

New York, New York
November 22, 1967

FOR NC INFORMATION:

DOBBS-HEDLUND CORRESPONDENCE

February 25, 1966

C. R. Hedlund
Minneapolis

Dear Comrade CR:

When I was in Minneapolis during a recent tour you gave me some written questions on which you asked my comments. Although it was understood between us that my reply would have to be delayed it has taken longer than I had hoped would be the case. For your convenience in referring back to the questions after this delay I am quoting them in full and adding my remarks after each one.

"1. Is a political revolution necessary in every country which is now known as a workers state?"

In discussing this question I will start from our basic position that socialism and democracy are inseparable. We insist that there must be workers democracy in the trade unions, in the workers political parties and in the workers states. Wherever there has been bureaucratic usurpation of the workers democratic control over their affairs, the dictatorial bureaucrats must be dethroned and replaced by the democratic rule of the workers themselves. As you can well testify from your own career as a worker militant, we have fought uncompromisingly against the bureaucratic officials who perch like vultures on top of the American trade unions. As you can further testify from the pages of your own rich personal history, we have also fought uncompromisingly against Stalinist usurpation of workers democracy within the revolutionary movement and against the bureaucratic rule imposed by Stalinism over the Soviet Union and other workers states.

We have rejected any notion that a privileged bureaucratic caste in a workers state would voluntarily reform itself out of existence. If bureaucratic oppression could be peacefully eliminated through constitutional means that would be preferable, but the bureaucrats close off that road and leave the workers no alternative but to fight for their rights. For that reason we have consistently held that bureaucratic rule will be abolished in the workers states only when the workers themselves carry out an organized struggle to smash the bureaucratic regime and establish workers democracy. This necessary action by the workers we have termed a political revolution since it does not involve a basic social change and envisages only the establishment of workers democracy on the basis of existing Soviet property forms.

With this brief review of the basic criteria involved, I come now to the question of its application to existing workers states. In the Soviet Union the bureaucratic degeneration under Stalinism has yet to be overcome. What is termed "de-Stalinization" in that country represents only limited concessions by the ruling caste to appease growing mass opposition to bureaucratic rule. The decisive feature of Soviet rule remains the bureaucratic repression of workers democracy and the need for political revolution retains full force and effect.

The workers states established in Eastern Europe and Asia came into being under Stalinist domination and consequently have had bureaucratic deformations engrafted upon them from the outset. As in the case of the Soviet Union, the decisive feature of political rule in these countries remains the bureaucratic repression of workers democracy. Objective testimony to this effect was given through the workers uprisings in East Germany, Poland and Hungary which were brutally suppressed by the Stalinist bureaucrats. We supported these uprisings, recognizing them as revolutionary attempts by the workers to establish their democratic rule on the basis of existing Soviet property forms. On the above basis we point out the need for political revolution in the workers states of Eastern Europe and Asia.

In the case of Cuba, which represents a workers state coming into being under exceptional conditions, we see the question of political forms as a matter still in flux and yet to be settled. It is significant to note that the Cuban revolution was carried out by a leadership that arose outside the school of Stalinism. Conscious anti-bureaucratic tendencies have been manifested within that leadership and a certain degree of workers democracy has been evident in the country. On the other hand, there are disturbing signs such as Castro's unprincipled attack on Trotskyism at the recent Havana conference. It is not yet clear whether Castro's action signals a degenerative process within the Cuban regime or an episodic deviation from revolutionary principles which may be corrected. For the moment it seems best to reserve judgment about our policy toward the Cuban regime until we have a clearer picture of what is happening within it. From the time Cuba became a workers state up to the present we have seen no necessity to raise the question of a political revolution in that country.

"2. If such a revolution is necessary, and it doesn't take place, what is our party's position towards such a country?"

On this point it should help to recall Comrade Trotsky's generalization that we must know how to fight Stalinism without capitulating to imperialism and how to fight imperialism without capitulating to Stalinism. In that respect we subordinate the question of political revolution to unconditional defense of the workers states against imperialism. Put the other way around, we defend the workers states against imperialism despite the existence of bureaucratic despotism within the countries involved. As in the case of our trade union policy, our first

concern in every instance is to defend workers institutions against capitalist attack. Corrective measures needed within any sphere of the labor movement are matters to be handled by the workers themselves entirely free from any capitalist intervention.

