

Discussion Bulletin

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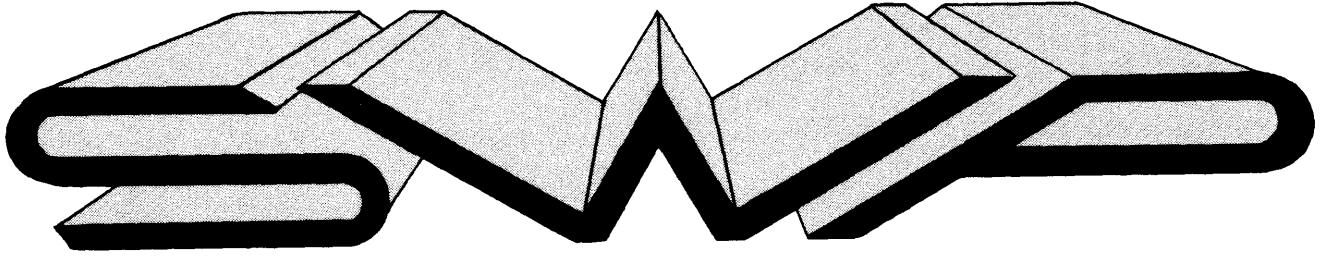
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From Trotskyism to Maoism -- a Review of the Swabeck Case

By the Political Committee

Comrade Arne Swabeck's disloyalty which has brought about his suspension from the party arises out of his eight-year political evolution from a Trotskyist into a complete Maoist. The process can be traced through the many pages of his discussion articles, statements and resolutions published across that period within the party.

1. The Evolution of Swabeck's Position

It began in 1958 with the launching of the peasant communes by the Mao regime. Comrade Swabeck attributed the step largely to pressures from below, conjuring up an image of peasant masses turned economic planners. He depicted the regime as responding democratically to mass pressure, using methods of persuasion to secure cooperation from reluctant peasants and shaping the communes into a motive force, alongside industrialization, for a whole new culture.

Subsequent developments refuted this roseate picture. The peasantry stubbornly resisted the artificially-forced pace of land reform through the commune policy and the high-handed bureaucratic way in which the Mao regime sought to implement the policy. The whole economy began to suffer from the commune adventure and the regime had to modify its policy, although this was not openly admitted. Ignoring the true situation, Comrade Swabeck continued to echo the Maoist glamorization of the communes as a "great leap forward." With similar adulation he hailed any and all measures promoted by the regime. He viewed the Chinese revolution as moving uninterrupted, stage by stage, toward socialism under Mao's guidance.

Although he may be a proponent of the dialectical method, he has persistently failed to recognize the existence and intensification of the divergences and antagonisms between the masses and the regime along with other contradictions in contemporary Chinese society and its course of development.

When the Chinese Trotskyists challenged this interpretation of events in their own land, Comrade Swabeck denounced them slanderously. According to him, they acted like carping critics with a factional ax to grind; they presented tendentious, one-sided reports of Chinese developments, including repetition of capitalist propaganda; their false position made it impossible for the Maoists to allow them into a revolutionary coalition.

Arrests and other persecutions of our co-thinkers by the Mao regime, he insinuated, were something they brought upon themselves. They were so much out of touch with reality that

they did not even recognize the revolution, much less support it. They had a preconceived notion that the country is Stalinist dominated, when there is no evidence whatever of Stalinist repression. Under Mao, he contended, conditions of internal democracy exist that few parties can match.

In similar vein Comrade Swabeck introduced in the Socialist Workers Party his revisionist views on the Maoist regime and the Chinese Communist Party. The political regime is not bureaucratically deformed, he argued, but basically democratic in structure, operation and tendency. The CCP is not in any way a Stalinist or opportunist party but a revolutionary Marxist party. At first he characterized the CCP as having ceased to be Stalinist during the 1946-49 struggle for power. Later he extended this retrospective re-evaluation back to the whole period after Mao became head of the CCP in the late 1920's.

Expression of these views was accompanied by demands for a basic change in party policy. Drop the characterization of China as a deformed workers state, he insisted. Go beyond the policy of unconditional support of China against imperialism. Invalidate the program of political revolution for China. Abandon political opposition to Mao's regime.

