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The Red Mole, 182, Pentonville Road, London N.1

5 July 1971

Joseph Hansen
Intercontinental Press
New York

Dear Comrade Jo:

I am writing to discuss ICP's coverage of Bengal which relates very directly to our work with Bengali comrades both in England and in Bangla Desh. I realise that you have a right not to publish the article which I sent you and which was published in The Red Mole. I'm sure your reasons were good ones. But when you publish an unsigned article entitled; BENGALI LIBERATION ARMY FIGHTING PARTISAN WAR (ICP/5.7.71) then one is forced to register both an objection and a protest, particularly as one assumes that this represents the viewpoint of revolutionary Marxism (i.e. the FI). Apart from the fact that the article is totally descriptive and based on hearsay and gossip (some of which I supplied Kolpe, but told him that it was not confirmed when I was in India), what is really distressing is the derisory way in which it deals with the East Bengal Communist Party (Allaudin's group): "who seems to have some base among the peasantry....." This is a downright slander. The EBCP as we correctly described in The Red Mole is the largest of the groups, was engaged in preparations for the armed struggle months before even the elections took place, has at least 2000 armed guerrillas and is the strongest component of the newly-created NLF.

Articles such as this, based on inaccurate information really harm our work as they paint us out to be politically sloppy and inadequate. It would be good to discuss this whole question with you when you next visit Europe, because we are engaged in serious work with precisely the people who are dismissed in the article.....

Incidentally I hope that you will be able to find some space for my article (The Red Mole was sent to you especially and I sent the article separately as well). Even though you might not think it represents the viewpoint of rev. marxism I can assure you it is useful and necessary for our work.

Fraternally,
s/Tariq

cc: Ernest Mandel

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July 8, 1971

Tariq Ali
c/o The Red Mole
London, England

Dear Comrade Tariq:

Thank you for your letter of July 5 which raises the question of how Intercontinental Press has handled the events in Bangla Desh.

I would make the following observations:

1. You do not complain about any lack of material on this subject in Intercontinental Press. The truth is, of course, that this would be difficult. Since last March when the upsurge and subsequent slaughter occurred, every single issue except one has carried at least one and more often two articles on the events there. A goodly proportion of them were written by our comrades in India, a fact of which I think the world Trotskyist movement should be especially appreciative.

2. You do not complain about the general line of these articles. From this I gather that you would agree that by and large they have expressed the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism, whether signed or not.

3. You voice only two complaints: (a) That Intercontinental Press did not carry out your request to reprint an article, "For a Red Bengal," signed by you which was published in the Red Mole. (b) That instead Interncontinental Press published an article datelined from Calcutta which you assume was written by Comrade Kolpe although he did not sign it. (We consider a datelined article to be the equivalent of a signed article --- what the British press features as "from our correspondent.") You condemn this article, saying that "Articles such as this, based on inaccurate information really harm our work as they paint us out to be politically sloppy and inadequate."

On the first point, you imply that I judged your article not to represent the viewpoint of revolutionary Marxism or not to be "useful and necessary" for your work. I do not know why you entertain such suspicions. In the April 26 issue of Intercontinental Press you will find an article, "The Spark That Could Set India Ablaze," signed by you that I would regard as expressing the same line as the article published in the Red Mole, "For a Red Bengal." You did not send us that article. It did not appear in the Red Mole. We found it in the Irish Times and reprinted it from there because we thought it was timely, informative, and in correspondence with the general position of our movement. This ought to show that no prejudgment exists here on articles bearing your signature.

We did not reprint your article "For a Red Bengal" for the simple reason that we received a series of articles from India on the developments in Bangla Desh, many of them written as eyewitness accounts or interviews on the scene. For once we were faced with an embarrassment of riches and we had to choose.

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In such a situation I followed the old rule of revolutionary journalism -- if all other considerations are equal, give the preference to the story from the field.

Whatever practical requirements were involved in your work were taken care of, I assumed, by publication of your article in the Red Mole.

As to your differences with Comrade Kolpe, I had received no word on this from either you or from the United Secretariat. Your criticisms thus came as a considerable surprise to me.

You will appreciate that I want to learn Comrade Kolpe's views on this. I am therefore sending him a copy of your letter together with a copy of this reply.

