

Dear Fellow Members of the SWP

Dear Comrades:

We have just learned that the Political Committee has suspended our entire group from party membership indefinitely. This action—and let's call it by its right name, expulsion—was preceded neither by a trial, as required in our constitution, nor even a Central Commission investigation. We were not even granted the right to present our case before the Political Committee in person. Such is the panic and political insecurity of the SWP leadership that not even one minute has been given us to defend ourselves inside the party. Such a procedure has nothing in common whatsoever with Bolshevism.

The ostensible grounds for our expulsion was our distribution to the party membership of an appeal to the Political Committee for the opening of a party discussion on the deepening crisis inside our international movement. Certainly rank and file members have the right to request that the PC organize a discussion. Certainly it is in our tradition for rank and file members to make known to their fellow party members the appeal they are making. So weak is the leadership's case against us that they do not dare to allow the rank and file membership to judge the matter through a trial procedure as required by our constitution. What a disgraceful business!

The real political reasons for our expulsion are plain for all to see. The PC takes great pains to characterize our assessment of the role of the SWP and United Secretariat in the Ceylonese betrayal as "slandereous" and we are dismissed as agents of Healy.

What a great revelation this latter accusation is! Since February of 1961 we have consistently and on every occasion open to us defended the political positions of the International Committee and announced our complete political solidarity with the SLL and other members of the IC. This has been no matter of conspiracy to be "discovered" by the PC. This has been our open political stance for over three years now. Rather than hiding it we are proud of our political solidarity with the IC and in fact our recent statement openly proclaims our conviction that this stand is being vindicated fully by current developments.

Our analysis of the Ceylonese developments is called "slandereous". However the Political Committee offers not one word in defense of its role and that of its co-thinkers in these events. It seems to feel it can answer "slandereous" by expelling the "slandereous" rather than seriously dealing with their political criticisms.

But the record is now clear for all to see. The Pabloites in Europe supported every step leading up to the Perera betrayal — the "no-contest" agreement between the LSSP and the bourgeois SWP in 1960; the retreat on the language and communitist issue; the parliamentary coalition with the rotten NRP and Krushchevian CP (The United Left Front — ULF); and full support for the center De Silva-Gooneswardena group.

When the DeSilva-Gooneswardena center group was faced with the open capitulation of Perera to the SWP it could muster only the weakest opposition. In fact its resolution at the June LSSP conference called for a coalition government of the United Left Front and the SWP—in no way in principle different from Perera's stand. Following the conference the United Secretariat expelled Perera and his supporters but refused to expell DeSilva-Gooneswardena and Co. who went along with Perera turning their backs on the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) which broke away.

Today the SWP leadership supports an international formation to which DeSilva and Goonewardena are also affiliated. For this collaboration and encouragement of the center group in the LSSP, which paved the way for Perera's sellout, we blame the SWP leadership. This is the nature of our "slander". What then is the answer of the majority? The expulsion of DeSilva-Goonewardena? No, the expulsion of those who criticize its support of the rotten DeSilva-Goonewardena tendency. What a shameful affair!

Since early 1961 we have insisted that unless the SWP majority came to grips with the revisionism of Pabloism the world movement was threatened with certain disaster. Unification without serious political preparation could lead only to further disintegration of our movement. And this is what has come to pass. The majority, which in 1953 saw itself as the defenders of the historically-created cadres of world Trotskyism, today plays the role of the destroyers of those cadres. What terrible havoc the SWP leadership and its European allies have wreaked upon our small international cadres! What chaos they have created!

No sooner had the negotiations gotten underway between the SWP and the Pabloites than virtually the entire Latin American cadres of the Pabloites took off, under the leadership of Posados, to form their own "International". The absurd views of this formation on preventive nuclear war are nothing more than the logical extension of the views of Pablo on War-Revolution. The Pabloites and their allies in the SWP are fully responsible for this political aberration.

In order to carry through its reunification with the Pabloites the majority blithely broke from its international collaborators of more than two decades the SLL, and the French comrades which it had treated so infamously in 1952. Following its reunification a factional battle is carried out against Pablo and some 15 per cent of the Pabloite formation is forthwith dispensed with with not so much as a word of discussion by our own party over the disputed issues. The views of this liquidationist group of apologists for the Kremlin are no more than an extension of the views and method of the United Secretariat and SWP majority and this is of course why no real discussion was allowed to take place.

Following close on the heels of the Pablo expulsion is the Ceylonese class betrayal which forced the United Secretariat to expell over 500 members of the LSSP for carry^{out} logically a line it has encouraged for more than a decade. In the meantime the Canadian supporters of the SWP, Dawson and Co., have expelled a group of workers in Vancouver for their political support to the views of the International Committee. The SWP has expelled the Robertson formation essentially for its political views. Now our group is forthwith tossed out without even the formality of discussion of the disciplinary action as was granted the Robertson group.

But the disintegrative process does not stop here. Already a good section of the Weiss group has left the party logically following out the liquidationist outlook of the majority. A good 15% of the party supports the Swaback position which represents a complete abandonment of Trotskyist principle and to^{ally} uncritical support to the Maoists. Certainly these comrades are not long for the SWP.

There is no escaping it. The shameful capitulation of the LSSP and the disgraceful role of the United Secretariat and the SWP in those events is a sign of the depth of the degeneration of the World movement. Unless there is a significant reaction to these events within the ranks of the United Sec^{retariat}

cretariat and the SWP we will be forced to conclude that the Fourth International created by Leon Trotsky has, in the main, been destroyed by the revisionists. We strongly urge the SWP to call a halt to this process by rescinding our suspensions and initiating a discussion process which can resolve these problems politically rather than by organizational fiat. Only in this way can the SWP be saved as a revolutionary instrument.

Never before in history has a revolutionary communist international been more needed. Such an international simply must be built and it will be built. Unless there is a serious turn now by the United Secretariat and the SWP, or at least some forces within these bodies, the responsibility for this great task will fall on the International Committee and the International Committee alone. The rebuilding of the movement must begin with the most thorough and exhaustive struggle against revisionism combined with the creative development of Marxist theory on the basis of the Marxist method. This work has now only just begun. We pledge ourselves to assist the International Committee in this task in every way we can.

We urge the SWP membership to struggle to return the SWP to the camp of Trotskyism. Such a task will require first of all an understanding of the developments in Ceylon. Then the comrades must dig back to the very roots of those developments in the collapse of the Marxist method and the growth of Pabloite revisionism in the postwar period. Within this framework the comrades must seek to discover why the SWP after partially resisting revisionism in 1953 has so totally capitulated to it over the past period. We will do everything we can for the coming period to assist the rank and file party members to carry out this work even though we have been placed outside the party by the actions of the leadership which fears above all such a political process.

If the SWP continues to ignore these tasks and seeks to maintain itself through organizational actions, it will be doomed. Already the cowardly reaction of the party to the Kennedy Assassination and its shameful petitioning of the bourgeois government to send troops to the South to restore orderly processes are signs of what the future course of the party must be if it fails to come to grips with revisionism.

Now is the time to call a halt to this process. Rescind the suspensions! Organize a discussion which faces squarely the disintegration of our movement and seeks to get at the roots of it! We do not request this of the SWP leadership. We demand it in the name of the thousands throughout the globe who have given their very lives so that the Fourth International would survive.

Comradely,

Jack Arnold
 Danny F.
 Neil M.
 Fred M.
 Sylvia M.
 Earl Owens
 Dave Van-Ronk
 Martha Wells
 Tim Wohlforth