

DICK MERRILL == SUMMARY

To being with, there's slanders that have been implied about us, comrades didn't have the courage to ~~XXXX~~ come out and state them, but all this crap about entry work for another organization is just that, crap. We're loyal members of the SWP and our loyalty is to the SWP and absolutely no other organization. That is just crap to try to poison the discussion so that comrades won't think. The charges, as we said again and again, have everything to do with the politics, as everybody who's raised those implications of entry work has pointed out. The question is posed by the party as one of discipline. Carol went through an explanation of what went on and the Executive Committee, or members of the exec, deny that the exec ~~has~~ has the power to act to prevent us from doing an act which they consider indisciplined. If they knew it was going to happen, then they could just prevent it. That's all there is to it. The organizer in the traditions of Bolshevism and in the constitution, the organizer has the power to say, "Don't say it." He didn't choose to do it.

I don't see why we have to go back and defend our 1000 percent disciplined activity in this party before this now disputed question. There's no need to defend it except that the leadership is trying to just ignore, as if that didn't have any connection at all. For some reason, now, we're anti-party. It just sprang out of the air.

We're not anti-party. We've shown that in our activity. We've shown that in our testimony and in our discussion. ~~The~~

The question of organizing the group. Every time the exec has brought this up, it has been misquoted and misrepresented from the tape and comrades maybe wouldn't want to stay around for two and a half hours and hear the discussion, but our answer was that we took part of the initiative was not all the answer we gave on that question. It is absolutely not all the answer we gave on the question of who organized the tendency. We didn't write the document, we took part in the initiative of that. We had suggestions on the document, and that the other comrades who were signing it we did not know were going to sign it at that time. They were contacted afterward. We have seen these comrades. We didn't go to those other comrades and recruit them.

Now the organizer, or the exec, or any representative of the organizer or the exec, or of any higher body in the party, has any power and, since Don just informed us that Frank Boehm got the document, took it right over to the SWP. He knew, he saw that we were members of the party. He must have us on a list or something, because I've never, I don't know Frank Boehm.

But he took that over to the SWP and it was sent to Dave Wulp. Dave Wulp showed it to Comrade Shmuger. Frank Boehm took it over to somebody. Somebody

showed it to Barry Sheppard. Barry showed it to Dave. Dave showed it to Steve Shmuger. And the next thing we knew about it, Steve Shmuger was bringing up charges against, again in the same way that this had been done before, without consulting the comrades. There's no interest in whether the comrades are aware that they are supposedly committing a violation. There's no interest in that. The only interest is to set us up.

Don used~~X~~ what I feel is a very crude analogy, or interpretation from during the preconvention discussion about, or maybe it was during the discussion on the CT. He said that what the party did in the case of the Cochranites was they already had then pegged for expulsion and they just found a factional hook to hang them on. That's what Don said that they did with the Cochranites. Now that may have been what was done with the Cochranites, but I know damn well it's what's being done with us here. It's not in the same situation as with the Cochranites. We are not projecting the liquidation of the party. We're not projecting that the party dissolve. What we're projecting is that the party can only sustain its life through an intervention in the working class. That's what was behind the charges against us.

~~EM~~ We'd gone through the whole thing here, gone through the whole thing about what it was that happened. All these quotes that Comrade Wulp was

reading off, all these questions and then the answers and then the question  
t) n the answer, weren't necessarily in the same order, he didn't happen  
to mention that when they asked us a question after two and a half hours,  
we explained that we had already answered the question and we were getting  
tired of the constant ~~XX~~ repetition of the same question. LAfter two and a  
half hours of deliberation, and then discussion until ~~X~~ 3:00 in the monring.  
That's what we're told, that they discussed until 3:00 in the monring, and  
they couldn't come to a decision. They couldn't come to az decision on it.  
They did not know about this paragraph that was left out, that supposedly  
was in the organizational report at Oberlin. They couldn't come to a deci-  
sion because there was no basis to come to a decision on. This is just  
clearly a political attack that takes an organizational fom.