In another sense, our support to the colonial revolution -- apart from the questions of principle directly involved in that sphere of the world revolution -- helps to strengthen the workers states against imperialism. That in turn improves the prospects for political revolution against bureaucratic misrule within the workers states. Just as we do, the workers themselves within the workers states tend to subordinate the fight against the dictatorial bureaucracy to defense of their country against imperialist attack. But the stronger the intensity of the colonial revolution, the more favorable is the situation for the workers states. Imperialism has to fight on an increasing number of fronts and is less able to concentrate on direct military threats against the workers states. In this respect further impulses are given to the objective processes of political revolution to establish workers democracy.

The most direct form of our defense of the workers states, and of our support to the colonial revolution as well, is our own revolutionary struggle against imperialism right here in the United States. This support flows from both our intransigent opposition to the foreign policy of the imperialist ruling class and our uncompromising fight against capitalism here at home. We strive ceaselessly to promote the overturn of American capitalism which, when it comes, will mark the decisive turning point in the whole world revolution. With a revolutionary triumph in this country, decadent capitalism will swiftly disappear from the globe, any remaining dictatorial usurpers of workers democracy will fall like ten-pins, and all mankind will march forward into an enlightened communist era.

"3. 'The building of an alternative leadership of the working class; i.e., of new revolutionary mass parties, remains the central task of our epoch.' (Dynamics of World Revolution Today). 4. According to the above, is it our party's position that new parties must be built in line with our political specification in every country where such a party does not now exist?"

With the founding of the Fourth International in 1938 under Comrade Trotsky's leadership our movement put forward the proposition that the central problem of the epoch is a crisis of revolutionary leadership; i.e., the need to build genuine revolutionary parties throughout the world. Only under the leadership of such parties can capitalism be overturned in the imperialist countries, revolutionary victory achieved in the colonial countries, and bureaucratic rule abolished in the workers states. It is this basic proposition that is restated in contemporary terms in the quotation you cite from "Dynamics of World Revolution Today."

As I see it, that means creating genuine revolutionary parties as an alternative leadership to the present decadent formations stemming from the bankrupt Second and Third Internationals. We counterpose Leninist-type parties to the Social Democratic parties and the Stalinist political formations, of whatever shade, that mislead the masses and retard the development of the world revolution. By a Leninist-type party we mean a party that holds firmly to revolutionary principles, nationally and internationally, a party that combines full internal democracy with unity in action as a combat force. Only parties of that kind, acting in principled international cooperation, can lead the world working class to revolutionary victory.

We do not say that the embryo forms of such parties, as they have presently been created by our movement, will necessarily represent the final organizational form of the triumphant revolutionary leadership. We leave open the possibilities of fusions and regroupments with other formations that may come to basic programmatic agreement with us. We insist only that, whatever the process through which the revolutionary party takes organizational form, it must be a Leninist-type party firmly based on the Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist principles for which we stand.

"5. Does it seem plausible that the Chinese people can be induced to overthrow its present leadership which is the same that led the Chinese masses to a victorious socialist revolution only 16 years ago?"

Under the Mao regime the Chinese workers are denied democratic control over their unions and other mass formations, over their political organizations, and over the administration of the state and the planned economy. In every sphere the institutions of the workers state of China are subjected to dictatorial bureaucratic control. Strictures are imposed upon freedom of thought, expression and association among loyal revolutionists. Leninist norms are violated concerning the democratic rights of loyal minorities. The Chinese regime has denounced the Moscow bureaucrats for their limited "de-Stalinization" concessions to the Soviet masses, and it has sought to create a cult of Mao cast in the hated image of the cult of Stalin.

