

14 Charles Lane
New York, NY 10014

November 29, 1978

TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

Attached are several items relating to requests by the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party to participate in the discussion preparing for the 1979 world congress of the Fourth International.

When the bureau of the United Secretariat responds to the October 9 letter from Murry Weiss, copies will be sent to you.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters

Mary Alice Waters
SWP National Office



MAY 15 1978

May 5, 1978

The United Secretariat of
The Fourth International
c/o Pierre Frank
1 Boul. du Temple
75003 Paris
FRANCE

Dear Comrades:

Revolutionary greetings on this 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International! We enclose our first issue of the Discussion Bulletin, March, 1978, published by the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party in the United States of America. The article, "The Portuguese Revolution and the Struggle within the Fourth International," by Murry Weiss, is hereby submitted as a contribution to the world-wide discussion you have initiated in preparation for the Eleventh World Congress. We welcome your warm invitation to all revolutionaries to exchange views with the F.I. on its key document, "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," and we are eager to receive whatever international discussion bulletins are published, to contribute to them, and to send observers to the Congress under the procedural formalities you set forth.

We support your historic work with all our hearts. Long live the Fourth International--the World Party of Socialist Revolution!

Comradely yours,



Myra Tanner Weiss, for
The National Steering Committee
of The Committee for a Revolu-
tionary Socialist Party, USA
P. O. Box 27783
Los Angeles, CA 90027
U.S.A.

(over)

JUN 1 1978

May 25, 1978

Myra Tanner Weiss
National Steering Committee of the
Committee for a Revolutionary Party, USA

Dear Comrade Weiss,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of May 5, 1978, together with an issue of your Discussion Bulletin.

Concerning your request that Comrade Murry Weiss' article, "The Portuguese Revolution and the Struggle Within the Fourth International," be submitted to the discussion preparatory to the next World Congress of the Fourth International: The official International Internal Discussion Bulletin is open to submissions from members of the sections and recognized sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International. Since the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party, USA does not fall into either category, it would be inappropriate to agree to your request. Similar criteria apply to your requests to "receive whatever international discussion bulletins are published, to contribute to them, and to send observers to the Congress . . .," aside from the public discussion of "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." This discussion is being handled through the individual sections and sympathizing organizations concerned.

As you know, reactionary legislation prevents the Socialist Workers Party in the United States from affiliating with the Fourth International. However, the International recognizes the SWP as the sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in the United States. Your position that the SWP is hopelessly degenerated and your goal of building an organization that seeks to destroy the SWP places you in opposition to the Fourth International, and is in contradiction to your statements of support to the FI.

We do not intend to open a discussion with the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party, USA on the nature of the SWP. The intent of Comrade Weiss' article cited above is to open just such a discussion. This is an additional reason for rejecting your request to participate in the upcoming World Congress and its preparation.

Fraternally,

Claudio am)
Claudio, for the United Secretariat Bureau

cc: SWP-USA

Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party
P.O. Box 475 Village Station
New York, New York 10014

October 9, 1978

International Executive
Committee
Fourth International
c/o Pierre Frank
1 Boul. du Temple
75003 Paris, France

Dear Comrades:

We received your letter of May 25, 1978. In response to our request for participation in the discussion in preparation for the 11th Congress of the Fourth International, the public discussion on socialist democracy, and the proceedings of the Congress itself, you have deepened your policy of pursuing an unprincipled bloc with the Socialist Workers Party at the expense of the traditional program, method and principles of Trotskyism.

In addition to having countenanced the expulsion of the International Tendency, you propose now to silence the struggle of C.R.S.P. for a return to principled politics. As Leninists we have no intention whatever of being silenced. We will conduct an ideological struggle for our ideas, as Trotskyists always have, in every section of the Fourth International and with all revolutionary Marxists despite the high-handed ukase of Claudio's letter.

The appended Theses on the Crisis of the Fourth International are hereby presented for the pre-Congress discussion. If the Secretariat attempts to suppress the proposals, criticisms and discussion raised in these theses, we are confident its efforts will not succeed.