Fraternally,
s/Joe

cc: Kolpe
Ernest

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

british section of the fourth international

182, Pentonville Road, London N.1 Tel. No. 01-278 2616

3rd August 1971

Dear Comrades,

We wish to communicate to you the following resolution which was passed at the Political Committee of the IMG on July 31st 1971:

"The PC of the IMG regrets that a shortage of money prevents it sending a representative to the convention of the SWP and forces it to restrict itself to sending a fraternal message. Comrades Adair and Williams will, we understand, be present at the convention. The PC must explain, however, that these comrades are not official representatives of the IMG nor do they support the political line of the IMG. These comrades are not authorised to speak at your convention and their visit is a purely personal one as far as the IMG is concerned.

"We have also heard that Comrade Williams is speaking at an SWP Cadre School after the Convention. While we have no objection on principle to leaders or members of minorities of national sections speaking to other sections, we are perturbed that the IMG leadership that the IMG leadership was not informed of this and a majority member was not invited to attend to present the views of the British section. We would therefore like a tape of Comrade William's speech to be made available to us."

Yours fraternally,

Clanisa
Political Bureau

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

british section of the fourth international

182, Pentonville Road, London N.1 Tel. No. 01-278 2616

IMG MESSAGE TO SWP CONVENTION

The International Marxist Group (British Section of the Fourth International) sends fraternal greetings to the Cleveland (1971) Convention of the SWP. We regret that shortage of money prevents us from sending a representative to a Convention which we are sure reflects the historic growth of American Trotskyism.

The work of the SWP in the anti-war movement, which has placed the party in the vanguard of the anti-war movement and at the head of hundreds of thousands of people opposed to imperialism's war in Asia, has been of immense value and has given prestige to our entire movement, not least in embattled North Vietnam where The Militant is often quoted to give evidence of opposition in the heart of the imperialist monster.

As you probably know we have doubled our forces in Britain over the last year, though we still have to contend with two large groups which claim to be Trotskyist. Our last conference took a very definite orientation to try to gain an implantation in the working class and we are at the moment working out a political strategy related to that orientation.

We note with enthusiasm that the American working class seems to be poised today on the verge of important new struggles and we are confident that the SWP will intervene in these struggles with the same determination with which it has led the anti-war movement or more relevant, the same exemplary heroism which it displayed during the Thirties in the face of capitalist repression and Stalinist thuggery.

Comrades, we want to assure you that, despite our differences on certain important questions confronting our movement, we stand for the unity of the Fourth International and we hope that our debates will be conducted fraternally and within the framework of the movement as a whole. We are confident that the SWP will go from strength to strength and, by gaining a strong base in the working class, will wipe that Stalinist abortion which goes by the name of the Communist Party, off the political map of the United States.

LONG LIVE THE SWP!

FOR THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN NORTH AMERICA!

LONG LIVE THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

DRAFT OF ANSWER TO IMG POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Political Committee
International Marxist Group

Dear Comrades,

We would like to thank you for sending greetings to the recently held national convention of the Socialist Workers Party. These greetings were received in time to be read to the convention.

Along with the greetings, you sent us a resolution passed by the Political Committee of the IMG on July 31, 1971. This letter is in response to that resolution.

Your resolution states: "Comrades Adair and Williams will, we understand, be present at the [SWP] convention. The PC must explain, however, that these comrades are not official representatives of the IMG nor do they support the political line of the IMG. These comrades are not authorized to speak at your convention and their visit is purely a personal one as far as the IMG is concerned."

Reactionary legislation prevents the SWP from membership in the Fourth International, but, as a fraternal courtesy, members of the Political Committees or Bureaus of sections or sympathizing groups of the Fourth International, members of the International Executive Committee and members of the International Control Commission who were able to attend the convention were seated as fraternal delegates with voice and no vote. This procedure parallels our procedure for seating as fraternal delegates members of the SWP's outgoing National Committee and Control Commission. Comrade Adair was seated as a fraternal delegate as a member of the IEC; Comrade

Williams was seated as a fraternal delegate as a member of the International Control Commission.

Your resolution further states: "We have also heard that Comrade Williams is speaking at an SWP Cadre School after the Convention. While we have no objection on principle to leaders or members of minorities of national sections speaking to other sections, we are perturbed that the IMG leadership was not informed of this and a majority member was not invited to attend to present the views of the British section. We would therefore like a tape of Comrade Williams' speech to be made available to us."

This paragraph is unclear to us. You state that you have no objection "on principle" to "leaders of or members of minorities of national sections speaking to other sections." Do you have some objection other than one based on principle to the fact that Comrade Williams gave two classes to the education conference the SWP and YSA held after the convention? It appears that you object to, or are "perturbed" by, two things. One is that the IMG leadership was not informed that Comrade Williams was asked to give this class; the other is that a "majority member of the IMG was not invited to attend to present the views of the British section."

