

X. MO, Ls, Doug, Yus, ...
APR 28 1978

New York
April 27, 1978

Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

1. I have received a copy of the letter sent by Stateman, for the United Secretariat, to the OST comrades in Costa Rica. In this letter Stateman replies to the OST leadership's request for publication of "For a Change in the Fourth International's Position on Cuba" in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin by recommending that they wait until the United Secretariat draft resolution on Latin America is ready, before submitting it.

Scott Cooper and I have not received any formal reply from the PC to our request dated January 1, 1978, that you submit this document, which we co-authored, to the IIDB.

Thus you appear to accept the views of Stateman's letter. I am therefore addressing this letter to you.

I have not heard the pros and cons of holding a world congress soon or of including one or another point on the agenda. I have no idea what kind of document the United Secretariat is likely to come up with or whether its line will be such that it is worthwhile to have the Cuba discussion further delayed than it already has been.

However, I think that one reason Stateman advances for delaying publication of our document can be set aside. He suggests that the document's authors might want to modify it later in light of the content of the United Secretariat's Latin America document.

The authors might indeed want to do so if they decide to propose a document for a vote.

But this is not a reason for delaying publication of the document already submitted, because it has not been proposed for a vote. Rather, it was submitted as a discussion article. This leaves wide open the course the individual authors might take in trying to get their views formally adopted by the Fourth International. They might move this document as a resolution or amendment; they might move a modified version; or they might not formally move it for a vote at all. Each author is furthermore entitled to decide for himself or herself how to proceed in the particular body or bodies of the particular organization he or she belongs to.

If some comrades propose this document for a vote, they might want to modify it before doing so, not only in light of points made in the Latin American resolution of the United Secretariat, but also in light of discussion among the members of the Fourth International on Cuba. But for this to be done, the document must appear in plenty of time for the members to read it and intervene in the discussion. Six months or less is not plenty of time, in this case.

All the document's authors asked their organizations' leaderships to submit the document to the United Secretariat for publication. The OST proposed to the United Secretariat January 16 that the document be published. Stateman's April 1 letter is addressed to the Costa Rican comrades.

If they accept his recommendation, I request that you urge the United Secretariat to publish the document as soon as it is resubmitted by the OST without any more delay.

On the other hand, if the Costa Rican comrades want the document published in the IIDB now, I request that you insist to the United Secretariat that this be done.

* * *

2. In a letter to Stateman, April 11, Comrade François Massion of the Belgian LRT, a co-author of the document, objects to Stateman's reasoning. He points out that the Cuba discussion does not fully belong in the Latin America discussion as outlined by Stateman. For example, Massion raises the question of Cuban foreign policy in Africa.

This consideration is underlined, in my opinion, by the three-page speech by Fidel Castro, and the four-paragraph introduction to it, published in Intercontinental Press/Inprecor of April 17, 1978, under the title, "Fidel Castro's Account of Cuba's Role in Ethiopia."

Castro's speech attempts to justify the Cuban leadership's policy of sending troops to the Ogaden region of Ethiopia to help the Ethiopian military junta crush the Somali national liberation struggle there. For example, Castro accused the Somalian government, which helped the Somalis in Ethiopia, of "invading Ethiopia to destroy a revolution on behalf of the reactionary nations of the area, NATO and imperialism."

Castro knew, however, that the U.S., far from pushing Somalia into war, had pressured the Somalian government to turn its back on the Somalis in Ethiopia. He knew, for one thing,

because it was U.S. president Carter who announced the Somalian pullback March 9. Castro lied in his speech.

He also used the reactionary argument of the need to protect borders -- borders which are used to imprison oppressed nationalities. He said that the African governments, "with a great sense of the practical, have wisely agreed on the inviolability of the borders left by colonialism." (pp. 465-466)

It is lamentable that IP/I's introduction to Castro's speech did not expose these lies and reactionary justifications or criticize the speech. It only stated that new "details on the overall Cuban role" are found in the speech, "including the efforts made by Havana to bring the conflict to a peaceful resolution." This last phrase on so-called peace efforts appears to refer to Castro's account of a meeting in 1977 in Aden, where the Cuban and Ethiopian leaderships sought, to all evidence, to convince the Somalian government not to support the Ethiopian Somalis.

The IP/I introduction thus presented a crime of the Cuban leadership as a peace mission. It passed over in silence the violence later carried out under Castro's orders by Cuban troops against the Somali liberation fighters.

Thus it departed from IP/I's previous coverage of the war in the Ogaden in which IP/I correctly supported the Somali side, expressing solidarity with this oppressed nationality.