The significance that the date of August 15 has for the working class  
was stated by Frank Lovell at the educational conference. He didn't only  
say that it was an historic date for the working class, he said it would  
have immediate repercussions in the labor movement. Along with that, there  
has been an increase in the growht of the JDL and comrades may think that  
I don't know if comrades see this or not, but the JDL is the basis for ,  
is one of the bases for a fascist movement in the United States. There

are fascists who are walking around the streets of Los Angeles and San Francisco and Boston wearing Swastikas. That hasn't happened for quite a while. The bombing of the headquarters of left groups didn't happen for quite a while, but it's all part of the same crisis that is emerged extremeley sharply after August 15, which many comrades spoke to very correctly. It's this sharp turn. I thought it was some kind of reproach that Comrade Wulp gave, a shrap turn in the working class, a sharp turn in the economic crisis and the fact that the woking class is now posed in contrast to the bourgeois state in a very open way with the wage freeze and the economicconditions, has had an extremely profound effect on the party because the party has been building its base all through the boom period on these petty-bourgeois movements, on the movements of the petty bourgeoisie. The working class, the party says, is not in motion during the boom. But when we say, "Well. That's right. The class that was in motion when the crisis first began to break up was not the working class. It was the petty bourgeoisie." The party says, "Oh, no! We don't want to give it a class name because that would mean we would have to take a specific stand, a scientific and Marxist stand on a future and development of a class movement where its class basis is, what its, where it came from. The class basis of those movements during the boomm was that the working

class was not yet openly affected by the developing crisis and this was an anticipation of the movement of the working class as the crisis would inevitably deepen. Now the crisis has reached, and it's not just since. I mean, August 15, that's not the only development that's taken place. August 15 was the beginning of a whole new stage, in the attacks on the working class. It was the time when all, as several comrades have said, when the Brenton-Woods agreement were annulled, or the agreement between the bourgeoisies of the various countries were annulled by the United States. If you look at the evening paper, the United States has just agreed to devalue the dollar. This is going to have extremely sharp and immediate consequences in the economy. All this is very sharp, very new and quickly developing events. The class struggle is opening up very fast.

It's having a very profound affect on the party and on the classon which the party is based. As we said, Novemb er6 was a sign of that. The abortion demonstrations were a sign of that. It's like there's a magnet coming up and all the iron filings have to align themselves between the two poles. That's what's happening in society. All of the elements in society are aligning themselves between the two poles. But they don't just do that right away. There's a process.

The petty-bourgeois movements are in the process of becoming torn

apart and aligned without a ~~CONSCIOUS~~ conscious. we know where they'll go. We know which pole they'll orient to. If the party does not see the class basis of these movements, it has no basis on which to analyze their development. Whenever the petty-bourgeois movements become smaller, it's because it's an election year. You can count on the movements being just miniscule because now we're a year away from an election. That affects it. That affects the movement~~s~~ and makes it small. Well, we'll always be less than six months away from any election. If that's the kind of confidence that the party has in the mass movements that it's working in, that's just a sign of the mercurial kind of stability that these ~~MOV~~ movements have.

The party has ~~BEEN~~ been profoundly affected, just like the class that it's based on. Just like the class that the leadership is based on, it has been profoundly affected by this crisis. It's faced with keeping on the old line when the new period brings up events that are completely and utterly in contradiction with that old line.

At one point was the possibility of an incomes policy mentioned in the NC document, and that was just one sentence about it and it had absolutely no prominent place where it should have been most important, central question, was the possibility of a very rapid development in the

crisis. The party cannot have any kind of political answer for comrades who want to go back to the Bolshevik, the Leninist and the Trotskyist conceptions of democratic centralism and of the revolutionary party and call for a return to the working class.

Trotsky's concept of democratic centralism was not ~~XXXX~~ the concept of democratic centralism that has been very statically outlined by many comrades in the leadership. Trotsky's concept of democratic centralism, and it's very apt definition of it, in his introduction to Revolution Betrayed, is that democratic centralism consists of the fact that the party has strict control over its boundaries. It has strict control exactly where it is in it and it presents a united face to the public, and within that party, he said, there's seething political contradictions and seething political conflicts. That does not happen to be what goes on in the SWP, for a number of reasons, mainly it has developed to a point where discussion and ~~XX~~ clarification of questions is not in the interest of maintaining the party line. Discussion and clarification on the question would bring out the comrades have the way of thinking of the bourgeoisie, mainly empiricism and pragmatism in the way they're looking at things.

