

XS PC

DEC 8 1976

Paris  
December 3, 1976

New York

Dear Caroline,

Enclosed is a letter from Mikado and a quick translation I did ( it needs checking in a couple of places), along with my reply to him. I think it would be a good idea to share this correspondence with the others over here. What do you think?

Please take up the relevant points with the comrades at IP and the speakers bureau. Mikado's letter convinces me even more that we should do everything we can to set up a tour for Lea Tsemel in January if possible, with time allotted for her to attend the plenum. Even aside from this, I'm sure the tour would be a success in itself. (She speaks English well, by the way, so there would be no ~~no~~ need to arrange translation.) But if a tour's to be done, it must be arranged quickly.

I already told Lea about my conversation with Solange, so it may not be necessary to write a letter. If you still want to send a letter, then it should be edited a bit. Enclosed are my suggestions.

Regards,

*Gus*  
Gus

--- Translation ---

letter from Mikado of the Israeli Revolutionary  
Communist League

Jerusalem  
November 4, 1976

Dear Gus,

Lea just got back from Europe and gave me the news from you. I've been thinking of writing you for a long time now, but unfortunately I wasn't able to find the time. I did receive your letter of June 16. Please excuse me for not having confirmed receipt of it.

As for Lea's trip to North America, we have not had confirmation from the AAUG. So the question is posed of whether such a tour would be financially possible, independently of the AAUG. If so, we think it would be both possible and worthwhile for our movement in the region and in North America to organize such a tour. There is no need to add that it could also be useful for the Palestinian movement as a whole.

I hope that, in the framework of the International Arab Commission, you were able to receive a rather detailed report of our activities and our development. Without wanting to be too optimistic, or, as the French comrades say, triumphalistic, I think that we have come out of the crisis we were in two years ago, and that the organization is developing today on a clearer and healthier organizational -- and programmatic -- basis. We are now located in 8 areas (cells or groups of close sympathizers), numbering around sixty people, though, of course, not all are members of the RCL. We are beginning to become not just a programmatic, but an organizational reality among the Palestinian population, and we even have a small presence in the territories occupied in 1967. The violent attacks of the CP against the RCL, ever since the Day of the Land, reflect <sup>(both</sup> this development and the disarray of the CP in face of the emergence of an alternative to the left -- particularly at a time when the CP is accentuating its rightist evolution still further (the theses for its forthcoming congress speak, for the first time, of the recognition ~~of the state of Israel as a Jewish state and as the expression of the national rights of the Jews.)~~ of the state of Israel as a Jewish state and as the expression of the national rights of the Jews.)

So it is easy to understand our impact: a period of radicalization among the Palestinian population and a rightist evolution of the party that has had hegemony in that population opens up all kinds of opportunities and radical alternatives, whether they be nationalists (this current is developing, and we have relations of collaboration/debate with it) or revolutionary Marxists.

The radicalization is less deep, less real, within the Jewish population, but the very serious attacks against the purchasing power of the workers gives reason

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to think that very important struggles are to be expected and prepared for. At the present time, these struggles are beginning to develop, but they are isolated from one another, and thus ~~more~~ easily broken. Here too, we have a consistent intervention for the first time, and have a small periphery of Jewish workers -- though we have no illusions about our capacity to play a leadership role today, even over the vanguard workers.

All this was at the center of the discussion at our last congress [~~September~~<sup>October</sup>, 1976 -- tr.]. A general political resolution analyzed the crisis of the Zionist state since the October war, and the consequences for the Revolutionary Marxists. A second resolution drew the organizational consequences from the first. What is worthwhile to note is that the latest developments of the organization and the perspectives that flow from this forced us to make a critical review of our past tactics, which were very much marked by propagandism and a refusal to deal with the construction of movements of a mass character. It was this that was the main axis of the congress document, which affirms the ~~the~~ necessity of building or participating actively in such movements (the women's movement, ~~the~~ setting up of solidarity committees with the Argentine political prisoners, village committees, etc.).

The third document of our congress dealt with "Revolutionary Communists and the Palestinian Resistance." It is a very important document from the programmatic point of view: it lays down the principled positions and the political and organizational links between the Revolutionary Marxists and the different components of the Palestinian Resistance. If from the general point of view we merely recapitulated the traditional positions of the RCL and the Fourth International, it is nevertheless to be noted that certain ambiguities which existed in the past have disappeared (the notion of the liberation of Palestine, the unconditional support to the Resistance, the problem of national rights of the Jewish minority). It seems to me, personally, that some of the SWP's criticisms of our position may have been met.