The Cuban intervention was publicly protested by the Carter administration. But the criminal policy of the Cuban leadership in sending troops against a national liberation struggle, on behalf of a capitalist military regime, was carried out in collaboration with U.S. imperialism -- in the spirit of "détente." Imperialism alone gains when a workers state is discredited in this way -- unprecedented -- and when a freedom struggle is set back.

IP/I has published no United Secretariat statement on the war in the Ogaden. Does this mean that the United Secretariat feels it can afford to let international wars pass by without comment?

Or does it mean that differences existed on which side to take in this war?

The wars in the Ogaden, in Eritrea, and in Africa as a whole are not over; nor is Cuban intervention, on the side of the oppressors, according to news accounts -- at least not in Ethiopia. IP/I's introduction to Castro's speech, and the United Secretariat's silence, indicate that it is necessary to discuss this intervention thoroughly in our world movement. My personal opinion is that the coming world congress will have to discuss not only the Cuban question, but also the question of the

Marxist attitude in general toward such military interventions as Cuba carried out.

It is necessary for the world congress to characterize these interventions without equivocation as crimes, no matter who perpetrates them -- Stalinists, centrists, "state capitalists," or revolutionists. It is also necessary to say clearly that the Trotskyists' task is not to apologize for such interventions or put them in a favorable light; it is to expose and denounce them, and to support their defeat, if necessary at the hands of the liberation fighters themselves -- while defending countries like Cuba against imperialist threats. In my opinion, this task is even more important, at times of wars such as the recent one, than the task of correctly characterizing the Cuban state. Only by carrying out our basic immediate tasks in such situations can our movement hope to win the support of the oppressed around the world.

In my opinion, a formal vote in the branches and membership bodies of the organizations of our world movement is required on this question.

* * *

3. Stateman's letter notes that the United Secretariat has decided "to restrict the number of points on the agenda of the next World Congress." This is because, with "the large number of points that have been placed on the agenda," the United Secretariat believes "It is impossible to hold a full and democratic discussion on all these points and at the same time hold the World Congress early next year."

What this restriction of the agenda means is not quite clear: on the China discussion, for example. China is not among the United Secretariat's agenda points.

The world political situation is on the United Secretariat world congress agenda. Will draft resolutions on the world political situation leave China out of consideration? Or will they contain a political position on China?

If they contain a political line, will there be a debate in case of differences?

I am raising this question because fundamental differences have existed in our movement on China since the early 1950s. These differences were among the main political issues of the split of the Pablo tendency from the United Secretariat in 1965. (The Pablo tendency said the Chinese Communist Party was a Stalinist party; the United Secretariat issued polemics rejecting that characterization.) They figured in the unexpected division into two opposing international caucuses on the China question in

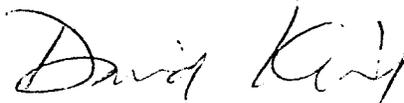
1969. Discussion of the differences was put aside in the pre-1974-world-congress discussion in favor of a post-world-congress discussion on China. This post-world-congress discussion never took place.

The most recent line document of a body of the Fourth International on China, to my knowledge, is the November 1976 United Secretariat statement (IP, December 13, 1976). It reaffirms the basic line of the 1969 world congress majority resolution on the Cultural Revolution. The SWP disagrees with the line of this document -- for example, on the nature of the Chinese Communist Party. We think it is a counter-revolutionary Stalinist party. The IEC majority tendency in 1973 vigorously defended the view that the Chinese CP is a centrist party, not a counter-revolutionary party. (See IIDB No. 22 in 1973.)

If the deep differences on China are not even discussed, let alone resolved, in the pre-1979-world-congress discussion, how will the United Secretariat be prepared to confront major events that may occur in China? Would it use the 1969 resolution? Would it use the 1974 International Majority Tendency world political resolution, with the same line as the 1969 China document? Would the United Secretariat feel free to adopt a line on China following no mandate at all and benefiting from no discussion in the ranks of the Fourth International on China in the last five years or more?

This is a problem which I think the PC should discuss in relation to the world congress agenda, in view of the depth and long-standing character of the differences, considering that the Communist Party in question rules in China, and giving due weight to the fact that there are more people in China than in any other country in the world.

Comradely,



David Keil

cc: Stateman
authors of "For a Change in the Fourth International's
Position on Cuba"

enc. copy of my December 1973 letter to Leninist Trotskyist
Faction International Steering Committee

David Keil
c/o SWP
706 Bway., 8th fl.
New York, N.Y. 10003

December 20, 1973

Leninist-Trotskyist Faction
International Steering Committee

Dear Comrades,

I am writing you to express some opinions concerning the coming World Congress.