I believe that the Chinese workers must and will demand the abolition of all such bureaucratic strictures and repressions. Revolutionary necessity will compel them to seize every opportunity to fight for the establishment of their full democratic control over all the institutions of their workers state. Therefore I believe that the Chinese workers will have to carry through the essence of what we term a political revolution to replace the Mao bureaucracy with a democratic workers regime.

"6. It is hard to figure out how a political party can be built in this country that fulfills the need of the American workers in their struggles that lie ahead, under, and with, the present political program and policy of the SWP."

This question seems to embrace two interrelated factors: does our program fit the needs of the American revolution; and can we expect the workers to adopt our program and fight to put it into effect? On the first of these aspects, our program stands firmly on the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism-Trotskyism. In every respect it presents under modern conditions an uncompromising class struggle approach to the perspective of proletarian revolution to abolish capitalism and establish a socialist America. With no deviations whatever from revolutionary principles, our program puts forward a transitional approach designed to bridge the gap between the present consciousness of the masses and the level of consciousness required to meet our revolutionary objectives.

To mention a few concrete examples: we oppose imperialist war and defend the colonial revolution and workers states. We support the democratic demands of the Negro people and defend civil liberties for all, pointing out at the same time that these objectives, like all the basic aspirations among the masses, can be attained only under socialism. We fight for the independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state, for a left wing in the unions based on a class struggle program, for a complete break with capitalist politics and for an independent labor party to wage political struggle against capitalism. You are, of course, familiar with these and other aspects of our policy. I have listed them mainly as a preamble to remarks about what seems an important second aspect of your question: can we expect the masses to adopt our program and fight to put it into effect?

It is true that the American workers, and in a general sense the workers of other imperialist countries, have lagged far behind in the unfolding world revolution. So much so, in fact, that our political role has remained confined to an essentially propagandistic character. You have experienced this directly, for example, in your struggle against the union bureaucrats and their class collaborationism in your section of the transportation industry, as I did in mine. The fight is not yet won, but at least we have the satisfaction of knowing that ours is the correct working class position and that in the long run time will be on our side.

Speaking of time, history's Olympian indifference to the limitations of the individual life span in relation to the objective march of events puts a certain burden of disappointment on comrades who have devoted long years to our movement. But unfortunate though the objective situation has been for us, we can now perceive signs of change that herald the coming of a new and higher stage of the American class struggle.

Today we are witnessing the unprecedented development in this country of a swiftly growing opposition to imperialist foreign policy during a shooting war. The Negro movement continues its development toward a coming anti-capitalist political radi-

calization. Signs are appearing of new prospects to build a class struggle left wing in the unions. In general the deepening contradictions of outlived capitalism are preparing a social explosion that will rip apart the whole fabric of the capitalist structure in this country and open the way to proletarian revolution.

Ours is the program through which the masses can be mobilized in the fight to overturn capitalism as the political radicalization deepens in the times ahead. No one has come forward with a better program. On the contrary, our opponents within the radical movement water down and depart from revolutionary principles in one or another way. We alone have stood firm on programmatic principles in the face of all adversity. I am firmly convinced that the program on which our party is based, whatever the changes in organizational form of the revolutionary vanguard that may take place during the revolutionary march, is the program that will lead triumphantly to the socialist goal for which we stand.

* * *

To close on a personal note, I was happy to find that you were able to come to the headquarters and participate in branch life, and I hope your situation will remain that way despite your physical troubles. It was good to be able to talk with you, but I regret that my situation didn't permit us to spend more time together. I still remember warmly the lunch to which you treated Ray and me, the one where you loaned me a jacket so I could get into the restaurant. By the way, I am sending Ray a copy of this letter since I am sure he will share our interest in the questions discussed.

Warmest comradely greetings,

/s/ Farrell Dobbs

Minneapolis
March 9, 1966

Dear Comrade Dobbs:

Your letter of February 25th has been duly received and carefully analyzed, and I find myself completely at loss in trying to figure out how you could arrive at the conclusions you do in face of realities.

As I see it, your letter contains two major points or ideas, namely:

1. That new political parties must be built in practically all countries to supplant the present Communist Parties, and
2. That the leadership in those Communist Parties must be removed by political revolution. And that this assignment is going to be taken over by the "World Trotskyist Movement." To me this whole thing seems fantastic.

