

New York
October 25, 1973

To the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction Steering Committee

Dear Comrades,

Attached is a report on the recent Central Committee meeting of the GIM, the German Section of the Fourth International.

In a cover letter accompanying the report, Comrade Benny commented: "The Central Committee meeting reflected the success of the Brussels meeting organized by the LTT in July. Some of the formulations used by the Kompass Tendency were almost identical to Joe's comments there on the origins and existence of the crisis in the Fourth International. It is also very clear that they had studied 'The Underlying Differences in Method' very carefully. It was mentioned so often that it was really a recommendation to read the document." "The Underlying Differences in Method" is not yet available in German, but is being translated.

Leaders of the Kompass Tendency have agreed to go to Switzerland and Austria to present and argue for the line of our balance sheet on Argentina and Bolivia.

Also enclosed are copies of some recent correspondence concerning IP's coverage of the Chilean events and a letter from the SWP leadership to the IEC Majority Tendency concerning a tour of SWP branches.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters

REPORT ON CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE GERMAN SECTION

October 6-7, the German Central Committee met to discuss the issues in dispute in the world movement. Prior to this meeting, three tendencies had been declared in the GIM (IEC Majority Tendency supporters, Leninist-Trotskyist Faction supporters and the Kompass Tendency, which does not completely agree with either of the two international tendencies). After an initial presentation by each tendency, discussion was divided into a section on Latin America and a section on Europe. Most of the time available was spent on the Latin American discussion.

The reporters for the two international tendencies, Ernest Gernain and Peter Camejo, and others who spoke supporting either of these positions presented the ideas that are available in the International Internal Discussion Bulletin. What is of interest is the positions presented by the reporter, Karew, and the other leaders of the Kompass Tendency. These positions are not yet available to the world movement in the IIDB. The document "Why We Did Not Sign the International Majority's Tendency Declaration" signed by twelve leaders of the German section (IIDB Vol. X, No. 11) is not a document of this tendency although many leaders of Kompass signed that document.

On Latin America, the Kompass Tendency disagrees with the line adopted at the last world congress. They believe it has led to disaster in Bolivia and Argentina and must be changed. The most important problem in their opinion is not that the error was made but that it is not being corrected. This could lead to a crisis in confidence in the leadership. Further they stated there is no need for a specific orientation to armed struggle because armed struggle flows from the class struggle itself. If a revolutionary party has a correct orientation to the class struggle, it will have a correct orientation to armed struggle. The orientation of the IEC Majority Tendency leads to substitutionism -- substitution of armed struggle for political struggle, for the class struggle.

The Kompass Tendency supporters stated that the dispute in the Fourth International has not arisen because one of the tendencies is for armed struggle and the other is against it. Both tendencies are for armed struggle. If one tendency was against armed struggle, it would not, or should not, be in the International. The question is how. In their opinion, Joe Hansen's document "The Underlying Differences in Method" is correct on the origins of the dispute. This document was referred to several other times during the discussion.

They raised that they thought the party should organize a parallel apparatus, and they did not know whether the international tendencies, especially the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, agreed with this.

The Kompass Tendency had several criticisms of the perspectives on Europe developed by the IEC Majority Tendency in the European resolution and in some of their articles. First they felt that section 11 entitled "Three Tactics" should be removed from the document. None of the three were tactics. They were either goals or orientations, and this section did not give any advice on tactics, which in any case can vary greatly

country to country.

Second they thought that the concept of the new mass vanguard as it has been developed is incorrect. It is talked about as if it were a structured phenomenon which the party could have a single orientation toward. This is incorrect. It has many components which are not homogeneous. The example used was that it includes student radicals and advanced workers who in many cases cannot even talk to each other. An orientation to the new mass vanguard in Germany, they held, would in reality mean an attempt to win hegemony in the radicalized student movement rather than an orientation toward the working class. They considered the most important task today to make a serious effort to penetrate the working-class movement.

The Kompass Tendency raised some criticisms of Mary-Alice Waters' contribution to the discussion on Europe. While they disagreed with the 4-5 year timetable, they felt her contribution was incorrect when it maintained the document had a catastrophic character.

Of the comrades who spoke the largest number supported the Kompass Tendency. Almost as many supported the IEC Majority Tendency. One person spoke as a supporter of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. A slightly smaller number of comrades than the number supporting either the Kompass or IEC Majority tendencies indicated they did not clearly support any of the three tendencies.

The Kompass Tendency has prepared several documents for the German discussion and is planning on writing additional documents on its attitude toward the issues under discussion in the world movement. When these are available, comrades will be able to have a more complete presentation of their views.

They stressed that a central aspect of their platform was a stand for unity of the International.