Points #5-8 of "Recommendations to the Delegates of the Coming World Congress," passed unanimously by the United Secretariat, September 19, 1973, specify that votes should be taken on five questions "only," that discussion on these questions be closed for the next year and that votes not be taken on the Cultural Revolution in China, the youth radicalization, women's liberation, the Middle East, Vietnam and Eastern Europe; furthermore, discussion on "conjunctural events in Vietnam and Eastern Europe" is to be excluded from the post-Congress discussion.

I am not able to understand these Recommendations very well, because the LTF leadership has not explained them fully to its members. I assume that they are a result of an agreement between the LTF and IEC majority leaderships.

I would like to request that this agreement be explained to the LTF membership so that we can understand it better.

I would also like to express my opinion that, in the present situation, these proposals are not realistic or advantageous for the world movement. If this is so, the LTF must propose to the next United Secretariat meeting that the "Recommendations" be withdrawn.

The Recommendation that the World Congress not vote on the Cultural Revolution in China is impossible to carry out, because the IEC majority world political resolution presents for a vote its line on China. This is done in a covert, indirect way, by speaking of a "spectacular right-turn in Chinese foreign policy" beginning after the Cultural Revolution, i.e., "since the phase of the liquidations of the 'cultural revolution.'" (IIBB #20, p. 12.); by emphasizing the opinion that "conservative features" in China have been generalized since the fall of Lin Biao and that the rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-ping

accompanies the "new" right turn; by emphasizing that the Cultural Revolution activity "reduced the material privileges of the bureaucracy;" and finally, by asserting that "the radicalism of Maoism in the 1960s had not been solely verbal, but real..."

In addition, the resolution states that "the Chinese socialist revolution gave birth, from the beginning, to a workers state..." which, in the context of Germain's document on China, seems to imply that China was a workers state in 1949, four years before capitalist property was nationalized. This theory of Germain's is in conflict with the Marxist theory of the state.

This section of the resolution represents, in my opinion, an implicit, but nevertheless clear, approval of the position of support to the Maoist faction in the Cultural Revolution. Teng Hsiao-ping was a victim of this faction, gagged by the bonapartist grouping; Lin Biao was a leader of the faction; his departure is not to be mourned as a defeat. Maoist ultraleft rhetoric was not "real" radicalism.

Comrades Peng Shu-tse, Joseph Hansen and Les Evans, as well as the authors of the resolution on China submitted by the seven U.S. members, have demonstrated that the Mao faction was not deserving of support in the Cultural Revolution. They, and those who agree with them, including the majority of the SWP, would undoubtedly take issue with the China section of the IEC majority world political resolution.

This section of the resolution thus violates the "Recommendations" unanimously agreed upon. It would be hypocritical for the World Congress to pretend to take no vote on China, but, at the same time, to take such a vote by voting on the IEC majority's line on China in its world political resolution. The "Recommendations" must therefore be set aside, in my opinion, if the resolution is submitted as it stands.

If the resolution is submitted in its present form, it seems to me necessary that the LFP include in its world political resolution a section on China decisively rejecting the line that China was a workers state in 1949-53, that Maoism is not Stalinism, and that it was correct to support the Mao faction in the Cultural Revolution. Otherwise, the LFP will have no position to present at the World Congress on a central question in the

world debate, a question which will be voted upon at the World Congress at the insistence of the IEC majority. We should point out that these questions in dispute are theoretical ones and historical ones and thus need not be voted on; but if they are voted on, we must present our counter-positions.

Some of the other "Recommendations" also seem unrealistic to me. For example, how can we pretend to take no vote on Vietnam when the IEC majority political resolution states that the situation is "a relationship of forces that is improved" since the cease-fire and that there is "dual power from top to bottom in a large part of South Vietnam." (p.6) ? How can we exclude Latin America, Europe, and Vietnam from the internal discussion for the next year when these are the central areas of difference?

Finally, I would like to suggest that the LTF strengthen its organization, in light of developments, including the deepening of differences with the IEC majority, and the threat of the IEC majority to encourage splits by recognizing splitters as "members of the Fourth International." (IIDE, #20, p. 23.) The faction should hold caucus meetings in each country from time to time, publish an internal bulletin, without restrictions on subject matter, and adopt, by majority vote, positions on each question facing the world movement. These measures are all the more necessary in view of the tendency toward a split and in order to prevent such a split.

I am presenting these ideas to you now so that they can be discussed at the SWP convention in Chicago, or during it.

Comradely,

W. C. A.