He called for political reconciliation with the CCP in the form of critical support to the Mao leadership. In practice, however, his line has been one of unconditional endorsement of over-all Maoist policy, domestic and international. His line of political reliance on the Maoist bureaucracy has been counterposed to the party's line of struggle against it for fundamental change in accord with the Trotskyist program of workers' democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

According to the fantasies of Comrade Swabeck's reconstructed version of Chinese history, Mao's critique of the causes of the 1927 defeat of the CCP paralleled Trotsky's and constituted an attack on the basic pillars of Stalin's policies. With the establishment in 1935 of Mao's leadership CCP policy shifted in a revolutionary direction. The only possible criticism of Mao, in Comrade Swabeck's view, is his defense of Stalin "as a person," and this criticism should be assigned to an educational role within the framework of political solidarity with the regime.

Mao's submissive popular front policy with Chiang's regime during the war against Japan is justified by Comrade Swabeck with the sophism that Mao's line wasn't exactly like Stalin's. With similar political dishonesty he glosses over Mao's more recent complicity in the popular front course that brought catastrophe to the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965. He also defends Mao's sectarian rejection of a united front among workers states in defense of Vietnam, echoing the CCP's alibi that the Kremlin would use the united front as a cover under which to continue its treachery.

As he would have it, Peking's policies closely conform with revolutionary internationalism and have served to rejuvenate an international movement correctly oriented toward the world socialist revolution. The CCP is initiating a revolutionary reorientation leading to world-wide regroupments. Possibilities thus arise of restoring a genuine Communist International around Mao's leadership.

The Progressive Labor Party, we are told, is the American expression of the regroupment initiated by the CCP and the SWP should seek fusion with it. As in the case of the Mao regime, Comrade Swabeck glamorizes the PLP which maintains that the Soviet Union has reverted to capitalism, misrepresenting the true nature of its programmatic admixture of Maoist-style sectarianism, adventurism and opportunism. Listening to him, one wouldn't realize that the PLP leaders designate the SWP as "objectively counterrevolutionary," and that they instigate physical assaults on our comrades. All this to the contrary, he accuses the SWP leadership of disorienting the party politically by falsely attempting to pin a Stalinist label on the PLP.

With the advent of the "cultural revolution" Comrade Swabeck rose to new superlatives in his exaltation of Mao. To him the present Maoist course is nothing less than a monumental historical development, the permanent revolution carried into the cultural arena. It did not arise as an inter-bureaucratic conflict between different factions in the CCP leadership which subsequently activated various elements among the masses. Mao leads the anti-bureaucratic struggle for democratization required for the victory of a political revolution in a deformed workers' state. Any notion that only Trotskyism has the program that can lead a struggle against bureaucracy is therefore wrong.

Comrade Swabeck tries to justify the adulation of Mao that has characterized the "cultural revolution." The adulation is not for Mao as head of a bureaucracy, we are told, but for his teachings as the greatest authority on the Chinese revolution. Mao's thought is Marxism-Leninism applied to China. The campaign for study of his thought is made a feature of the "cultural revolution" as insurance against revisionism and to inspire confident self-reliance among revolutionaries.

Thus armed, Comrade Swabeck contends, the Maoists are closer to the real problems of revolution than the sterile criticisms voiced by the SWP. He further charges that our party is as hostile to the Chinese as the social democrats were to the Bolsheviks. Party policy does not align with the opponents of Stalinism, he alleges, but with the enemies of revolution. It calls for the overthrow of the Mao regime when the only force ready to follow this policy is the counter-revolution. Therefore, he slanderously charges the SWP is only a hairline from aid and comfort to the imperialist enemy and pro-capitalist counter-revolution.

To this he adds the allegation that party policy on China interlinks with its general pacifist, reformist and opportunist practices, and all this stems from the political and theoretical bankruptcy of the party leadership. That in turn results, he concludes, from the party leaders' disdain for the study of Mao's thought. Consequently they don't understand what's happening in China and have become purveyors of misinformation and miseducation to the socialist movement in this country and abroad.