In addition to the discussion, the congress adopted a resolution of solidarity with the victims of repression in Argentina, with Paez and Apaza, and with the political prisoners in the Zionist prisons.

By its content as well as its mood -- and its binational composition -- this congress ~~was~~ registered some of the important gains made by the organization. There will be a special congress, two months before the world congress, to take up international problems.

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Armed with the resolutions of our fourth congress, we are launching an offensive against the CP. Through a policy of united action, with action committees based in [check tr.] the Palestinian population, we want to create a favorable relationship of forces, which could, perhaps, be translated onto the electoral arena as well. As far as the other left organizations are concerned, we have little "competition": relations with the comrades of the ISO [Israeli Socialist Organization, the new left and anarchist remnants of the old Matzpen -- tr.] are relatively good, and an ongoing collaboration exists at the leadership level and in day-to-day work. Siah [a new left group --tr.] and the RCA [Revolutionary Communist Alliance, Maoist -- tr.] have dissolved. As to the Vanguard group [OCRFI -- tr.], after some success among Arab students, due above all to the crisis we ourselves were undergoing, they are today in a real decline, and we hardly ever run across them in our political activity in either the Jewish or Arab sectors. This decline is due, on the one hand, to their rightist ~~we~~ positions covered up by ultra-left and sectarian language, and, on the other hand, to their violent methods against the other components of the left. We know, in other respects, that there is an important debate going on in this organization, and that many members have quit recently.

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Barry →  
Nat →  
This letter sat on my desk for several days. In the meantime, I received your letter. I'm going to try to see what's up with Maria Joffe. When they are ready, I'll send you the ~~we~~ documents of the congress which will be brought out in a special issue of International, our theoretical review. If IP could publish extracts, that would be good. But it seems as if IP is ignoring us, given the small amount of material published this year. We, by contrast, have published a lot, including from IP...On the same subject, there were letters from Israel published in the last IP and the ~~we~~ last Militant. We would be interested in getting in touch with these correspondents.

The last point that I'd like to raise -- too briefly, unfortunately -- is the situation inside the FI. Aside from the IIB and the accounts of United Secretariat meetings, we have had no general report. Nevertheless, these documents are enough to cause us serious concern over the incomprehensible attitude of the SWP.

It seems to me that the SWP has decided to break all international discipline and not to respect the explicit resolutions of the international leadership. It even seems



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that this ~~issue~~ has become a position of principle concerning the very notion of democratic centralism on an international scale. If that is the case, it would be a grave rupture with the programmatic bases of our movement. Speaking frankly, I do not comprehend such an attitude on the part of the SWP, at the very moment when the international majority is modifying some of its overly "leftist" positions, and a new homogenization of the international seems like it might be possible.

In this sense, the international report of the last congress of the SWP, and the general attitude [ ambience? --tr.] towards the international, if one can judge from the IB's received here, have a dangerous ~~is~~ dynamic which leads -- consciously or not -- to a break -- which would also be a break with the programmatic past of the SWP; that's the way it seems to me. I would like to hear your ~~own~~ opinion of this question.

O.K. That's it. I hope to hear from you soon.

Fraternal regards,

s/Mikado

Paris  
December 2, 1976

Jerusalem

Dear Michel,

Your letter of November 4 arrived several days ago. I was very pleased to get such a complete report of what is happening in Israel -- and especially to hear of the real progress you are making. I also saw your letter of October 20 to the Arab Commission. Everyone is anxiously awaiting the documents of your congress. Will you send a French or English translation? If not, we will try to arrange at least a partial translation or summary from here.

After talking to Lea last month, I contacted the comrades in New York about the possibility of a tour arrangement with the AAUG. Now that that seems unlikely, I'll check again to see if we can arrange something ourselves. I hope it can work out.

