

C O P Y

TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE PLENUM, January 29, 30, 31, 1965

Dear Comrades:

On July 11, 1964, I submitted to the Political Committee, on behalf of Comrade Liang and myself, a statement containing some observations on the open split in the international Trotskyist organization. The views expressed in the statement may not have pleased all the comrades, but nobody can deny the extraordinary seriousness of an open split in the leading body of the international movement. A development of such grave consequences should warrant a thorough discussion and analysis of all the questions involved, by the leadership of our party.

In fact, a leadership that is aware of its responsibility must make an attempt to clarify questions concerning the political weakness that leads to a division into contradictory positions; to clarify the perspectives of the movement in view of the split and, above all, make a thorough examination of the issues involved in the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute, around which the split occurred.

Such an approach would be in harmony with our tradition. We were always sensitive to developments in the international movement; these became subjects of serious discussion and we attempted to learn from their lessons. But the tradition is now being negated; the party leadership made no analysis of the present split; it had not one word to say about this to the members.

On the Ceylonese situation, Comrade Dobbs made a report to the P.C. (Minutes July 10, 1964) in which he declared: "Healy tries to make it appear that reunified movement is disintegrating through series of splits; Fundamental process just the opposite. Viable cadres are sloughing off sectarian abstentionists and adventurers of the Healy and Posados variety; also revisionists and capitulators of whom Pablo and Perera represent different kinds, each moving away from Trotskyist fundamentals in his own peculiar fashion." etc.

The characterizations of abstentionists, adventurers, revisionists and capitulators may or may not be the scientifically most exact, or the most appropriate. But to assert that fundamental process of world movement is just the opposite to that of a continued series of splits is so much wishful thinking. It explains absolutely nothing; and is not the way to treat a grave development

which, in fact, had led to a deep-going fragmentation of the movement. This is a fact that a responsible leadership should face soberly, discuss carefully and thoroughly, draw the proper lessons and use the lessons learned to help in the Marxist education of the membership.

However, an opposite course is now being followed. The statement I submitted on behalf of Comrade Liang and myself, was not even presented to the party leadership. In its place appeared the summary version by Comrade Dobbs -- his version -- which was neither an adequate nor an accurate presentation of our observations. This action has introduced in our party an exceedingly dangerous practice. The views of some members of the leadership are deliberately withheld from other members. The other members are denied the democratic right to know what these views are. For this practice there are historical precedents, of course. But these are the kind of precedents that we Trotskyists have always fought against; and we must continue to fight against them.

The charge in the Secretariat motions (P.C. minutes of Aug. 14 and Sept. 11, 1964) of irresponsibility of submitting our statement for discussion during the time of the Party's presidential campaign cannot be taken seriously. A delay of the time of discussion would easily take care of the matter. On a previous occasion Comrade Liang and I readily agreed, upon request, to forego consideration for a time of a resolution we had jointly submitted.

The Secretariat motion also asserted that our statement presented nothing new on the Chinese question. But that is entirely irrelevant. Our statement was concerned with the split in the international movement and as we all know, the split arose out of problems of attitude to the Sino-Soviet dispute. Referring to decisions made at our last convention begs the question; the split has taken place since then. Calling the statement a rehash of old arguments for "unconditional support of the Mao regime" and "revision of basic Trotskyist principles," as further contained in the Secretariat motions is pure deception, serving to divert attention from the split in the international movement; and to divert attention from the issues involved in the split. It is a kind of practice that has nothing in common with the honest, free and open interchange of views that is necessary within the leadership of a revolutionary party. Free and open discussion of conflicting views that unavoidably arise as a result of pressure from conflicting class forces, is a fundamental prerequisite for our party leadership. Without it party life comes to an end.

This practice has been repeated in regard to some observations concerning the Khrushchev downfall that I submitted to the Political Committee on Dec. 10, 1964. In order to make it appear that my observations had reference merely to the Chinese question, and use this as excuse for an arbitrary rejection, only one small paragraph of my statement is made known to PC and NC members. The truth is that my observations were concerned predominantly with changes in the Soviet Union, changes in Kremlin foreign policy, and a discussion of these questions as related to the political revolution. This is also being withheld from the knowledge of the party leadership.

The most cursory reading of the statement I submitted will make patently clear that all I had in mind was to introduce for discussion in the party leadership -- not in the party branches -- some observations on an exceptionally important world development, and not to reopen any question administratively considered taboo. Obviously the important issues involved in the Khrushchev downfall were not settled at our last convention.

Why this inordinate fear of discussion in the party leadership? How can a leadership of a revolutionary party live up to its responsibility without being prepared at all times to take note of important developments, to discuss them, analyze their fundamental content and attempt to explain them? Should it not welcome the opportunity within its own ranks of constant exchanges of opinions, with all viewpoints to be considered, and all voices to be heard?

The Militant of November 23, 1964, carried an editorial declaration pertinent to questions such as these. Said the editorial:

"There are many vital and serious questions facing the world revolutionary movement which should be fully discussed everywhere. The Sino-Soviet dispute raised some of these problems -- the question of proletarian internationalism, 'peaceful co-existence,' Stalinism or de-Stalinization, economic inequalities in the USSR, and so on. This discussion was an is all to the good, and should be developed and deepened. It should include the viewpoint of all tendencies, including the Trotskyists. The solution of these momentous questions is essential for getting the world working-class movement back on the correct road."

This declaration is very much in order; however, judging by present practices, this would seem to be intended only for the other fellows. I still prefer to believe that what seems is not

real. I prefer to believe that this declaration holds good also for the party. With this in mind I submit, together with this letter, the previously disputed statements on the split in the international movement and on the Khrushchev downfall directly to the National Committee Plenum.

Comradely yours,

s/ Arne Swabeck

January 12, 1965