

873 Broadway
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New York, N. Y. 10003
Nov. 30, 1970

TO ALL COMRADES

Dear Comrades:

THE COCHRAN FIGHT ON TAPE: Speeches by Al Hansen and James P. Cannon

The National Tape Service of the SWP is now making available a series of three educationals by Al Hansen and eight speeches by James P. Cannon from the 1953 Cochran fight. The set is available for 2- and 4-track machines at standard $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips speed. The 4-track set is on 3 reels, 2-track is on 5 reels. The cost is: 4-track, \$12.00; 2-track, \$20.00. Partial orders will be handled by special request.

The first tape in the series consists of three talks by Al Hansen, given in New York in 1969. These provide an indispensable background for the balance of the series, which consists of speeches by Cannon from the Cochran fight itself. Hansen sets the social and political context in which the fight broke out and developed, and gives a step-by-step analysis of the fight, the challenges to the party made by the Cochranites, and the party's response to them.

The factional struggle inside the SWP, initiated by the Cochran faction, was one of the most serious challenges to the party's revolutionary perspective in its history. It ranks beside the better-known Schactman-Burnham split just prior to World War II. The Cochranites challenged the very necessity to have an American revolutionary party and the revolutionary perspective of the SWP.

The factional alignments, which were developing in 1952, finally broke out in the open in January 1953 and James P. Cannon entered the fray four months later in April, 1953. Internal Bulletin Vol. XV No. 12, containing twenty letters to various leading comrades written over the previous year was issued. Then, in May, 1953, he came to New York from Los Angeles and participated in the formation of the Majority Caucus, a debate with Mike Bartell (who was organizer at that time in New York City), and then the May Plenum of the National Committee.

A truce agreement was reached at the May Plenum, but was short-lived, and by June the internal conflict was in the open again. When the Cochranites boycotted the 25th Anniversary celebration of the party, they were suspended and their expulsion ratified by the November 1953 Plenum.

The speeches in this tape series are a fine review of the party's history, its procedures, and its policies. They offer an unusual insight of the flavor and meaning of such intense political disputes.

Two final points. First, this tape series should be listened to in conjunction with reading Defending the Revolutionary Party and Its Perspectives, which contains speeches and documents of the Cochran fight. It is available from the National Education Department of the SWP for 50¢.

Secondly, those comrades who have worked with and around Comrade Cannon are aware of his rare oratorical skill and ability. A finished and adept orator, he is and was widely known throughout the radical and labor movements as not only an experienced political leader, but one of the finest speakers and debaters in the American labor movement.

These lectures and speeches by Al Hansen and James P. Cannon provide a unique opportunity for young revolutionists to gain insight into one of the most important political battles in the history of the SWP.

THE COCHRAN FIGHT: Speeches by Al Hansen and James P. Cannon

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THE COCHRAN FIGHT ON TAPE: Speeches by Al Hansen and James P. Cannon

4-Track Copy

Reel # 1.

Three lectures by Al Hansen which detail the social forces at work, the methods and final evolution of the Cochranites. Listening to this tape first will greatly enhance one's appreciation of Cannon's contribution. Al Hansen gave these talks in New York in July, 1969.

Reel # 2, tracks 1 and 4 (about 3 hours)

"Some Facts about Party History -- And the Reasons for its Falsification." This is Cannon's speeches at the Cannon-Bartell debate, May 24, 1953, including the rebuttal and Summary. Previously available as Chicago tape library #'s 208, 209, 210. Published in part in the Internal Bulletin, Vol. XV, No. 19.

Reel # 2 track 3 (about 1½ hours)

"Internationalism and the SWP" Delivered at a meeting of the Majority Caucus in New York City on May 18, 1953. This speech was not previously available on tape (the technical quality of the tape is poor) but was published in Defending the Revolutionary Party and Its Perspectives.

Reel # 2, track 2 (about 1½ hours)

"Report to the May Plenum" This speech, which is not quite complete, has not been available either on tape or in print.

Reel # 3, track 1

"Concluding Speech at the May Plenum" Dated May 30, 1953. Previously not available on tape but published in the Internal Bulletin Vol. XV, No. 16. Also, "Introduction to the International Report" Given to the Majority Caucus meeting on November 2, 1953. This speech was previously available as Chicago tape library #41, but not in print.

Reel # 3, track 4

"Summary of the Discussion at the Majority Caucus" November 2, 1953. Also on the Chicago tape library #41, not in print. Also, "Factional Struggle and Party Leadership." Delivered at the November Plenum in New York. Previously available as Chicago tape Library #'s 211, 212. Published in the Internal Bulletin, Vol. XV, No. 16, and later reprinted in Defending the Revolutionary Party and Its Perspectives.