The world Trotskyist movement was formed in struggle against bureaucratic monolithism. The attempt of the SWP to extend into the Fourth International its own break with the norms of Leninist democratic centralism must be resolutely resisted.

In struggle,

Murry Weiss

Murry Weiss, for
The First National CRSP Conference
Alderbrook Inn
Union, Washington, U.S.A.

THESES ON THE CRISIS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Contribution to the Pre-World Conference Discussion
from the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist
Party, U.S.A.

The World Congress of the Fourth International needs to address itself to four major problems confronting it that could spell the difference between enormous growth or failure to take any advantage of vast opportunities.

CRSP views these four phenomena as follows:

I. The International must intervene immediately into the explosive, anti-bureaucratic revolt initiated and led by women militants against the entrenched monolithism of the Communist parties, the Socialist parties, and the trade unions.

II. The International must undertake immediately a principled struggle against the Stalinophobia, male chauvinism and centrist deviationism (toward the social democracy) of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

III. The International must take immediate steps to correct the SWP's orientation to the "young white male" leadership of the labor movement, an orientation flowing from a glaringly incorrect and myopic view of the demographics of the working class in the U.S.

IV. The International must cease its trade-off with the SWP which exchanged the dramatic new turn of the SWP to the working class for suppression of the previous valid criticisms of the SWP by the International. The International has sharply reversed its previous condemnation of SWP centrist tendencies and practices and now pretends that this chapter in SWP history never happened.

Women's Liberation and the Struggle for Workers Democracy

The upsurge of the women's liberation struggle sweeping across Europe and England has become the central feature of the deepening struggle between the proletariat and the bureaucracies of the mass workers' parties and trade unions.

The explosive revolutionary character of the autonomous women's movement arises from the depths of centuries of accumulated repression resulting in a burst of consciousness and self-organization.

This seething struggle has brought women into collision with both the Stalinist and Social Democratic bureaucracies and the struggle now intertwines with the crises of these parties throughout Europe.

The widespread mood against the class collaborationist policies of the party tops, in the C.P. and S.P., has raised a common demand for party and trade union democracy. The independent movement of women is becoming more and more a leader and a catalyst in this process.

The current crisis of the Communist Party of France, following the electoral defeat of its people's front policy (Union of the Left) last March, is far deeper than the crises it experienced in 1936, 1945, and 1968 because the party is now in turmoil as never before. On the heels of the 1978 electoral defeat, a mood of critical questioning and outspoken demands for party democracy erupted, stirring the workers in both the factories and the trade unions.

The organization of women's caucuses in the SP and CP, a manifestation of the revolutionary dynamic of feminist revolt, presents the Fourth International with dazzling opportunities for intervention, an intervention which can lead to the historic coalescence of Trotskyism and the proletarian masses.

The activism of the independent women's movement has been so sudden and unexpected in its thrusts against left bureaucrats that the officialdom has not entirely grasped the dimensions of this opposition.

If the ponderous, slow-witted left bureaucracy doesn't fully comprehend the threat to its rule, all the better.

The Trotskyist movement should turn resolutely to these embattled revolutionary women whose actions mark a major shift in the working class.

The International should organize its cadre of Trotskyist women, mobilize its revolutionary will, and intervene in this volcanic movement that could be the long-sought key to working class unity. This army of enraged women workers could topple the bureaucratic tops and undertake the historic task of organizing a mass, popular, armed insurrection that can end capitalist rule.

* * * * *

This historically indicated turn of Trotskyism toward women radicals was anticipated by the creation of women's caucuses in

such sections of the Fourth International as the International Marxist Group (IMG) of England and the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR) in France. The Trotskyist women in these caucuses show a dynamic capacity to relate to the entire women's liberation movement, and they are capable of finding a common road with CP and SP women to combat bureaucracy all over the left.

Women's caucuses in the Fourth International are an advance over the highest forms of revolutionary participation ever attained by oppressed women in either the Second or Third Internationals. Caucuses are an enrichment and strengthening of the Leninist concept of democratic centralism because they broaden the arena for democratic participation in decision-making and also enhance the solidarity, loyalty, and cohesion of the contingents within the party. But caucuses are met with implacable hostility by the Socialist Workers Party regime, which has already declared strong opposition. The revolutionary leadership characteristic of women's autonomous caucuses is a threat to male domination and, therefore, is a continuing issue of struggle that remains to be won in our movement.