The significance of August 15 is not just a new recruiting ground, it's a new way that we can make some propaganda gains and recruit a few workers because we're against the wage freeze. That's not the question it poses for the party at all. The questions that it poses for the party is that the working class is confronted by the united strength of the bourgeoisie united in the state and not split up in individual enterprises as was on the surface as the case during the boom period. The bourgeoisie is openly united in the state and they're coming out with attempts to subordinate the trade unions to the state. Those were very serious attacks on the working class, and they weren't expected. The extent and the sharpness of those attacks wasn't expected and it has a big effect, and the main effect in the party is that it means a sharp turn now to suppress any kind of realization of what was going on outside.



What the party had to do to maintain its line was to protect the membership from what goes on outside the party. That means that whenever anyone inside the party tried to explain what's going on outside the party, you have to get rid of them. That's the only way you can preserve the political line, is to expel them.

But this is not in any way going to solve the problem. It's in any way at all going to solve the problem. These questions are going to come up, as Carol said, louder and again and again and again. Whether the party wants them to or not because the party doesn't choose whether these questions are going to come up. This party didn't choose whether there would be a wage freeze or whether the working class would go into motion. This is going to keep hitting the party, whatever the leadership does, or tries to do, with those in the party who want to explain that and draw strength for the party from the movement of the working class. The party should have everything to gain from basing itself on the strength of that working class, and based on that strength, the party should go in and try to resolve the crisis of leadership.

Instead of that, every comrade who calls for a turn to the working class is called a petty-bourgeois dilettante and is at least threatened. I feel that every comrade in this branch has been threatened by the leadership. It really amounts to if you don't give up your ideas, then you ~~are~~ are next. That's what the leadership is preparing with this. It's not just us. It wasn't just Fender, as we said. It's a political question that the party is trying to solve in an organizational way. It sounds hollow because it's been said so many times, but it's absolutely true that every comrade who has their eyes open knows it damn well. This is a political question of a very sharp crisis in society that has caused a very sharp crisis inside the party, and there's a leadership which is trying to avoid the consequences of that crisis and avoid the political questions that are raised by it.

What we are doing, what we did in the YSA, we still say we're not guilty of an indisdisciplinary act. It can't be clearer. Not guilty. What we are saying is that exactly because we think that the party should have a correct understanding of dialectics, ~~which~~ which Comrade Shmuger was so shocked at, exactly because we are Marxists, exactly because we think that the entire party should have a correct understanding of dialectics, the entire party should be the revolutionary leadership of the working class, exactly because of all that we're saying we're not going to sacrifice our part in building that party for the question of the YSA. That's what's on the tape. That's what we told Comrade ~~w~~ulp.

Some comrades just don't understand. They say, "That's ridiculous. Why in the hell would you want to do that?" We want to do it because we're loyal party members. We're acting as loyal party members when we signed our names to the document. We were acting as loyal party members when we spoke in the YSA, when we gave our presentations and the summaries. If the party is going to decide against the traditions of the party and they say, "Well. You can't do that." We'd say, and we've said before, we won't do it. It's very clear. We have withdrawn our names from the document. Not that we want to, not that we think it's correct. We've withdrawn our names from the document because it's being used in a factional way instead of promoting any educational discussion. There's no educational benefits that the party has from sitting around discussing factional charges and trying to justify them. There's no educational benefit to derive from that, except the benefit the comrades can derive from realizing what kind of bureaucratic maneuvers those are. That's the only kind of educational

benefit.

It's been raised again and again about a talk shop, that what we want is a talk shop. What is it that we have here except just exactly a no talk shop. What we're talking about is not just talk to hear ourself talk. Comrades should read the document because we support the political line of that document. They should read it if they want to understand our views on that. That presents, that's not a talk shop proposal and that's no social-democratic proposal. That's a fighting proposal to take the leadership of the working class. It's exactly that that the leadership wants to fight against in its organizational way. There were over 100 ~~XX~~ sessions at the conference at which the Bolsheviks split from the Mensheviks, over 100 sessions, seated sessions. Was that a talk shop? It depends on what's being talked about and what the basis of the talk is. What was going was a political struggle there between two opposing forces. There are opposing forces in the party. There are contradictions in the party. The only way the party develops is through bringing those contradictions out, resolving those contradictions. That's the only way the party develops.