Comrade Swabeck managed to organize a tiny grouplet in seeking support for his line within the party. Its members have emulated him in voicing unqualified support to Mao and unbridled criticism of the SWP. The grouplet actually became a staging area for departure of its members from the party, serving as a bridge toward capitulation to the Maoist variety of Stalinism. A typical example is Al Appel's letter of December 11, 1965, addressed to fellow members of the Swabeck tendency.

"Now, if the Chinese Question occupies the central axis of the world working class politics and if the epicenter of the international class struggle is the battle between American imperialism and revolutionary China," he wrote, "and if the ideological struggle between Trotskyism and Stalinism has been superseded by the living struggle between Peking and Moscow and if the SWP leadership is only a hairline removed from the danger of giving aid and comfort to the imperialist enemy, then it no longer follows that the possibility of reforming the party is valid. . . . Just as a new and powerful force, the Chinese Revolution, arose on the world scene, a new power has appeared here that possesses the promise of regenerating American Communism, the Progressive Labor Party. . . . I therefore propose that the tendency immediately contact the leadership of the PLP and initiate discussions leading to the joining of their organization." (Emphasis in original).

Soon thereafter Appel quit the party and joined Progressive Labor. Others in the tendency also resigned from membership with similar repudiations of the party and comparable pro-Maoist declarations.

While conducting his struggle against the foundations of our movement, Comrade Swabeck has sought a common front with whatever minorities appeared within the party on one special point -- opposition to the principle of majority rule. In self-protection he has opposed any form of disciplinary action against those guilty of indiscipline and disloyalty, falsely accusing the party leadership of conducting a political purge motivated by factionalism. His organizational course has constituted an attack on our Leninist principles of party operation and has been oriented toward reducing the party to a loose, all-inclusive federation of freelance factionalists.

His attitude has been such that David Dreiser of the Kirk-Kaye tendency felt secure in writing him on February 9, 1966, "You know that Seattle and their supporters here plan an early exodus. I write to urge you to join the move . . ." Comrade Swabeck said nothing about this sneak attack the Kirkites were making on the party in preparing their 1966 split from our ranks and failed to inform the national leadership about it, as he was obligated to do as a loyal party member who also belonged to the Advisory Committee of the National Committee.

He acted similarly when his pro-Maoist associates of the Boulton cult were preparing their split a few months ago. Discussion at a Milwaukee branch meeting on the eve of their split, at which a loyal comrade on a speaking tour chanced to be present, indicated that they had been in consultation with Comrade Swabeck on the occasion of their break from the party. Yet he kept silent as the Boultonites deserted the party, proclaimed their solidarity with the Mao regime, and proceeded to join the Workers World Party.

Comrade Swabeck acted behind the back of the National Committee in like manner in sending his June 2, 1967 letter to G. Healy of the Socialist Labor League. Although a plenum of the N.C. opened on that day, he waited until the plenum had adjourned before sending a copy of his letter to the National Secretary. In the letter to Healy he attacked the SWP, hailed the SLL for its gestures of support to Mao's "cultural revolution", and expressed no criticism of Healy other than a regret that he had not gone all the way over to Maoism.

This unauthorized correspondence with a hostile non-party organization constituted a violation of party discipline. Moreover, the letter was sent to an opponent organization that has purported to read the SWP out of the working class and made a physical assault in Britain on one of our co-thinkers, Comrade Ernest Tate. It was an utterly disloyal act.

Because of Comrade Swabeck's indisciplined and disloyal conduct the Political Committee recommended that the National Committee suspend him from membership, pending a final decision in his case by the party convention. In a poll of the N.C. a majority -- well over the two-thirds required by the party constitution in the case of an N.C. member -- voted to suspend him from the party. N.C. members responding to the poll indicated general agreement that his action was indisciplined and disloyal. The poll reflected concurrence as to the basic principles involved and the leadership's duty to uphold those principles.

2. Some Tactical Questions

Some differences were expressed, however, over tactical factors involved in fulfilling that duty. These tended to center around three main considerations: (1) a desire to avoid having an organizational question divert attention from political clarification at a time when a pre-convention discussion was just beginning in the party and an international discussion had just opened on China; (2) a question as to whether Healy might use the situation to put our co-thinkers at a tactical disadvantage; (3) concern lest an impression be created that a political problem was being dealt with by organizational means.