* * * * *

France. The women in the French Socialist Party have turned to the women's liberation movement as their main arena of political work--with or without the "permission" of the SP bureaucrats. The women have fused with the representatives of the autonomous women's movement in the factories, trade unions and working class neighborhoods, and a wide array of issues are being raised: equal pay; voice and representation in the factory and neighborhood committees and delegations; abortion; rape; childcare; nurseries; sharing housework between men and women, etc.

An independent women's caucus within the French Socialist Party received 2,000 offers of adherence from party members in June, 1978, and 1,000 women, not in the SP, pledged to join the party as members. Within the French Communist Party, a significant and widespread feminist struggle has begun, with emphasis on the demand for party democracy.

Feminist leaders of the SP have reached out to women in the CP, and CP women, in turn, have built bridges to their sisters. Both forces meet in the overall feminist movement. Decades of hostility and separatism are being overcome in a true united front, a real union of the left.

The bulk of these women radicals, moreover, are lodged deeply in the proletariat. Hence, revolutionary unity of workers in both mass parties and in the trade unions is being ineradicably forged.

The initiative for a bold new rearming and reorientation of the French working class can spring from these radical and autonomous women, especially if they are provided with ideological help and organizational support from Trotskyist women. The Fourth International, by initiating an intensive campaign within the broad feminist movement, can play a vital role in the development of revolutionary consciousness on the entire continent.

Spain, since the death of Franco, is in the midst of a pre-revolutionary situation. An independent mass women's movement has arisen in every organization of oppressed people. Women's Commissions, organized by women, are intrinsic components of the network of Workers' Commissions, organs of incipient dual power in Spain.

The CP bureaucracy has attempted in vain to put the brakes on this development. The CP of Spain, as in France, has attempted to control, curb, and stifle this movement of independent women by adopting the slogan: "We are the party of the women's liberation." But, as Comrade Jacqueline Heinen of the Fourth International has noted, "It is precisely among these women that the first seeds of opposition are developing within the (Communist) party." (Intercontinental Press, January 30, 1978, p. 114.)

Comrade Heinen reports, "The women in the opposition caucus forced the leadership to call a general assembly of women CP members in Madrid last December, to discuss the question of internal democracy and 'the party's orientation toward the independent women's movement.'" And despite the charges of CP leaders, "it was the critical resolution of the minority oppositions that received a majority of votes." (Ibid., p. 115.)

In England an independent socialist feminist movement burst forth in the last two years, engendering numerous periodicals, large conferences, and intensive struggle on all the issues confronting all women. The struggle within the unions for equal pay and representation is a central issue.

Significantly, women of the Communist Party of Britain are intensively active in the independent, socialist feminist movement. They are enraged at entrenched sexism within the party. They have tried to convince their male leaders of the great significance of their struggles, but CP bureaucrats and sexists on every level have complained that the women are neglecting routine party activity and preoccupying themselves with the liberation movement. In truth, the Trotskyist women in the women's caucuses of the IMG and the Socialist Workers Party of England could raise the revolutionary consciousness of the entire working class if their potential to do this were endorsed and encouraged by the 4th International.

* * * * *

All these manifestations of feminist rebellion provide the most promising opening to world Trotskyism for hastening the growth of revolutionary understanding in the working class, for the women spur all the oppressed to resist and overcome the bureaucratic caste that holds in check the will of all workers to struggle against the class enemy.

To take full advantage of these opportunities, the Fourth International must first free itself of two fatal afflictions: Stalinophobia and Sexophobia.

Stalinophobia restricts the viewer from seeing anything but the Stalinist leadership of the mass Communist parties; the Stalinophobe is blinded to the changes and transformations occurring in the proletarian ranks.