A revolutionary party has plenty of discussion. This is what the leadership is suggesting is qualitatively the same thing as a talk shop -- a no talk shop -- and that's the way they like to propose it. Anybody who doesn't like the policy of no talk must be for all talk. That's just on the face of it, ridiculous.

What the leadership is trying to defend is really based on Mandel's whole conception of neo-capitalism, the whole theory of neo-capitalism in which, he does say, that ~~XXXXX~~ through the intervention of the state, there are structural reforms which can be made so that there does not have to be a violent revolution to overthrow the capitalist state. Maybe some comrades don't think that means anything, maybe they don't think that means a peaceful transformation to socialism, but there have been less clear statements that the Trotskyist movement has attacked the Stalinists on for that very concept. Mandel, I believe, does not hold that specific position of structural reforms now, but he's never made any theoretical refutation of it and the ~~XXXXXX~~ policies of the party continue on that basis. That's just a completely dead perspective. It's a perspective of the hopes of the middle class of some kind of solution to the crisis in capitalist society without a violent revolution/ That's the hope of the middle class. But the hopes of the middle class are no going to come true as they're seen now. ~~XXXXXX~~ You see an Attica. You see a Rahway. You see it in the prisons all over.

The party leadership is based with a very fundamental crisis. The split of NPAC was completely covered up in The Militant even more so than it was on the branch floor. Those developments, even though the party wants to ignore them, are not going to ignore the party. They're going to take their toll on the party, unless the party reassesses its perspective. The party is trying to defend a dead perspective and the way it does is to use every single technicality it can sum up from the year 1 to avoid the political questions that are facing them. All this stuff about you can discuss August 15, but when you do it, don't discuss the party line. You can talk about the new developments and what the party should say about these tactical situations, but while you're doing it don't discuss the party line. That's why we have comrades in the party who spend a lot of time in the party and don't become theoretically developed in any way. They read all kinds of things, but don't become educated, because of that attitude. Just ~~XXXXXX~~ separate things. Keep everything isolated from everything else. Just look at what's under your nose and you'll be all right.

We've gone through specifically the organizational issues and the charges that are being made against and the recommendations from the trial body. We've gone through the organizational issues on that. Those organizational issues...The specific organizational questions here can't be understood just by taking them in isolation from everything else, because they're not just in isolation from anything else. They're a part of the whole campaign that the leadership is carrying on to quell opposition within the party. That's what we tried to show in this. That's what we tried to show in the presentation. That's what we're trying to show now with this. This is bureaucratic procedure to try to quell political discussion.

But it's not going to work. Whatever the party, whatever the branch decides on these charges, that's not going to solve anything. That's not going to change the fact that the working class is moving forward, that the dollar is being devalued, that Nixon is moving against the working class and preparing a new and more serious move against the working class with this devaluation of the dollar, even that the wage freeze. All these are not going to be solved by organizational measures to try to physically remove the opposition from the party. Physically removing it doesn't take away the problem, because we aren't the problem. We are not the problem. We're expressions of the problem. The problem is that the party finds itself isolated from the working class, pursuing a perspective that is opposed to the interests of the working class in the new period where the working class is in motion and where the needs of the working class are to be united against the bourgeois state in a political way. The perspective of the leadership is completely opposed to that and so they have to just try to do this. It's not going to get rid of the problem, whatever comrades decide about us, it's not going to get rid of that problem. Any comrade who votes to expel us has to have that in mind. You vote to expel us, you're trying to vote away the objective situation outside the party. You're trying to vote away history and it's just not going to work. Comrades don't have to take me at my word right now, if they can't already see what's going on. Comrades can just mark down what we say and check it out in a few months, or in a year. Every comrade that decides to vote to expel us has to do it with the complete knowledge that that's not a solution to their problem and it's for a false reason, it's not a solution to the problem and it never will be. I ~~KN~~ urge everyone to retain us in our membership in good standing in the SWP.