Important tactical considerations of this nature merit close attention. They were, in fact, weighed in the balance by the P.C., along with other questions involved, before it recommended the disciplinary action that has been taken in Comrade Swabeck's case. Its appraisal of the situation can be summed up as follows:

Our co-thinkers are wholly aware of Comrade Swabeck's views, and there does not appear to be any among them who shares his Maoist position. His own recognition of this state of affairs is reflected in his letter to Healy. It is shown both by the attack made on the United Secretariat and by the hostile act of expressing fraternal solidarity with a rabid opponent of the reunified world movement. All can plainly see that he has turned his back on world Trotskyism, just as he has repudiated the SWP. Having abandoned hope of making Maoists out of Trotskyists, he has acted to cut himself off entirely from the Trotskyist movement.

His premeditated step does create a freer atmosphere for objective discussion of the Chinese question among comrades who hold in common a Trotskyist outlook, whatever differences of emphasis on various aspects may exist. No problem arises of a diversion from political clarification of this complex issue because of disciplinary action taken against a disloyal comrade turned Maoist. Thus there is no real prospect that Healy can utilize the Swabeck case to cause difficulties for our co-thinkers.

The latter prospect is still further restricted by the political contradictions involved in any Healy-Swabeck relationship. Healy is no Maoist. He is a sectarian adventurer toying with support for Mao and his Red Guards for his own insular reasons, and he is capable of dropping that line as precipitately as he picked it up. It follows that Healy would quickly prove to be as much of a problem to Swabeck, the devout Maoist, as Swabeck will be to Healy. Neither is in a position to cause any real difficulties for our co-thinkers, who are inclined to consider the Swabeck case as an SWP affair to be handled as the party thinks best.

In considering the tactical timing of disciplinary action against him, thought had to be given to the fact that a pre-convention discussion was about to open in the party. During such a discussion, under SWP norms, all comrades are free to bring up any question they choose. The suspension excludes Comrade Swabeck from participation in the discussion. This automatically raised the question: would his suspension actually make it appear that a political problem was being dealt with organizationally?

This same question had arisen at previous junctures in the course of the Swabeck tendency's evolution away from loyalty to the party. On those occasions disciplinary action was postponed for several important reasons. Until a political dispute has been clearly resolved, it is generally preferable to avoid organizational controversies. It is better to warn those who are guilty of organizational violations, explain proper conduct, educate comrades in the party's principles, but try to avoid mixing up political and organizational issues. In general, the political issues should be clarified and settled on a political basis before any organizational problems connected with the dispute are dealt with and disposed of.

Political clarification not yet having been fully attained, the party leadership did not initiate disciplinary action where organizational violations occurred. In those circumstances an impression could arise that a dissident minority can get away with anything in the party. But the reality is that enforcement of the party's organizational principles was only postponed -- not cancelled. First it was necessary to reach a decision on the political issues in dispute. Then the time would be at hand to deal with indiscipline and disloyalty.

These considerations lead now to another question: Where do matters presently stand concerning clarification and resolution of the political dispute with the Swabeck tendency? There were five years of continuous discussion of Comrade Swabeck's views up to the 1963 party convention. At that time the party overwhelmingly reaffirmed its basic position on China: its designation as a workers state, although bureaucratically deformed; unconditional defense of China against imperialism; critical support to Peking as against Moscow on certain important issues of international revolutionary strategy; a program of political revolution to abolish bureaucratic rule and establish workers democracy.

Simultaneously Comrade Swabeck's pro-Maoist position was overwhelmingly rejected. His tiny grouplet found itself isolated, unable to extend its influence within the party. Thereafter, he continued to present the same basic views that the party had already rejected. These were made available to the comrades in accord with our established procedures for internal party discussion, and his position was again overwhelmingly

rejected by the 1965 party convention. These facts rule out any implication that an effort is being made to resolve a political problem by organizational means. The political reality is that his Maoist line has been thoroughly considered and definitively rejected by the party.