Sexophobia, the prejudice of male chauvinism, prevents comrades from appreciating the vast social accomplishments, revolutionary potential, and intrepid leadership of the feminist movement. To underestimate this movement, downgrade it, or sidetrack and smother it is to close the road to the revolutionary-minded workers of both sexes.

For a Principled Struggle against SWP Centrism

The Socialist Workers Party of the United States is dominated by both Stalinophobia and sexism.

The former International Majority Tendency (IMT) of the Fourth International conducted an eight-year, sharp struggle against the systematic Stalinophobic mistakes of the SWP leadership. Its experience was summarized in the "Declaration of the International Majority Tendency" (International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Sept., 1977).

The Declaration charged the SWP (the Leninist-Trotskyist faction) with disparaging worker capacity to struggle against Stalinist bureaucracies. The SWP ridiculed the workers' attempts to break through the limits set by the labor bureaucracy and denied the reality of the incipient dual power inherent in a struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy in Portugal and Spain.

The Declaration further charged the SWP with obstinacy in refusing to recognize the revolutionary character of the heroic struggle in Vietnam led by the Communist Party. However riddled with Stalinist doctrine, the CP fought to overthrow imperialism and capitalist rule, and to establish, however deformed, a workers state.

The Declaration accused the SWP of gross errors and disastrous mistakes in evaluating the Portuguese revolution. The

SWP failed to grasp the role of the Portuguese Socialist Party as the main instrument of the imperialists in the clash of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces; the SWP wound up preferring Soares of the SP to Cunhal of the CP.

The SWP was charged with a third-camp position in the Angolan anti-imperialist war. The SWP failed to recognize that the UNITA-FNLA forces were the transmission belts of imperialist design, and that the MPLA, with Cuban help, fought for liberation of the Angolan people.

The SWP was charged with generally underestimating revolutionary or pre-revolutionary crises.

The Declaration charged the SWP with keeping silent about the ultra-opportunist, blindly Stalinophobic maneuver of the leadership of one Trotskyist group in Spain, a country where a revolutionary crisis is developing. This group went so far as to oppose Workers' Commissions because the Commissions were linked with the CP. The Commissions were criticized for dividing the working class! Social Democratic union bureaucrats were supported on this issue.

The SWP was condemned for its bureaucratic expulsion of the International Tendency (I.T.), the tendency that strongly supported the main positions of the IMT throughout its struggle.

Despite this long and ominous list of SWP errors and its clear bureaucratic deviation from traditional Trotskyism, the former IMT reversed course and accommodated to the SWP's regime, compromising its former principled position. This accommodation was expressed in the following ways:

Despite its basic political agreement with the International Tendency within the SWP, the IMT demanded over and over again that the IT comrades submit to the SWP's monolithic credo or loyal, "non-factional" discipline.

The Socialist Union, now merged with CRSP, refused to continue this disastrous course of submitting unconditionally to the SWP regime. It refused to disarm ideologically which could only demoralize its precious cadres. The Socialist Union comrades rejected IMT assurances of "the generally revolutionary Trotskyist character of the SWP" and the assertion that "the new SWP American perspectives document of more than a year ago signified that the SWP was moving to the left, and that the differences were 'narrowing'" (Socialist Union Information Bulletin, Dec. 7, 1976).

As against the IMT's evaluation of the SWP, the Socialist Union said:

"The test of a 'generally revolutionary' party is its response to revolutionary crises. There have been two

such crises in this period. Portugal and Angola. We trust you will agree that the SWP failed the test on both counts. It acted neither as 'generally revolutionary' nor 'Trotskyist'. This test This test may not be conclusive, but its results should give you pause." (Ibid.)

Insisting that Trotskyists should never abandon their ideological struggle, the Socialist Union comrades used, as an instructive example, the conduct of the Trotskyists as a faction within the CPs in the Thirties.

"We have historical precedent which is very illuminating.

"We refer to the expulsion of the left opposition. Trotsky's conviction, in 1928, that the world revolutionary movement would pass through the Communist International, did not prevent him from striving tirelessly to consolidate an organization, a press, etc. Not only did the opposition not refrain from public criticism of the CI leadership and policies, but openly directed its main recruiting efforts toward the CPs Had Trotsky followed a course similar to yours (the IMT's) there would probably be no Fourth International." (Ibid.)

