our new tasks in H.K., toward the China situation, in the region and toward the integration in the F-2. present evolution.

The objective conditions are more favorable than ever. The key question is now the political conviction of the leaderships. The fusion process should be ~~improved~~ strengthened by an overall discussion between RCP and RHC, involving all their militants, with as many contacts between all of them as possible, and involving the YSC militants as well as the former IWP comrades.

The USC Bureau should be ready to give its full help to this process, and to act as quickly as possible if required due to the present schedule of the fusion process (RCP convention in August).

Please, take in account that this report has been written in english and in a hasty way,

Fraternally,
Roman