It would therefore be unwarranted to set aside disciplinary action against Comrade Swabeck, despite gross violation of party principles, simply because a pre-convention discussion is opening. A false notion would be created that a political dispute can't be resolved to a point where enforcement of organizational principles takes precedence over other considerations. An implication would follow that a political minority has perpetual immunity from compliance with party norms. It would begin to appear that indiscipline and disloyalty must be tolerated unless and until a dissident minority decides, in its own good time, to split from the party.

3. The Main Issues At Stake

Education of our cadres against any such mistaken concepts is required at every juncture in the living experiences of the party. In each instance of the present kind, the comrades should be made fully cognizant of the basic principles on which our party is founded. It is timely to summarize our Leninist principles as they were reaffirmed in the 1965 convention resolution on "The Organizational Character of the SWP."

That resolution states that our movement aims to train its cadres in the irreconcilable spirit of a combat party. That aim requires firmness in political line, unity in action, disciplined conduct in all internal party affairs and unconditional loyalty to the party. These are indispensable requirements for a party that aspires to lead the workers to victory in a struggle for political power. To go up against the ruling class in the United States, it is imperative that we approach our revolutionary tasks as one party with one program.

Our democratic-centralist norms enable the party to shape such a course in a free and democratic internal atmosphere. Room is provided for expression of dissident views. The right to organize tendencies and factions is scrupulously protected. All individuals and tendencies have a full chance to contribute to the development of the party and to the shaping of its leading cadres. Minority views may be presented in internal discussion at the proper time and in an appropriate manner as determined by the party.

Once a decision has been made on disputed issues, a minority may retain its views but must subordinate itself in action to the majority. Between conventions authority becomes centralized and the party confronts the outside world with a single policy, that of the majority. In that way the

party maintains its role as a revolutionary vanguard. Its character as a combat organization is safeguarded. Unity in action is preserved. Firmness of political line is assured and the party is enabled to maintain its principles unadulterated.

In keeping with these objectives comrades must be imbued with an understanding that party patriotism is part of revolutionary consciousness. Disloyalty and indiscipline must be looked upon as crimes against the party that bring punishment.

As the record shows, Comrade Swabeck has involved himself in a series of violations of responsible, disciplined and loyal conduct. This has recently culminated in the overt act of his letter to Healy that constitutes a public attack on the SWP.

Confronted with that flagrant act of disloyalty, the Political Committee felt duty bound to initiate his suspension from membership by the National Committee. He was then informed that, as an N.C. member, disciplinary action against him remained subject to final decision by the party convention and that he had the right to appeal to the convention.

Instead of exercising the right of appeal within the party, he has made yet another public attack on the SWP. The August 3, 1967, issue of the Marcyite paper, Workers World, quotes from a "prepared statement" by Arne Swabeck. He is reported to have characterized the disciplinary action against him as "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 political degeneracy." This statement has since been distributed by Workers World to public party meetings.

In view of his repeated acts of disloyalty, the Political Committee recommends that the convention expel Comrade Swabeck from the party.

August 17, 1967

(C O P Y)

Los Angeles, June 5, 1967

Dear Farrell:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I sent to Gerry Healy and the Socialist Labor League. Its content will demonstrate clearly and obviously that the views expressed are my own. It does not pretend to speak for anybody else.

I am sending a copy of this letter also, together with a copy of my letter to the recent plenum, to our co-thinkers for their information.

Comradely yours,

S/ Arne

Los Angeles, Calif. June 2, 1967

Gerry Healy
186a Clapham High Street
London, S.W.4.

Dear Gerry:

Please accept my congratulation to you and the comrades of the Socialist Labor League on the stand taken in critical support of the Chinese Red Guards, and critical support of the struggle carried on by Mao Tse-tung and his collaborators in the Chinese socialist cultural revolution.

This is a welcome development indeed. It should bring a ray of hope and renewed confidence to those who have remained steadfast on the proletarian revolutionary position; for one must assume that there still are some of those among the presently fragmented movement of Trotskyist groups and tendencies.

To say this does not mean an attempt to impart the conviction that all these groups will be able to reorient their position on the important and complex question of the Chinese revolution. That could too easily become mere wishful thinking. After all, the centers of imperialism in Europe and North America are strewn with the wreckage of parties, groups and tendencies which were once revolutionary but later turned into the opposite.

