

You ought to listen carefully to what I have to say, because I've been told by the trial committee, everybody on the trial committee, and by Comrade Wulp, that if I say what I'm going to say, I'll be brought up on charges. So it should have some historical interest, if not political interest, to some of you.

The CT said that we would be next when it went. They were a little bit off schedule. The CT was put on trial for what it said, the next week I'll be put on trial for defending someone for what they have said. So listen carefully and see if you can find some disloyalty in what I'm going to say.

The trial committee bases its recommendation to expel the Merrills on a statement by Barry Sheppard and a brief elaboration by Jack Barnes at the last convention, stating that no differences resolved at the convention could be brought up in the forthcoming YSA convention. I'd like to briefly explain my opposition to this so-called rule and then explain what this action by the party leadership really means. First of all, the rule itself is so little known that the Executive Committee itself did not know the rule at the first trial, wasn't aware of it. The NO had to send a letter here saying that the statement, the paragraph, the famous paragraph that Comrade Wulp quoted from in Barry Sheppard's speech, was

left out by mistake, if you please, by mistake in the printed version.

That very crucial paragraph which said that no differences could be brought to the YSA convention, was left out by mistake in the printed version.

Leaving aside, however, the fact that the rule was so littleknown that not even the Executive Committee knew about it, that the rule is left out of the printed version of Barry Sheppard's speech, and the fact that once the organizer told the ~~XXXX~~ Merrills about the rule and their infraction of it, they said that they were willing to abide by this rule by announcement.

That came out in the trial. Dave made a big thing about the fact that the Merrills went right on and took their differences into the pre-convention discussion. But they were asked by George Basley if they would submit to any discipline the trial committee sought to impose upon them (this was the first trial). They said, "Yes. Anything."

He even said, "Remove your names from the document and not defend the document." They said, "Yes." This trial committee sandbagged. I couldn't figure out exactly what they were up to because they said, "Well, even if we reach a decision tonight (this was two weeks ago), they still have the right to go the pre-convention discussion tomorrow night and voice their views." I said, "Wait a minute. This is the Executive Committee. We can tell them not to speak. Why don't we tell them not to speak?" They

wanted them to speak. They just wanted that additional thing to have against them. Much has been made of the fact that the Merrills did not go through proper channels, that they did not inform the NO. But they did inform the NO. The NO came right back with a letter to Dave Wulp, saying, "Here." They knew about it. They weren't informed formally, but they knew. That they were trying to correct people, instead of sandbag and chop them up, they could have written the Merrills and said, "Look. This is wrong and if you persist on this course, we're going to have to bring you up on charges." But the NO didn't do that.

The trial body didn't pay any attention to the Merrills when they said they would submit to its discipline. They didn't want to put them under any discipline, they wanted them to continue in the YSA with their political differences.

Let me explain one more thing about this rule. The ~~NEW~~ rule is, in fact, out of accord with the party's previous attitude on the question of party-youth relations. This change was instituted by fiat, without any discussion or even any prior hint that such a change was coming. Every factional struggle that has taken place in the party has also taken place in the youth. Never has a minority been expelled for taking its differences into the youth: the Shachtmanites, the Wohlforthites, the Marcyites, the

Robertsonites, all carried out political battles in the youth, factional battles, and were not disciplined for it. Tom Kerry, in 1967 in response to Fender, and Charlie Bolduc and Larry Seigle in 1969 Discussion Bulletin, both declared that the YSA is not an outside organization, no matter what Dave Wulp says. He quotes one part of Tom Kerry's speech, but doesn't quote another part, which is very crucial. Tom Kerry says, and I quote, "We never really considered the YSA an outside organization," in the same document that he refers to.

These comments were made in response to Fender, who said that the Boston party comrades who wrote the Chase-Meseke document where he said they should have been called to order, he said they shouldn't have been called to order. There was no formal violation.

