

CONCERNING OUR EXPULSIONS

Letter to the National Committee

The five members of the Revolutionary Tendency expelled from the Socialist Workers Party declare to the National Committee that our expulsion has taken the party another long step on the descent into Stalinist monolithism.

Nothing in the history and tradition of the party can be used as a precedent to justify our expulsion for thought crimes. Nor can the party justify the violation of elementary norms of procedure which even bourgeois society grants an accused, such as a trial. Not a single act is charged against us! Instead, the leadership has torn out of context quotations from written opinions in an internal discussion in our tendency, given them the most sinister interpretation possible, and used them as a pretext for our expulsion.

The concept put forth by the National Secretary, Farrell Dobbs, that the majority is the party, makes very clear the intention to convert the party into a completely docile organizational instrument in which only officially sponsored ideas will be permitted expression. This intention cannot now be masked by soothing assurances to the contrary to the other minorities.

The political motivation for this action is also quite clear. The leadership has abandoned the fundamental Marxist concept that the working class and its vanguard must lead the masses in order to achieve a socialist transformation of society, and continues to seek to convert the party into an appendage of petty-bourgeois radical groupings. It hopes that humble obeisance and adulation will enable the party to ride the coat-tails of the Castros, Ben Bellas, and Malcolm X's into the socialist future. At the same time, the leadership cannot openly admit to discarding the basic principles on which the party was founded. For example, it is still eager to use a phrase such as the Permanent Revolution after discarding its political content, as a cover for its political nakedness. The leadership is, therefore, especially vindictive toward our tendency for exposing them, and seizes any and all organizational pretexts in an attempt to silence it.

A particularly envenomed situation was created by the majority in youth work. For the first time in seventeen years, and with minority party members playing a leading role, a significant youth cadre had been developed. The majority found it intolerable that party members identifying with the minority led this cadre, and set about to displace them. A campaign was therefore launched by the party from outside the youth movement to remove the youth leadership. In doing so, youth independence and initiative was deliberately destroyed. In the circumstances, charges of disloyalty to the party and double recruiting can only be described as a hollow mockery.

We have used every legitimate opportunity which presented itself to expose and oppose the abandonment of a revolutionary class position and the abstentionist policies which directly derived therefrom. Accordingly, we have protested with all our strength the opposition of the Majority to a policy which permits sending Negro members into the Negro rights movement in the South, as well as the refusal to allow white members to participate in this struggle in the North. We have called for the involvement of the membership in select trade-union concentrations, and have also raised the need to resume our traditional policy of cooperation with leftward moving radical groups, now in motion as a result of the Sino-Soviet dispute. In sum, we have demanded the involvement of the party in the struggles now taking place, with the object of influencing them in the direction of greater militancy and mass participation, to help the process of crystallization of a left-wing, and to recruit to the party new militant working-class and intellectual forces--and we shall continue to do so.

We declare to the National Committee that the efforts of its majority to isolate us from the membership by expelling us are in vain.

We shall continue to appeal to the membership in person and in writing to reject the politics of opportunism and abstentionism, and to return to the revolutionary policies and practices on which the SWP was founded.

We consider ourselves to be a temporarily expelled section of the party and declare that we will do everything in our power to gain readmission to it.

As part of this perspective, we declare that we shall support every action taken to involve the party membership in the fight for Negro rights, to reach out to the trade-unions, to oppose the desperate attempts of American imperialism to stem the tide of revolution throughout the world, and to combat its ever increasing danger to the existence of humanity.

We welcome the party's announcement of its plans to run presidential and vice-presidential candidates in 1964, although we must protest the refusal to place Myra Tanner Weiss on the ticket. In replacing her as a punishment for opposing its unprincipled organizational highhandedness, the leadership merely demonstrated its own insensitivity to the struggle for women's rights which Myra's candidacy served to highlight. We shall, in any case, support the party's efforts on the electoral scene to promote socialist ideas, defend the Cuban Revolution, and fight against colonialism and imperialism.

We also declare that in thrusting us outside the party's ranks, the responsibility for the necessity of our open political work falls on the leadership. We shall, as a result, direct

our efforts not only toward the party membership, but also toward other, leftward moving, radical groups, the Negro rights movement, the trade-unions, and the mass movement in general. We are, therefore, compelled, while outside the party, to make our criticism known to the radical public, while we continue to press our struggle in every possible way for readmission to the party.

We shall, in short, continue our struggle for a working-class vanguard free from alien class influences, and thereby capable of leading the masses to socialism.

Fraternally yours,

Lynne Harper
Laurence Ireland
Shane Mage
James Robertson
Geoffrey White

February 10, 1964