Nevertheless, the stand taken by the SLL deserves to be greeted in the sense of the inspiration that it does provide for revolutionary workers.

This action is so much more important since it emerges out of the lessons of a great revolution. The working class parties, groups and tendencies which fail to rise to the occasion and assimilate its lessons will be relegated to the dustbin of history.

During the first half of the twentieth century the Russian revolution formed the central axis of world politics. It drew a sharp dividing line through the labor and socialist movement of all countries. Under Trotsky's guidance we studied and attempted to assimilate its lessons; both its triumph and its degeneracy. This was a salutary development in which the Trotskyist movement matured. However, as you well remember, many members floundered and failed to pay heed to these lessons.

In the second half of the twentieth century the Chinese revolution, and its uninterrupted development, has become the central axis of world politics. In this case also a sharp line of division has been drawn through the working class movement of all countries. It has hit the Communist Parties most directly, but affected the Trotskyist movement as well.

What is the attitude now among Trotskyists to this development? Its great importance for world revolutionary perspectives no one can deny. And yet, as you are well aware, many more, who claim the Trotskyist heritage, are now floundering and failing to assimilate, or even to pay heed to its lessons.

Most glaringly at fault in this respect, if not entirely derelict of duty, are the leaders of the SWP. The Chinese revolution presented an acid test in which they have been found wanting; for there can be no greater error than that of failing to recognize a revolution that is unfolding before their very eyes. They still adhere stubbornly to a course that defies reality and is bound to end disastrously. Their basic policy is still aimed at the overthrow of the Mao Tse-tung regime; and this at a time when virtually the entire radical milieu throughout the world, outside of the Moscow oriented parties, recognize that the only force ready to follow this policy would be those of the bourgeois inspired counter-revolution.

But the present position of our co-thinkers in the United Secretariat is not much different. It represents a revision in principle of an earlier basic policy.

Viewing the early stage of the Chinese revolution in May, 1952, the International Executive Committee plenum characterized it as "the beginning of a process of permanent revolution," and it decided that: "The Fourth International and the Chinese Trotskyists will give critical support to Mao Tse-tung's government."

No objection can be made to a revision of policy if necessitated by subsequent developments of the Chinese revolution. In such a case, however, the need for revision would require thorough explanation and adequate documentation. But no such necessity has arisen. Quite the contrary. The early anticipation of "the beginning of a process of permanent revolution" has found further confirmation -- and confirmation under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung and his collaborators.

The fundamentally false SWP policy on China is not an isolated phenomenon. It interlinks with and has its logical corollary in the general reformist inspired and opportunist attitude, outlook and practice that has become predominant in leading party circles. This is reflected most clearly in

the policy pursued in the anti-war movement.

More than a year ago I urged the SWP leadership to base its anti-war policy on the Leninist conception of revolutionary defeatism, and to take the necessary steps that such a policy entails. In the first instance, that would mean to favor the victory of the National Liberation Front, to say so publicly and declare that its struggle is just. Lenin considered the policy of revolutionary defeatism entirely justified in regard to the Czarist armies. It is many times more justified in the case of the American imperialist assault on Vietnam.

Lenin said that the policy of defeatism is the logical conclusion from the class relationships of imperialist wars. He insisted on the necessity of this policy as a means of preserving the revolutionary quality of the party. Trotsky taught us that "the renunciation of defeatism under the conditions of imperialist war is tantamount to the rejection of the socialist revolution." And yet, this is precisely the position of the party leadership. It never accepted, much less practiced, the policy of revolutionary defeatism.

I was happy to notice that the SLL takes its stand squarely for the victory of the NLF.

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Permit me now to make some comments on the elucidation you comrades have made of your position on China.

In Banda's speech "Hands off the Chinese Revolution," I notice the statement that the "movement in China remains tied to the old doctrines, to the sanctified dogmas and completely bankrupt fetishes of Stalinism; the theory that Stalin was right against Trotsky..."