To begin with, I consider proposition number one both wrong and impossible. To propose that new parties be built to put the present Communist Parties out of commission together with their leaders on a world scale, sounds to me like a pipe dream. At best, this would mean that the world's working class would be saddled for years with two dual and rival political organizations wasting their resources in a suicidal struggle to destroy each other. This policy and arrangement, wrong and destructive from beginning to end, would delay and prevent social revolutions indefinitely and thereby prolong the life of World Capitalism.

Another thing, why build new parties? In doing that, we would have to use the same human material that we find in the old ones. And further, considering the records and past accomplishments of the two movements, what assurance would we have that this costly and tremendous undertaking, if it was possible, would be any improvement over the wonderful progress that the Communist movement has made in growth and influence on a world scale in the last 20 years. During this time Capitalist Rule has been eliminated from 11 additional countries. The Soviet Union has developed into the second most powerful industrial country in the world. The Chinese revolution of 1949 was the biggest working class victory since 1917. Communist growth and influence is well recognized by world capitalism, and the American section is now spending nearly \$20,000,000 a day in its frantic effort in trying to stop it. One-third of the human race now live in countries under Communist rule.

I am assuming that the programmatic proposals you pose in your letter are those of the SWP and the Fourth International. To put those proposals into effect, it would be necessary for the Trotskyist movement, with its small membership and little influ-

ence anywhere, to eliminate the entire present world Communist movement from the world scene, unless it wanted to load the workers down with two rival movements working at cross purposes and thereby put a brake on all revolutionary progress indefinitely.

My contention is, that the small Trotskyist movement has only two alternatives. It must either supplant the entire Communist movement on a world scale, or join it. In my opinion, it is not able to do the former, and is therefore compelled to do the latter or suffer a lingering death.

As it looks to me, our party leaders have been so busy trying to locate mistakes committed by the leaders of the Communist parties, that they have neglected to take an inventory of their own program and leadership, and thereby try to find out why our party and the rest of the Trotskyist movement haven't been able to progress beyond the embryo stage of development in the last 28 years.

Our leaders still fool around with the idea of "political revolution," without being able to advance a single precedent or past experience in the revolutionary movement since it started to support such a thing. If political revolution couldn't develop during more than 25 years of Stalin's bloody rule, how do you figure that it can take place now when social conditions have greatly improved in all Communist countries since Stalin's death.

The SWP leadership has also been very liberal with its charges of mistakes committed by the CP leaders. Part of your letter literally bristles with sharp criticism of Mao Tse-tung and his leadership. Don't you think it is a little bit out of place for the SWP leaders to sit in the office and level all kinds of criticism at a person like Mao, who was able to lead and direct one of the greatest successful workers revolutions in history. World capitalism admits freely that the Chinese revolution was the greatest setback and defeat that it has suffered since 1917, even if the SWP leadership doesn't. In spite of what the SWP leadership says about Mao and the rest of the Chinese leaders, I am quite sure that the living conditions of the Chinese masses will undergo continuous and growing improvement. I don't think that millions of Chinese people starve to death now like they did under the brutal regime of Chiang Kai-shek.

With regard to mistakes and bureaucrats, yes, how can anyone expect any workers state to be absolutely free from those things after going through the experience of a socialist revolution, especially in a country like China? Bureaucratism, one of the many evils spawned by rotting capitalism, is something that every workers state will have to contend with for some time after its revolution. And mistakes, all human beings that make material contributions to social progress are subject to them. The only people that don't make mistakes are in the cemetery, or those who never bother doing anything for human welfare that requires effort and sacrifice, which in my opinion, is one of the worst

mistakes of all.

I also want to register a protest against the continued policy and practice on the part of the SWP leadership, to smear other Communists with the epithet of "Stalinist" or "Stalinism." Under the circumstances, it is not only wrong and unjust, but it serves no useful purpose and is no credit to the SWP leadership.