When we learned that Comrade Williams planned to attend the SWP convention, the comrades in charge of planning the educational conference following the convention thought that this would be an excellent opportunity to help educate our members and sympathizers on the history of British Trotskyism. Comrade Williams, due to her long personal experience and intimate knowledge of the somewhat complicated evolution of British Trotskyism, was a good choice to give such a class, in the opinion of those responsible for organizing the education conference.

Generally, when comrades from Trotskyist groups from around the world are able to visit the United States, we make maximum use of their presence to help educate our comrades about the world movement. Our geographical position and the reactionary policies of our government make such direct contacts difficult and, unfortunately, all too infrequent. So we are glad to take advantage of any such opportunity that does arise. When a comrade as qualified as Comrade Williams is able to spend some time here, especially at a national gathering, we are especially pleased at the possibility this provides of widening the knowledge of our members on the problems of constructing a Trotskyist party in other countries. We cannot see what possible objection you could have to Comrade Williams, a loyal, leading member of the IMG, recently reelected by your national convention to the IMG national committee, giving classes on the history of British Trotskyism.

You imply that the decision to ask Comrade Williams to give such classes was something the SWP wanted to keep hidden from the majority leadership of the IMG. But the class syllabus, listing Comrade Williams as lecturing on the topic of the history of British Trotskyism, was sent to the international center, where it was available to members of the IMG Political Committee. We can agree that it would have been useful if you were sent information about the educational conference directly; we can see to it that you receive such material in the future. However, we can see no reason for getting your prior approval before we asked Comrade Williams to give a class on the history of British Trotskyism.

If a leading majority member of the IMG were able to attend our convention and educational conference, we would have been only too

happy to schedule classes to be taught by him or her. Comrade Peter Petersen, for example, could have covered ground in the history of British Trotskyism outside of Comrade Williams' experience. However, none of the classes given during this educational conference had as their purpose the presentation of views of minorities or majorities on disputed issues with the international or within any section. Besides Comrade Williams' class, there was one given by a leading French comrade on the Communist League, and one on the situation in Quebec by a leading Canadian comrade.

Comrade Williams' class gave a sketch of the history of British Trotskyism, and covered the period from the founding of the British Communist Party up to the founding of the IMG. Her talks did not go into any current disputes within the IMG. We can agree that the British comrades will find these talks useful. We will send you either a copy of the tapes or a transcript of them, although this will take some time as we are presently short-staffed because of the vacation period.

Comradely,

Barry Sheppard
for the Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP

british section of the fourth international

NOV 29 1971

182, Pentonville Road, London N.1 Tel. No. 01-278 2616

November 26th, 1971

Dear Comrade Joe:

Many thanks for your letter dated November 23rd. To be quite honest and frank, I never dreamt that the ICP would do us the honour of printing the statement (not very long) issued by the Political Committee of the IMG or The Red Mole's own tribute to Peter. I did think, however, that you might print the complete text of the report contained in This Week, since after all it was a well-established liberal bourgeois journal and could be expected to avoid the "ultra-leftism" or other vices of the IMG and its journals. However, even that was censored fairly expertly by Comrade Foley. It is also interesting that Cde Foley in his remarks doesn't state what Peter's position vis-a-vis the FI was. I would like to register the strongest possible protest at the ~~method~~ method in which you covered the murder of one of our comrades.

Also to be honest I didn't think that Cde Van Gelderen's article/~~stood a~~^{stood a} snowball's chance in hell of appearing in the ICP, because as you yourself write even if it had arrived in time "it would have offered some difficulties from an editorial point of view." Instead you use an account by Cde Gordon, whose political status is not clear to us in any case, who is seriously ill and mentally unstable and who in this case arrived at the meeting half-an-hour before it ~~was~~ finished.

The complete and utter contempt which you show for the IMG and any activity associated with it makes us wonder whether it's worth sending in any material to the ICP. We have just appointed Cde Van Gelderen to be the ICP's London correspondent, but it obviously seems a total waste of time. We would, therefore, like you to let us know (a) What Sam Gordon's position is vis-a-vis both the ICP and the SWP. Is he a member of the FI or not? (b) whether you would publish material related to the IMG sent to you directly by the IMG or not.

The reason ~~why~~ I am more indignant than usual is because the ICP is supposed to be the journal of the USFI. This seems to me increasingly a fiction. I intend to raise the matter at the next meeting of the U.S. Either the status of the journal should be re-confirmed or you should state openly that it represent the viewpoint (particularly on matters pertaining to Britain and Ireland) not of the USFI, but of one of its components.