The first part of this statement is an error; the last part is correct. On this point of Stalin vs. Trotsky the Chinese still have some important lessons to learn. When the Soviet workers get ready to settle accounts with their bureaucrats, they will be able to provide real assistance. Here in the SWP and among our co-thinkers internationally I have been fighting since the rise of the people's communes, in 1958, for a rational revolutionary attitude toward China. I have often stated my disagreement with the Chinese on the question of Stalin vs. Trotsky. But a fundamental and historically documented criticism of the Chinese views on this point can have fruitful educational value only within the framework of such a rational attitude.

Let's examine the other part of Comrade Banda's statement that the Chinese remain tied to the old doctrines, to the sanctified dogmas and the bankrupt fetishes of Stalinism.

To do so, it is necessary to refer to the works of Mao Tse-tung -- the authentic leader of the Chinese revolution.

First however, let me point out that the Chinese cannot at all use the sanctified dogmas and bankrupt fetishes of Stalinism. It would serve no purpose whatever. Nor can we use our formulas about Stalinism to interpret the Chinese revolution. They would explain nothing, but rather lead us astray. This is the fatal mistake made by the SWP leaders. They attempt to squeeze their "interpretation" of the Chinese revolution into the mould of the Stalinist degeneration in the USSR. They seem blissfully unaware that we always interpreted the rise of Stalinism on dialectical materialist grounds, as a parasitic bureaucratic excrescence not endowed with any quality of permanence. Much less can such a monstrosity arise elsewhere under different historical conditions.

Each revolution unfolds according to laws of its own internal development; and it can be interpreted only in terms of an understanding of these laws. What is necessary, above all, is to see China today as it actually is and as it has developed out of its own protracted revolutionary experience.

You will recall that during the events of the 1927 defeated Chinese revolution the main thrust of Trotsky's criticism of Stalin's policy was that it subordinated the CCP to the Kuomintang and the Chinese workers and peasants to the bourgeoisie. Mao's critique of these same events closely paralleled Trotsky's. His main point was the failure to maintain the independence of the CCP and of the armed forces under CCP leadership. But he did not lay the blame for this failure to Stalin. Quite the contrary; he said for this we Chinese must take the responsibility.

Mao broke with Stalin, not in name but in fact, during the struggle for power in 1947-49. At the time Stalin had a pact with Chiang Kai-shek, officially recognizing his regime as the legitimate ruler of China. Stalin advised the CCP to collaborate with Chiang and not engage in a struggle for power. The CCP did the exact opposite.

When assuming state power Mao and his associates maintained their conception that two major stages of development are embodied in the Chinese revolution -- the bourgeois democratic and the socialist. This had no relation whatever to the sanctified dogmas and bankrupt fetishes of Stalinism. It was the theory of permanent revolution to which they had adhered throughout the protracted struggle for state power. Most generally they used the term uninterrupted revolution.

In December 1939 Mao stated this basic conception succinctly. "The democratic revolution is the necessary preparation for the socialist revolution, and the socialist revolution is the inevitable sequel to the democratic revolution..."

A clear understanding of both the differences and the interconnections between the democratic and the socialist revolutions is indispensable for correct leadership in the Chinese revolution." He added the pertinent point that the democratic and socialist revolutions formed "two parts of one organic whole, guided by one and the same communist ideology." (Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 331, 361)

Correct leadership in this development the Chinese Communist Party attained through its clear understanding of both the differences and the interconnections between the democratic and the socialist revolutions. Affirmed in life was once again the permanent character of the revolution.

Hitherto the Marxist conception of revolution as an uninterrupted process has not been explicitly projected beyond the political and economic sphere into the cultural arena. Nevertheless, this further extension was implicit in its basic premises. Ideological changes to conform to the changed socio-economic structure have always been regarded as imperative, but all too often expected to follow automatically. Only the inflexible determination of the Chinese Communist Party leaders show the earnest effort to really bring it about. Under their guidance the socialist cultural revolution is rolling on with the force of an avalanche. It subjects all persons in authority to criticism by the masses. Many millions, workers, peasants, soldiers, students and intellectuals are stood on their feet to join political debate in the streets, factories, army, communes, schools, everywhere. The people are aroused to criticise and supervise their leaders. This is proletarian democracy in its broadest and most authentic form.