From reading party literature, including your letter, it shows quite plainly, in my opinion, the effect that long and enforced isolation from the mass labor movement has had on the SWP leadership. For instance, in their writings and speeches our leaders use a lot of expressions that I deem long out of date, like "Leninist-type party" and "Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist" principles, etc. I never used any such expressions in my long experience in dealing with workers no matter what I wanted them to do, whether I wanted them to sign my list to get our people on the ballot, take a subscription to our press, or to join our party. In my opinion, to use expressions like those quoted above only confuses and frightens the ordinary worker, and standing by themselves, such expressions really don't explain anything.

I have heard of a slogan that said: "Everything in both nature and society must either progress or perish," and this law of development naturally applies to our little party too. As mentioned before in this letter, the Communist parties and their world movement are growing in both scope and influence. This keeps them healthy and vigorous. Our party suffers because the world condition in which it finds itself is unfavorable to its growth and development. Being unable to grow it ceases to be an asset, and turns into its opposite, and becomes a liability if not a menace.

Because of the fact that our party and the rest of the Trotskyist movement has, in the main, been stalled on the dead center and getting nowhere ever since their inception, I have been bothered for some time about what the probable cause could be for this condition.

So, during our last pre-convention discussion period, I bought a number of discussion bulletins, and when I read the Statement by the Secretariat of the Political Committee, starting on page 8, Vol. 25, No. 12, I developed a desire to look into our whole party situation and its relations to the world Communist movement, and that investigation brought me all the way to the positions I take in this letter.

In the first place, I did not like the statement of the Committee. It sounded very much like the expressions of the union bureaucrats in the BLE and BLE&E. They could not tolerate any criticism from the dues-paying and boss-ridden members. Every time a union local or a member advanced a proposal for some needed change or improvement in the union, they too were charged with some disloyalty, or violation of some gaglaw or solemn obli-

gation. Secondly, after reading that statement and other material that followed, I made up my mind, that the whole Trotskyist program and policy on building new Communist parties to supplant the present ones has been out of date for ten years, and that is why the Trotskyist movement has been unable to grow and is therefore slated for the discard of abandoned ideas. There is no room for two Communist movements in the world today, and by all indications, the Trotskyist movement is the one that has to get out.

At this point in my letter I stopped typing, to recheck your letter to see if I had covered all the questions I wanted to touch on, and found something right on the first and second page that needs some additional comment.

There you seem to take the position, that in order for the workers in the Communist parties to be able to change leaders, or to be able to attain any other improvements in their political organizations, it will first be necessary to wreck them and build new parties with new leaders. If the workers can do all that, why can't they bring about the changes they want in the parties they now have instead of going to all that work of wrecking one party and building another one?

No, I can't go for that idea. Workers in any organization, old or new, will only be able to bring about needed organizational improvements when they know why and how to do it, and they learn this by experience and not by building a new organization every time they want a change.

We had some experience with this thing in the rail unions. We tried to build a new union of engine, train and yardmen in order to get rid of some of the evils we had in the old boss-ridden craft unions. But it didn't work out the way we figured. A new set of union bureaucrats moved right in the new union and took over, and the workers were no more able to cope with the situation in the new union than they were in the old one. They lacked the necessary knowledge and experience to do the job, and the new union simply died in the egg. The same thing will happen in the Communist parties under your theory, in my opinion.

In bringing this letter to a close, I want to make the following observation: The transition from capitalism to socialism that is now in process on a world scale is the most serious and deep-going social change that has ever taken place since the advent of man. Therefore, the workers in the advanced capitalist countries, especially the U.S., will no doubt meet savage opposition to this change. This will require united action on the part of the workers, with one party in each country, and all parties in one world movement. The only working class movement in the world today that fulfills that requirement is the Communist movement. And to try to build rival splinter parties in opposition to this movement is, in my firm opinion, wrong, destructive and reactionary from every conceivable standpoint.

I also contend that it is high time for our leadership to take the important questions raised in this correspondence out of cold storage and put them to our party members for a thorough discussion. And this should not be put off until our next convention, and I don't see why our party press shouldn't be used for that purpose. I think our past discussion policy and method is ineffective, cumbersome, expensive and out of date.