Benny Johnson
October 11, 1973

TRANSLATION

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September 26, 1973

Joe Hansen
Intercontinental Press

Dear Comrade Joe,

I have just received the issue of IF dated September 24. In the article by G. Foley on Chile, there are a number of expressions that I find inadmissible.

"the young former guerillas who dies heroically in a futile defense of a capitulationist government" (page 1051)
"fighting for a legally elected government" (page 1052)
"less than 50,000 soldiers could never have intimidated..."
"they died defending a government" (page 1052)

The army did not intimidate the workers, but massacred them. Those who took up arms did not, in reality, do so to defend the Allende government but to defend the liberties and rights of the workers. Their combat was in no way futile; it was an absolutely essential combat, a combat that assures the future of the Chilean working class.

I strongly and totally disassociate myself from this article.

Very cordially,
s/Pierre Frank

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October 13, 1973

Dear Pierre,

Your letter of September 26 concerning some of the formulations in Gerry Foley's article "The Coup in Chile -- What Happened and Why" arrived while I was out of town. However, the comrades read it and Gerry agreed that the formulations were subject to misinterpretation. He therefore modified them in the reprint of the article, which is scheduled to appear as part of a pamphlet on the events in Chile.

In checking the formulations in the article upon returning to New York, I was of the opinion that while they were open to misinterpretation if taken out of context, the general line of the article -- like the others on Chile written by Gerry -- was absolutely clear, and in conformity with the positions codified in the unanimous United Secretariat resolution of December 1971. In my opinion, the line of the article was also in conformity with the September 19 statement of the United Secretariat, although this, of course, was not available at the time Gerry wrote his article.

Now we have received a letter from Comrade Gote Kildén, writing as a member of the RMF's Political Bureau, making in substance the same criticisms as those raised in your letter. In view of what Comrade Kildén says, I think it would be worthwhile to publish his letter in Intercontinental Press, together with a brief clarification by Comrade Foley, and I have written Comrade Kildén accordingly. We will wait for his reply before going ahead in the event he may wish to modify some of his own formulations.

In view of the present situation in our movement, it is easy for unwarranted suspicions to arise concerning the line of this or that article because of incidental badly formulated sentences that would otherwise cause little concern in the context of one or more articles in which a correct and agreed upon line was obviously being followed. To overcome such suspicions it may be advisable from time to time to publish criticisms of the kind made by Comrade Kildén. The present instance would seem to be a case in point.

With best regards,

Joe

cc: Ernest
Livio
Peter

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SWP
14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 100 14
United States of America

Göte Kildén
Sweden
5 October 1973

to: The Political Committee of the SWP

Dear Comrades:

In the last issue of Intercontinental Press, there is an article by comrade Gerry Foley, entitled "The coup in Chile -- what happened and why". One of the conclusions drawn by comrade Foley is a serious political error and has to be clarified. Among many revolutionists in Sweden, as in many other countries, this article is taken as stating the revolutionary marxist point of view in relation to the bloody confrontation in Chile. Therefore an official rectification is urgently needed.

The conclusion which I find in contradiction to the principles of revolutionary marxism, is the following:

"A revolutionary party able to give leadership to the resistance could have completely changed the outcome. Without this, the military force of the former guerillas was insignificant. The final irony was that they died defending a government that had irrevocably condemned itself to death, when they were needed to help form the nucleus of a government based directly on the workers that could have really fought imperialism and dealt it a decisive defeat." (IP Vol. 11, No. 33 - page 1052)

What is this? Moralizing cynicism! An insult to those who died in the battles with the counter-revolutionaries!

Comrade Foley's proposal to those who took up arms and wanted to fight, is the following: Stop fighting, you are "needed to help form the nucleus of a government based directly on the workers"! This is nonsense. Those who died were defending their own lives. They were defending the working class. The counter-revolutionaries wanted to wipe out the political organisations of the working class! They wanted to jail or execute all leaders of the working class! In this struggle the workers of course were not neutral between the camp of Allende and that of the semi-fascists! I think it is necessary to remind comrade Foley of the positions of revolutionary marxism:

"The Bolsheviks did not remain neutral between the camp of Kerensky and that of Kornilov. They fought in the first camp against the second. They accepted the official command as long as they were not sufficiently strong to overthrow it. It was precisely in the month of August, with the Kornilov uprising, that a prodigious upswing of the Bolsheviks began. This upswing was made possible only thanks to the double-edged Bolshevik policy. While participating in the front lines of the struggle against Kornilov, the Bolsheviks did not take the slightest responsibility for the policy of Kerensky. On the contrary, they denounced him as responsible for the reactionary attack and as incapable of overcoming it. In this way they prepared the political premises of the October revolution

Kildén Letter/page 2

in which the laternative Bolshevism or counter-revolution (communism or fascism) evolved from a historic tendency into a living and immediate reality.

