

My membership in the Socialist Workers Party since its inception has been arbitrarily terminated by expulsion.

This action taken by the present SWP leaders represents another sordid example of a method that has now become standard practice. They seek to settle internal party political disputes by organizational means -- in this case the long standing dispute about the real essence and the real meaning of the Chinese revolution. It is an attempt to establish the monolithic concept of party organization which destroys free and open discussion and which, in the end can lead only to complete political degeneracy.

Needless to say, this method of party organization and function has nothing in common with Bolshevik practices. It is extracted from the murky recesses of trade union bureaucratic rules and procedures.

It might be recalled that among the Bolsheviks in Russia during the very heat of stormy battles for the seizure of working class power, different tactical and strategic lines clashed and important issues were subjected to intense debate. These issues were debated in the party press before the eyes of the working class public.

Long before these developments, during the formative period of the Bolshevik party, fundamental questions were debated no less intensely; and debates were not limited to the narrow confines of the party press. Thus in 1908, Lenin published his book, "Materialism and Empirio Criticism", which was directed primarily against the philosophical concepts of two members of the Central Committee, Bogdanov and Lunacharsky, who also had published their views.

Political parties are social organisms subject to the dialectical interplay of internal contradictions. The party adhering to, or professing to adhere to the Marxist program forms no exception to this general rule. Contradictions of social life become reflected within it, leading to internal struggle of opposing viewpoints. Such a party can remain an effective force only by the open, free and frank discussion of all conflicting views. In fact, it can retain its revolutionary quality only through the ceaseless process of correctly dealing with and resolving internal contradictions and thus apply the Marxist program as a guide to action in the class struggle.

Since the rise of the Chinese people's communes in 1958 I have made continuous efforts in the SWP for a rational revolutionary evaluation of the real essence of the Chinese

revolution. But the present party leaders have adhered to, and they still cling stubbornly to a course that defies reality and is bound to end disastrously. The central objective of their policy is the overthrow of the Mao Tse-tung government; and this at a time when all objective observers of Chinese developments recognize that the only forces ready to follow this policy would be those of the bourgeois inspired counter-revolution.

The resolution adopted on this question, but never made public, calls for "a political revolution . . . intransigent opposition to the holders of power", and the formation of a "new party to conduct that struggle." The resolution goes so far as to declare that: "There are no legal means, no institutional channels through which the direction and policies of the one-party state can be changed or corrected in a peaceful way."

Internal party discussion of this vitally important question became reduced to a limited three months pre-convention period every other year. This turned out to be a farce. Instead of arguing their position in discussion, the present party leaders merely continued to present it publicly in the party press, from which my views were shut out. Factional reprisals against the position I hold on this question went to the extent of preventing any of my political or theoretical contributions from appearing in the party press. Even articles on such non-controversial subjects as the American economy were simply rejected.

The expression of my views in a letter to the Socialist Labor League in Britain -- another Trotskyist organization -- was seized upon as an excuse for the expulsion. But lacking any genuine justification for such an action, it was covered up by slanderous and ridiculous charges of violating discipline, unauthorized correspondence, disloyalty and fraternization with an opponent organization.

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In September 1919 I went through the experience, together with the whole contingent of left wing delegates, of being ejected by the Chicago police from the Socialist Party convention. We proceeded then and there to launch the Communist Party. I became one of its founders.

In 1928 this experience was repeated in somewhat different form, while the essence remained the same. I was expelled from the Communist Party. Together with other members, who were expelled on the same political grounds, I became one of the founders of the Trotskyist movement in America.

And now -- I have no regrets of my past or my present position. I have merely tried to respond to what I have always considered to be my duty as a revolutionary. Once again I can only say: I intend to continue my revolutionary activity, and I look forward to new opportunities to make my modest contribution to the cause of my class -- the working class.

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