Much more could and should be said on all this, but this will be all for now.

Whenever you come to Minneapolis, time permitting, I will be glad to see you, and I will try to make our visit both pleasant and interesting. I will take you out and wine and dine you at the Edgewater Inn, the Casino that lies right on the bank of the Mississippi, a stream that probably drains more territory than any other river in the world.

I will be looking forward to seeing you.

Comradely,

/s/ C. R. Hedlund

P.S. Find herewith some correspondence and press clippings that may interest you. The correspondence throws some light on my ideas and activity, and the press matter is informative.

Indications are that Gus Hall intends to visit Moscow and probably other places. Do you realize the advantage Gus has over any SWP leader by being a member of the world Communist movement and with powerful friends in different parts of the globe?

He is, no doubt, a welcome visitor at any C.P. headquarters. Communist leaders in different countries are no doubt glad to see Gus, and to do what they can to help him and his political associates to build a strong Communist Party in the U.S. They have all kinds of reasons for feeling that way.

To build a Communist Party, and to lead a socialist revolution to victory in this country, is a pretty big assignment and will not be a pushover. So Gus will need all the help he can get.

C. R.

Minneapolis
September 29, 1967

Dear Comrade Dobbs:

I am writing this letter to the National Committee of our party, in your care, in an effort to find out what our party program and position is towards the world Communist movement, with its parties in practically every country, including 12 workers states where one-third of the human race now lives. In other words, what do the SWP leaders figure on doing with this movement, destroy it, or join it, or what?

I think it is high time that our leaders and the coming convention furnish our members with a definite answer to this all-important question. It seems to me that if our party members don't know the answer to this question, then all party activity becomes meaningless.

It is my firm opinion, that the present world Communist movement is here to stay. It represents the future, and it has organized and led every important and needed social change and improvement that has taken place in the world since the Russian revolution.

It is also my opinion, that no dual and rival organization can be built to supplant this world movement by simply finding fault with it. This is a negative program that the Fourth International and the SWP have been trying to build on, and after nearly 30 years of effort have gotten nowhere.

For the above reasons I also find myself in opposition and disagreement to the big buildup our party leaders are trying to give to the "Fourth International." This organization came into a world unfavorable to its development and, in my opinion, never was able to grow beyond the embryo stage. Therefore I think it is both wrong and misleading for our leaders to parade this organizational phantom behind the high-sounding title of "the World Party of the Socialist Revolution."

In reading the written expressions of the SWP leaders, one would be led to believe that the Communist movement doesn't amount to much, and that it must be replaced with new parties and new leaders. But world capitalism, headed by the U.S., doesn't seem to think so. On the contrary, it fears that the present Communist movement is a threat to its very existence, and therefore it is spending more money and effort to stop Communism than on any other need or problem, and this world development has already turned imperialist war into class war. As a matter of fact, the Communist movement has already reached such proportions of strength, that the issue between capitalism and socialism is now the central question on this planet.

We are living in a world where there is nothing constant but the law of change. Therefore it can be assumed that the technique

and methods used in bringing about social changes at different times and in different countries will not be the same. For instance, I cannot imagine that the well organized workers in such countries as Sweden and Finland will have to use the same methods to get what they want as the workers in Spain, Formosa, and other such countries.

Therefore, I find it difficult to subscribe to the theory that it will require a violent revolution at all times and in all countries to make the transition from capitalism to socialism, and I think that this position on my part is supported by history. And further, I contend that no one is able to furnish the American workers with any blueprint on what experiences they will have to go through between now and the time when the U.S. has become a workers state. I am making these observations because it seems to me that our party leaders have become sectarian and dogmatic in their attitude and expressions like the leaders of the SLP.

I am not worried that the present Communist movement will fall apart, or that it will be unable to make the transition from capitalism to socialism on a global scale in the long run.