"We must teach this lesson to the youth. We must inculcate the Marxist method into them. But as to the people who are a few decades past school age and who persist in counterposing to us at all times -- to us as well as to reality -- the same formulas (which they have, by the way, taken from us), it is necessary to recognize them publicly as incurables who must be kept a few feet away from the general staffs who are elaborating revolutionary policy." (The Spanish Revolution, L. Trotsky, pp. 296-297)

As far as I know, comrade Foley is a few decades past school age, but still I do not want to denounce him publicly. I hope that he made a mistake when he wrote the article and I therefore hope for a clarification. But that is not enough. Comrade Foley is a co-thinker of the Fourth International and therefore I hope for a public rectification!

Maybe comrade Foley has the opinion that there was no possibility to win the battle against the semi-fascists. Maybe that's why we writes that the young former guerillas "died heroically in a futile (!) defence of a capitulationist government". But this doesn't change things:

"A revolutionary party will always prefer to subject itself to a defeat together with the masses rather than stand aside moralizing, and leave the workers without leadership under the bayonets of the bourgeoisie. A party beaten in battle will root itself deeply in the hearts of the masses and will sooner or later take revenge. But a party that has deserted the class at the moment of danger will never come to life again". (Ibid., p. 132)

Communist Greetings,

Gote Kildén

- member of RMF's Political Bureau

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
October 13, 1973

Sweden

Dear Comrade Kildén,

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 5 concerning the article by Comrade Gerry Foley in the September 24 issue of Intercontinental Press.

Your letter was addressed to the "Political Committee of the SWP." This is in error. Intercontinental Press is not a publication of the Socialist Workers Party, however great our interest is in supporting and circulating it as the weekly magazine of the Fourth International. Consequently I have forwarded your letter to Intercontinental Press.

Comradely yours,
s/Lew Jones
SWP National Office

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October 13, 1973

Dear Comrade Kildén,

We received your letter criticizing some of the formulations in the article by Gerry Foley "The Coup in Chile -- What Happened and Why" which appeared in the September 24 issue of Intercontinental Press.

I think that the sentences you cite are open to misinterpretation, particularly if they are taken out of context. Since others may have gained the same impression as you, I think it would be worthwhile to publish your letter in Intercontinental Press together with a brief clarification by Comrade Foley.

This should be done as soon as possible, so we would appreciate your checking your letter again in case you want to modify anything before it is published.

Comradely yours,
s/Joseph Hansen
Editor

cc: Pierre
Ernest
Peter

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

October 16, 1973

BRUSSELS

Dear Charles,

We discussed your proposal, communicated to us by phone today, that a member of the IEC Majority Tendency make a tour of the SWP branches between October 20 and the beginning of November.

Since these dates cannot be met by us, we would like to make a counterproposal -- at least a three-week tour from about November 25 to December 15. It would be still better if it could be longer. We have 22 branches, everyone of which is anxious to organize a meeting to hear an international leader of the IEC Majority Tendency. Even with an exhausting effort, one person could not begin to cover them all, or even the major ones, in two weeks.

On your proposed dates, which gives us only five days' notice, it is virtually impossible to organize an adequate tour or give the branches time to arrange for the special meetings they will want to have.

Additional considerations are as follows:

We held an extensive three-months' oral discussion (and four-months written discussion) in all the branches prior to our August convention. During those three months we repeatedly requested that the IEC Majority Tendency send one or more comrades to tour. One comrade did finally arrive, less than two weeks before the convention, and made brief stops at four of the largest branches. This was quite inadequate.

As of September 28 the SWP Political Committee reopened the written discussion in the party on all points on the world congress agenda. However, the PC decided not to reopen oral discussion in the branches until one or more of the new resolutions submitted by the IEC Majority Tendency for vote at the world congress become available. The translation of the political resolution adopted by the IEC Majority Tendency is now being checked by the comrades in Brussels -- a special request they made -- so this will not be received in the SWP branches for several weeks at the earliest. The other new IEC Majority resolutions -- on Argentina and on armed struggle in Latin America -- were received in New York today. They have to be translated and then published before they can be distributed to the branches.

For these reasons we propose the last week of November and the first two weeks of December as the best dates for a tour by a leader of the IEC Majority Tendency. If this comrade can only come for two weeks, the first half of December would be best.

If further details need to be taken up, this can be done at the Parity Committee meeting on October 23.

Comradely,
s/Lew Jones
for the Political Bureau

cc: Walter