The right of SWP members to raise their differences in the YSA is fully in accord with both of their norms, maybe not recently formulated party norms in the past couple of months. How a norm becomes a norm in a couple of months, I don't know. Those norms are designed to guarantee the fullest ideological and theoretical discussion in the revolutionary movement. It is sufficient to look at the history of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party to see that comrades who publically avow their differences are not expelled. In fact, Lenin, in recognizing the need for ideological

struggle within the party that plans to lead the revolution, drafted a motion that was passed at the third congress of the Russian party. The motion said that the struggle in the party had to confine itself to ideological struggle, as opposed to struggle over posts, in order to ensure that there was ideological struggle, not just a minor debate, to ensure that there was ideological struggle in the party. The third congress guaranteed any and every minority the right to express their ideas in party pamphlets, public party pamphlets, and leaflets and, in certain cases, even the newspaper. Lenin knew the importance of ideological struggle. Lenin felt that all the advanced workers must actively, be actively involved in ideological struggle in the party in order to further educate and train them in Bolshevism. We recognize that a minority which publically expressed its differences was not violating centralism so long as it carried out the tasks of the party and did not appear as an opponent of the party. Similarly, the party comrades who are the most advanced elements in the YSA, are not allowed to present their differences in the YSA, the youth will become a sterile organization.

All sophisticated political discussion will be cut off. Of course, the party must maintain its right to fully control the activity of its members and, in certain cases, will demand its members ~~not~~ to publically

express their differences. For example, on the eve of the October revolution, the Bolshevik Central Committee planned the insurrection and decided that those plans must be kept absolutely secret. So Lenin threatened to expose Zinoviev if he publically opposed insurrection. Prior to October, however, and throughout 1917, the Bolshevik Party was alive with discussion and debate. Even the subsequent ban on factions which followed the Civil War, that ban existed only amongst the Central Committee, never in the rank and file. There's never been a ban on factions in the ranks and file in the Bolshevik movement. Never. Except in this party. Even at that, there were differences and political discussion, organized discussions within the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party.

The period we're now in hardly parallels the extreme suppression and underground nature of the organization in Russia in 1917. That brings me to the major point I want to make: the reason for this expulsion, the reason for the expulsion of the CT which preceded it, and the expulsions which will follow.

All
~~I ought to~~ talk about August 15 marking a qualitative new period in capitalist economic crisis and signalling the beginning of an all out war on the working class ^{is} not mere rhetoric. It is a decisive fact. It is a fact which exposes more clearly than ever the crisis of leadership in the

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working class, which the Fourth International was founded to solve. It is a fact which poses more urgently than ever the need for a Marxist party to orient fully to the working class and enter the organizations of the working class. There is no other way in which the leadership can develop in the class which can organize and lead to victory the war against the capitalist onslaught. In the midst of this crisis, the SWP has abrogated its responsibility to the working class. It has only further consolidated its orientation to the petty bourgeoisie and to the movements of the petty bourgeoisie. At precisely the time when it is incumbent upon the party to turn an about-face toward the working class, it marches steadfastly on the path away from the working class. In order to continue on this course with impunity, the party leadership must stifle all serious dissent, all serious dissent, just as in unions when the bureaucrats want to make a show of how democratic they are, they let drunks get up and talk, they let nuts get up and talk and show how democratic they are. If anybody serious gets up and talks, they're out in the corridor, because the serious people are the threat, not the drunks, not the hacks and not the kooks, but the serious people, and that's what we're faced with here, serious people with serious political differences. And it will be faced in the period immediate following this trial also.

At the very time that the party and youth should be steeped in discussion and aimed at developing the correct method of breaking out of our isolation from the class, not to turn into a talk-shop discussion, but discussion with a purpose, the leadership turns the screws harder and harder in order to intimidate comrades and prevent serious discussion in any way possible. The leadership must utilize the same methods that Stalin resorted to in order to rid himself of criticism. As Cannon said of Stalin's silencing of the Left Opposition, when nobody has a chance to answer back, you can get away with anything.

The present party leadership must resort to silencing all criticism, but most particularly political criticism from the left, in order to get away with its headlong rush from the working class. The party leadership must, if it's to continue on its path away from the class and deeper into the mire of petty-bourgeois politics, it must silence all criticism which calls for going to the working class. That is the meaning of the expulsion of the Merrills.

If there are any comrades in this room who are capable of seeing and understanding the forces working on the party, who are capable of seeing the inevitable bureaucratization of the party, I urge you to vote against the expulsion of the Merrills.