Yours fraternally,

Toric
Toric

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Peter Graumann

Portland Branch
Socialist Workers Party
923 S.E. 13th Ave.
Portland, Oregon 97214
U.S.A.

DEC 1 1971

Nov. 24, 1971

National Executive Committee
LSA/LSO
334 Queen Street W,
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to inform you of what I believe to be a very shocking and serious incident which occurred at the Vancouver branch of the LSA/LSO's public celebration of the October revolution on Nov. 6, 1971. I attended this celebration as a visitor from the U.S. Trotskyist movement, and I brought along several independents who are close to our movement. At the celebration there was publically displayed a poster which showed a cartoon of a bird with the following inscription beneath:

The Red Mole (clipped from the masthead of the paper) is for the birds.

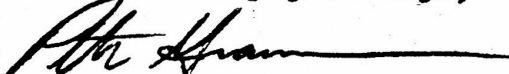
But not for this bird:

As a steady diet it is undigestable!

I was, of course, quite taken aback that this otherwise quite excellent celebration of the October Revolution should be marred by a public attack on another section of the Fourth International! I would consider this kind of attack inappropriate even for an internal function, let alone at a public meeting where contacts are present who are aware that the Red Mole is a publication of a sister organization (the IMG). Such an act, in my opinion, runs directly counter to the building of the world party of revolution and could damage the building of a democratic-centralist international. When I asked the Vancouver branch organizer about the display, no action was taken to remove the poster.

I am writing this letter to you in the hope that by bringing this incident to your attention, further incidents of this character might be prevented. Copies of this letter are being sent to the appropriate bodies in the world movement.

With comradely greetings,



cc: Political Committee, SWP
Executive Committee, IMG
United Secretariat of the Fourth International

DEC 4 1971

December 1, 1971
334 Queen Street W
Toronto

Peter Graumann
c/o Socialist Workers Party
923 S.E. 13th Ave
Portland, Oregon 97214

Dear Comrade

Thank you for your letter detailing an observation you made while attending a public meeting in celebration of the October Revolution organized by our Vancouver branch

It would seem that while you have brought this incident to the attention of the SWP political committee, the executive committee of the IMG and even the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, through sending them carbon copies of your letter to our central committee, that you have neglected to extend this courtesy to our comrades of the Vancouver LSA/LSO

I think you will agree that it is of primary importance that everyone know what they have to say about this incident and in writing. I have therefore sent them a copy of your letter. I will forward a copy of their reply to you and to all the other recipients of your note just as soon as I receive it.

comradely



Ross Dowson
executive secretary of the
central committee LSA/LSO

December 18, 1971
Toronto

To the Political Committee of the SWP
Executive committee of the IMG
United Secretariat of the FI
copies to Peter Graumann
Vancouver LSA(Canada)

Dear Comrades

We have just received a letter from our Vancouver comrades concerning the incident that Comrade Graumann, a member of the For a Proletarian Tendency of the Socialist Workers Party, brought to your attention in his letter of November 24

You will recall that Comrade Graumann protested the display of a poster which apparently portrayed a large bird eating a mole, The Red Mole (through the attachment of that papers masthead to it) and enscribed with the following words, it "is for the birds, but not for this bird; as a steady diet it is indigestable."

This poster was displayed along with many others at a banquet-celebration of the October Revolution held on November 6, some 18 days earlier than comrade Graumann's letter which described the banquet as being otherwise a "quite excellent celebration of the October Revolution."

The minutes of the Vancouver executive committee meeting of November 14--held only 8 days after the celebration, while in no way condoning the incident not only give insight into the attitude of the leading Vancouver comrades about this incident but put it into its proper framework.

Item #3 of the executive minutes reads as follows; "Discussion of banquet and specifically of light treatment of Lenin, Marx, Trotsky, etc. Must create more serious attitude to political questions and to leadership of the movement. Surprise atmosphere of banquet not appropriate, not in control of the membership."

It is apparent from the above that the general character of the displays at the banquet celebration were of an irreverent and satirical character that took Marx, Lenin and Trotsky and others to task. It is only in this context that we too could understand this unfortunate incident involving the Red Mole.

At its December 9th meeting the Vancouver branch LSA/LSO passed unanimously a resolution condemning this display as "not representing the attitude or view of the branch towards the international or any of its sections" We are completely confident that our Vancouver branch shares our opposition to any and all actions that could in anyway create or heat up a factional situation in the world movement and that such an incident will not be repeated

comradely
Ross Dowson on behalf of
the PC LSA/LSO