I'll also get in touch with IP and the Militant to see if they have the addresses for the people who wrote the letters. I don't know why IP hasn't published more of your material. Perhaps there are difficulties in arranging translations. There was only one person (not an SWPer) available to translate, and this was on a volunteer basis, several months ago. I just noticed though, that there was something in the November 29 issue. In any case, articles in French or English, sent directly to IP, are much more likely to be published. By the way, it sounds from your report that an interesting article could be written on the evolution of the CP. 8

You did not mention whether your earlier plans to publish a pamphlet with Dave Frankel's article on Jews in the USSR was ever ~~xxx~~ realized. If so, please send a copy. (If it is not yet published, but you still plan to do so, remember the small factual correction in IP, page 639, April 19, 1976 issue.)

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On the points you raised concerning the situation in the Fourth International. From the context of your letter it seems like you have received SWP IIB no. 9, 1976, with the United Secretariat motions and the reply of the SWP PC concerning the invitations to the 1976 SWP convention. If not, let me know and I'll send it to you. Also, SWP IIB no. 10 contains the minutes of the SWP convention. Since then, important decisions have been made at the October and November United Secretariat meetings. You should have the October

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minuted by now. The November minutes will be available soon. Additional documentation will also be available soon in the IIDB. All of this should give you a better idea of the overall situation.

I disagree with your view that the SWP rejects the principle of democratic centralism on an international scale. In my opinion, there were two issues involved in the case of the invitations to the SWP convention.

1. The correctness of the United Secretariat issuing instructions on invitations to the national conventions of national parties. This question was first posed with regard to the December, 1975 convention of the ISA/ISO, the Canadian section. You can see in the SWP PC statement (IIB, no. 9, page 13) that we were against the instructions that the United Secretariat voted to send at that time. What was involved here was not the general principle of democratic centralism, but the specific case.

As for the SWP convention, the reasoning behind our view was explained more fully in the report by Jack Barnes, adopted by the convention. I won't go into that now, since the report will be published soon in the IIDB. The actual motion adopted at the SWP convention was published in SWP IIB, no. 10, page 9. This motion reads:

"To reject the instructions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to rescind the invitation to the OCRFI to send an observer to the open sessions of the Twenty-Eighth National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party."

Here, too, what was involved was a specific case.

2. The SWP PC statement, and the report by Jack Barnes, centered on the merits of the issue: that is, whether it was justifiable to invite the OCRFI to attend the open sessions of the convention, based on the past history of the OCRFI request for discussions with the United Secretariat, and the subsequent developments.

This is the key question that must be answered. If you believe that the invitation was not justified on the merits, then of course you would agree that it should have been rescinded. But if you agree that the invitation was justified, what would you say about the instruction? And what would you have done under similar circumstances?

At the October United Secretariat meeting, a positive step forward was taken in the discussion of this fundamental question: how to respond to the OCRFI request for discussion? Unanimous agreement was reached, in the presence of leaders of all the main international currents in the Fourth International. This was a key

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step not only towards x resolving this important question, but in helping establish a spirit x that could help lead to a reduction in frictions of a factional nature. (It's no secret that the differences over how to respond to the OCRFI have exacerbated things.)

The reason that such a spirit prevailed at the October meeting, in my opinion, was that the United Secretariat took x decisions, including on the question of the OCRFI, that were objective, non-sectarian, and non-factional.

Since that time, however, serious differences emerged again at the November meeting over how to evaluate the OCRFI response to the statement asked of them by the United Secretariat. (You should be getting the minutes of the meeting soon.) The position adopted by majority vote in November was completely indefensible, in my opinion, just the opposite of the October decision. So that creates a big problem. But there is still a possibility that this problem will be resolved. At least I hope it will be at the December meeting.

In other respects, there has been progress towards collaboration at the center, and this was reported to the November United Secretariat meeting. There are some common activities, a little more exchange of information, agreements have been reached on the handling of some of the practical problems, and, on some points of political discussion there has been an exchange of opinion crossing factional lines. Some of the new documents being submitted to the international discussion will be submitted in the names of individuals, rather than tendencies or factions, to try and encourage a more open exchange of views.

Of course, this development is just a few weeks old, and at the very beginning stages. But if things should continue along these lines, then we will be taking big steps towards a goal that I hope all of us support: the dissolution of the structured tendencies x and factions in favor of looser ideological formations. That would really be a big step forward for the international as a whole. And it would help the process of achieving clarity in the political debates.

Best regards,

Gus Horowitz