Its internal struggles, mistakes, twists and turns are as natural as that night follows day. Every forward step that mankind has ever made has had to face these same problems. The Communist movement has only one place to go and that is to socialism. It has only one real opposition and that is outmoded capitalism. This simplifies matters, and as the Communist movement rolls on it will gather both strength and momentum as more and more people find out that socialism will bring the human race more benefits than any other social change that has taken place since the advent of man.

From what has been stated above, and much more that could and should be stated, I take the position that the SWP and the F.I. movements should take what steps are necessary to gain re-entry into the Communist movement and there contribute what they can to hasten the arrival of the best social change that man has ever made in his long fall forward.

In closing, I have stated my position on the question posed in paragraph one in this letter, and now I hope that I can have the position taken on this same question by our National Committee and our coming convention.

Comradely,

/s/ C. R. Hedlund

New York, N.Y.
October 13, 1967

C. R. Hedlund
Minneapolis

Dear CR:

This is in reply to your inquiry through me about the National Committee's views on the question: "What our party program and position is towards the world Communist movement, with its parties in practically every country, including 12 workers states where one-third of the human race now lives. In other words, what do the SWP leaders figure on doing with this movement, destroy it, or join it, or what?"

My answer is written with the suggestion that you might also refer back to the extensive letter I sent you on Feb. 25, 1966, dealing with this general subject. On that basis I will undertake to summarize the key aspects of the party's position as it has been set down in basic documents adopted at plenums and conventions of our movement, as follows:

The decisive feature of political rule in the Soviet Union, as in other workers states of Eastern Europe and Asia, remains the bureaucratic repression of workers democracy. This requires an organized struggle by the workers to smash the bureaucratic regimes through political revolution, which entails the establishment of workers democracy on the basis of existing property forms. We subordinate the question of political revolution only to the need for unconditional defense of workers states against imperialism.

In the colonial sphere we oppose the Stalinist line of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and "popular front" collaboration with the colonial bourgeoisie. While giving unconditional support to colonial independence struggles against imperialism, we call for an uncompromising class-struggle policy in these conflicts based on a proletarian revolutionary orientation. In this connection it should be added that-- insofar as the Mao regime finds itself compelled by objective conditions to differentiate from the Kremlin's line of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism -- we give Peking critical support as against Moscow on such issues.

We repudiate the Stalinist "popular front" policy applied in advanced capitalist countries. Here in the United States one of our key problems is to combat the Communist Party's line of keeping the workers tied to the Democratic Party. The vital issues of class-struggle politics involved constitute yet another example of the fundamental differences separating us from the CP.

The SWP and our co-thinkers consider the central problem of the epoch to be a crisis of revolutionary leadership that dictates the need to build genuine revolutionary parties throughout the

world in opposition to Stalinist -- and social-democratic -- mis-leaders. We counterpose Leninist-type parties to those political formations, of whatever shade, that disorient the masses and retard development of the world revolution.

It is not assumed in advance that the embryo forms of such parties, as they have been created by us and our co-thinkers, will necessarily represent the ultimate organizational structure of revolutionary leadership. Possible fusions and regroupments with other formations may be envisaged, provided the development is toward an expanded Leninist-type party based on Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist programmatic concepts.

In this connection let me again refer to my letter of Feb. 25, 1966. At that time Castro had just made an attack on Trotskyism. We reserved judgment about the basic meaning of his attack because time would be needed to tell whether it reflected degeneration of the Cuban regime or an episodic deviation from revolutionary principles which might be corrected.

Since then Castro has admitted that he made a mistake in attacking Trotskyism. The Cubans are now openly challenging the Stalinist "peaceful coexistence" and "popular front" line throughout Latin America. Our fraternal relations with the Cubans have improved greatly and they can be expected to advance to a still higher plane.

We see in this situation new potential internationally for the process of fusions and regroupments mentioned above, stemming from the developing Cuban challenge of Stalinism. The party convention this month will surely welcome this new trend and respond to it in a positive and principled manner.