That is why the Socialist Union in Los Angeles, together with Trotskyists in the Freedom Socialist Party in Seattle, and a group of Trotskyists in New York, including Myra and Murry Weiss, formed the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party. In the CRSP Statement of Purpose, July 1977, we said:

"The building of a U.S. section of the world Trotskyist movement lies ahead of us. The principal responsibility for this tragic situation obviously lies with the leadership of the SWP. We must, however, reluctantly take note of the self-defeating policy of the International Majority Tendency (IMT) of the Fourth International. In the interests of maintaining its worthless relations with the SWP, the IMT contributed to the liquidation of its own supporting tendency in the U.S.--the International Tendency (I.T.) of the SWP. We declare our strong opposition to the opportunistic line of conduct followed by the IMT leadership in relation to the destruction of a sympathizing section of the 4th International in the United States.

"We nevertheless reaffirm our support to the general political line of the 4th International and our commitment to working for a revolutionary program in the U.S. in struggle against the revisionist SWP which

flagrantly suppresses the voice of the International in this country in an organizational expression of its political hostility to the International." (Statement of Purposes, CRSP Discussion Bulletin, No. 1, March, 1978.)

The second manifestation of accommodation to the SWP at the expense of principle was the decision to liquidate the IMT faction in exchange for the fictitious liquidation of the SWP's Leninist-Trotskyist faction. The SWP leadership is itself a monolithic faction maintained by silencing every voice of dissent.

The IMT's Declaration in September 1977 said:

"The differences that have arisen in the Fourth International turn around the analysis of some of the major focuses of the world class struggle. But despite the scope of this discussion, the gravity of the errors of analysis and political positions adopted by the minorities, and the serious theoretical confusion which has been exhibited on some questions, the IMT reaffirms that all components of our International have their place in it, that none of them has degenerated, nor do any base their orientation on a revision of the Trotskyist program." (Internal Discussion Bulletin, Sept., 1977.)

This evaluation of the SWP is totally false and constitutes a grave danger to the International. It is not a question of expulsions or splits. It is a question of a principled struggle.

Our analysis of the degeneration of the SWP is not based solely on its theoretical and political errors; errors can be corrected in a revolutionary movement. But the degeneration of the SWP is to be seen in the fact that the SWP leadership deepened and systematized its errors, turning a deaf ear to criticism by the weightiest forces in the International. It voted 100% against the program of the Fourth International on the disputed issues. Not a single delegate or alternate delegate at its August, 1977 Convention in Oberlin voted in dissent.

Monolithism is a demonstration of a total lack of democratic possibility of dissent. The entire left wing of the SWP has been expelled or cowed into silence. The powerful theoretical and political thrusts of the International made not the slightest dent in this bureaucratic structure. When the SWP suffered a similar sickness of Stalinophobia in 1939, the party, even with the aid of Trotsky, barely won a majority, and today, not one audible voice is heard in defense of Trotskyism.

The IMT declared in its document:

"Tendencies and a faction, with permanent contours, have existed in the International for eight years now. This

is an abnormal situation in a democratic organization like ours. It is time to return to a mode of functioning more in conformity with the traditions of Bolshevism."

What traditions of Bolshevism could the IMT be referring to? Bolshevism meant an implacable struggle against Menshevism from 1903 right up to 1917--14 years! The Bolshevik faction itself was almost split when its own right wing moved to fuse with the Mensheviks in support of the Provisional Government of February 1917. When Lenin arrived in April he defeated the right-wing Bolsheviks in a vigorous struggle fought with the aid of the workers in the Vyborg district of Petrograd. Lenin would never have hesitated to split from the Bolshevik right wing with the revolution at stake.

Today the SWP makes a mockery of all the basic programmatic traditions of world Trotskyism. The struggle of its expelled left wing is based on Leninist considerations of principle and the need to construct a viable, democratic, and revolutionary expression of world Trotskyism in the United States, the heart of the imperialist enemy.