Comradely,

/s/ Farrell Dobbs

Minneapolis
October 21, 1967

Dear Comrade Dobbs:

I have your reply under date of October 13th to my letter of September 29th. I don't know what your purpose was in sending me that reply. Both the beginning and the ending of my letter clearly shows that it was directed to the National Committee and our coming convention and not to you personally. The question raised in paragraph one in my letter of the 29th of September is, in my firm opinion, the key and central question in the SWP. No other matter that can possibly come before our convention even approximates the importance of that question. Therefore, this is not something that can be decided and disposed of in any personal correspondence between you and me.

The SWP leadership has been very vocal about the necessity of building new "mass" Communist parties in every country in the world. But it has been quite silent about how, or by what process this gigantic assignment was to be done. Cannon's article in the September-October issue of ISR is a typical example of this. On pages 29-30-31 he tells us that new mass Communist parties have to be built in all the advanced capitalist countries, in the backward countries, and even in all the present workers states. But he fails to cite a single past experience in the entire world labor movement to support the possibility of doing such a thing.

Personally, I consider the idea of building "new mass Communist parties all over the world" to supplant the old ones both phony and misleading. First, because it is beyond the range of possibility, second, if the workers are not willing or able to support needed improvements and changes in the organizations that they are already in, they will not join or line up in any new organization that will be both dual and rival to the one that they are in. All labor history supports that position.

It is ridiculous to think that every time we need some improvements or needed changes in any labor organization, that the workers will have to build a new organization in order to get them.

Our SWP leaders talk loosely about building new mass Communist parties to take the place of the old ones. The U.S., the most powerful capitalist country in the world, has spent billions of tax dollars for the last seven years in Vietnam to do the same thing and failed. The only difference is, that the U.S. is trying to supplant the Communist Party in Vietnam with a capitalist party.

You speak of Castro coming closer to the SWP and his growing difference with the Soviet Union. Don't kid yourself, Farrell, Castro has no intention of lining up with the SWP and turning his back on the Soviet Union. Russian ships are in Havana harbor right along unloading needed supplies to Cuba, and if it wasn't for the support of the Soviet Union and other Communist

countries both Cuba and North Vietnam would have been crushed by the U.S. colossus a long time ago.

The SWP leaders through their written and spoken expressions, try hard to make other people believe that they are the only ones who can build and run mass Communist parties the right way. The editorial in the October 16th issue of The Militant is a typical example of this policy and practice. But they have failed to explain why they haven't been able to either build or run a mass Communist party anywhere in the world after being in the party-building business for nearly 30 years. During that time, Communist leaders have built mass parties all over the world, and have put Communist parties in control in 11 different countries.

I saw a press report only a few days ago to the effect that the Communists have a party in Japan with 300,000 members, and party representatives in both houses of the National Legislature.

Our leaders harp continuously about the mistakes that the leaders of the Communist parties make. If I was in their place I wouldn't worry about that so much. Don't forget that the Communist leaders have done something besides making mistakes. Look what the Communist Party in the Soviet Union has done after going through the destruction of two devastating world wars and 26 years of Stalin's bloody and brutal misrule. Look what progress that country has made in the last 50 years, all under Communist leadership, and they didn't have to come to 873 Broadway to find out how to do it either.

So, instead of using so much time pointing out the mistakes other people make, I recommend that our party leaders devote more time and study to our own party affairs. If our party leaders really intend to build new mass Communist parties all over the world as Cannon tells us, then I think they have a full time job on their hands instead of spending so much of their time in fault finding.

The SWP leaders complain about lack of democracy in other parties. Personally I think we could use a little more democracy in our own little embryo party. There is practically no outlet for membership opinion on inner party matters between our conventions, and our party record shows that it is quite a risky business for any member in our party to express ideas that happen to clash with the ideas of the party leadership.

In closing, I again want to ask you to submit the question I raised in paragraph one in my letter of September 29th to the National Committee, and after discussing it there, I want the NC to put that question on the convention agenda for discussion and action.

If the NC and the convention cannot or will not furnish our party members with a definite answer to that question, then our members will not be in the position to know definitely what the

program and the aim and purpose of the Socialist Workers Party
is.

Comradely,

/s/ C. R. Hedlund