To dissolve the IMT, the organizational expression of principled struggle against the appalling line of the SWP, is to abandon Leninist methodology.

The Opportunism of the SWP in the United States

The opportunism of the SWP has been easily and clearly grasped by the International on the world scene. The opportunism of the SWP in the United States must also be understood.

There is a danger for the International in its sweetheart agreement with the SWP on the "turn" to the proletariat and the trade unions.

Jack Barnes, SWP National Secretary, hailed this unity in the following terms:

"If this orientation [proletarianization] is adopted by the upcoming World Congress of the Fourth International, for the first time in more than a decade we will all be heading in the same direction as a united world party with a commonly held program and strategy."

We must warn the International that proletarianization of the Fourth International in Europe, Asia, or Latin America is one thing; but the SWP's ballyhooed stage entrance into the labor movement is quite another.

The SWP, with its Stalinophobia and male chauvinism, is steeped in opportunism. Its programmatic errors in Portugal and Angola brought it perilously close to the politics of the U.S. labor bureaucracy. And to the extent that the SWP already has forces in the union movement, it tends to link itself with the labor bureaucracy and to pursue a struggle against the militants and the left wing. The opportunism of the SWP in the working class has been most evident in the following situations:

1. In the feminist movement, the SWP moves with the bureaucratic tops in the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and the National Organization of Women (NOW), even when its support is unwelcomed.
2. In the coal miners' strike, the SWP obscured the sell-out role of the union bureaucracy.
3. At the University of Washington, the SWP joined the bureaucracy in collision with the strikers on campus.
4. The SWP voted for the New York contract signed by the International Typographical Union, which solved the problem of unemployed workers at the expense of the employed, and completely locked out the youth from the benefits won at the bargaining table.
5. The SWP violates its own rich tradition of struggle against fascist outbreaks with united labor forces when it now identifies itself with the civil libertarian position of defense of the "rights" of fascists.

Furthermore, the SWP poses its "proletarianization" course as an alternative to work in the feminist and Black movements.

At the SWP National Committee meeting in February, 1978, Jack Barnes said:

"We had to go through the experience of seeing what it means to have more Blacks, more Chicanos, more Puerto Ricans, more females, and more young workers in industry and the unions. We had to see in real life how the attitudes, the reactions, the combativity . . . began to manifest themselves.

"We were able to confirm that we are not going to see the development of some sort of nonwhite or nonmale vanguard. We saw literally hundreds of thousands of young workers come forward and get involved in this or that struggle. Probably the majority of them were young white male workers." (Our emphasis.)

This awkward phrasing really means that the SWP envisions young white males as the proletarian leadership, while women and

minorities are consigned to the rearguard. Of course, this is absurd. There is no "probable" majority of young white males getting "involved" in "this or that". What there is is a majority of Blacks, women, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asians in the vanguard of the work force. And add to this historic new reality the wide sector of a group never mentioned by the SWP in relation to mass struggles--lesbians and gay men--and a clear picture emerges of the real vanguard. But the SWP has turned its back on this leading force of rebels and multiply-oppressed workers.

The SWP's program for proletarianization and that of the International are diametrically opposed. This must be frankly recognized.

* * * * *

In a letter to Farrell Dobbs, Comrade Trotsky expressed what is still relevant today for the struggle against the SWP leadership:

"The homogeneity and cohesion of a revolutionary propaganda organization such as the SWP must be incomparably greater than that of a mass party. I agree with you that under such conditions the Fourth International should and could not admit a purely fictitious unity under the cover of which two independent organizations address the external world with different theories, different programs, different slogans and different organizational principles." (In Defense of Marxism, p. 161.)

This is not the time for an unprincipled truce. It is time to intensify the struggle against the opportunism, Stalinophobia, sexism, and the monolithism of the SWP.

The "unity" of the Fourth International and the SWP is fictitious, unprincipled, and fraught with disaster for world Trotskyism. It is time for the International to halt the dangerous course which has accelerated from a scratch to the danger of gangrene.

Passed with a standing ovation at the First Annual CRSP Conference at Alderbrook Inn, Union, Washington, October 9, 1978.