The Communist Party is similarly subjected to critical scrutiny by the masses. This is a most healthy aspect of the great debate. The revolutionary quality of a working class party is not established once and for all; it must be subjected to constant test and verification. If the revolutionary quality is to endure, it will need constant renewal; and only through the practical experience in the class struggle can political and theoretical clarity and firmness with revolutionary dedication be maintained.

The burning question today is, which road to follow: whether forward on the socialist road or backward on the road that reverts to capitalism. This issue is focussed within the party; and it is being fought to a finish with the participation of the masses. In turn, the masses are educating themselves in this great revolutionary movement.

Most assuredly, these examples of how China has developed out of its own revolutionary experiences do not have any resemblance to the sanctified dogmas and bankrupt fetishes of Stalinism.

If I understand Comrade Banda's speech correctly, he seems to think that the Chinese Communist Party is saddled with the theory of socialism in one country; it has "degenerated to a point beyond redemption"; it does not follow a policy of international revolution; "it is an empirical movement without an integrated theoretical conception behind it."

How do these complaints correspond to reality? Surely, both bureaucratic and revisionist tendencies have shown up within the Communist Party. More important, however, is the question: what is being done about it? And on this point, as you comrades do recognize, the Mao Tse-tung leadership is fighting against both tendencies. But this is not all of it. The same leadership has carried on over a period of several years a vigorous, tireless, protracted and stubborn struggle against the revisionism of the Kremlin and the Kremlin oriented Communist Parties. And it has done so pretty much in the same manner and with the same theoretical clarity with which Lenin combatted the revisionism of Kautsky and the Second International. This is what the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute is all about.

If you will recall some of the essential points made by the Chinese in this dispute, you will quickly recognize that these very points are derived from a well founded program and a thoroughly integrated theoretical conception.

The major Peking indictment against the Kremlin revisionism is on its peaceful coexistence with American imperialism. "In the place of international class struggle they advocate international class collaboration," say the Chinese. Next they turn to the Kremlin advocacy of the peaceful road to socialism, which includes the pernicious notion that bourgeois parliaments can be converted "from an organ of bourgeois democracy into a genuine instrument of the people's will." These, say the Chinese, are "precisely the questions that divide Marxists from revisionists."

The practice of peaceful coexistence with imperialism and the advocacy of a peaceful road to socialism we have always recognized as central issues of Kremlin treachery, which were to be combatted. Precisely this is what Mao and his associates have been doing for so long.

Additional explanation of their views is contained in the basic documents published in the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute, from which I will extract a few points to refresh your memory. The Chinese recall that Lenin stressed "the great significance of the unity between the proletariat in the capitalist countries and the oppressed nations for the victory of the proletarian revolution." To carry this idea into reality, the Chinese say, the proletariat and its communist vanguard in the capitalist countries must march in the lead. But they must also support the struggles of the oppressed peoples in colonial and semi-colonial areas in order to establish the common cause against imperialism.

Peaceful coexistence between nations of different social systems, they say further, "cannot be a substitute for the necessary revolutionary struggle...To advance the idea of general disarmament as the fundamental road to world peace, and spread illusions that imperialism will lay down its arms, is deliberately to deceive the proletariat and help the imperialists in their policies of aggression and war."

Mao and his collaborators insist: "There must be a revolutionary party able to link the leadership closely with the broad mass of the people...Proletarian internationalism must be demanded of all parties, large or small...The proletarian party must never base its thinking, policies and actions on the assumption that the capitalists will accept peaceful transition to socialism. It must fully prepare for armed struggle in the revolution...Ideologically and organizationally the party must constantly prepare its own ranks and the masses for revolution and promote revolutionary struggle...In the capitalist countries the party must not fall into legalism and parliamentary cretinism...The proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat are essential for the thorough solution of the contradictions of capitalist society."

* * *

At the Young Socialist conference at Morecambe a delegate, Mark Jenkins, when discussing the question of China, informed the audience: "It is impossible to defeat bureaucracy if you do not understand how it arose and only Trotskyism and the Fourth International are able to explain how it arose in Russia and China and therefore only they can lead a successful struggle against bureaucracy."

Is such boastfulness really warranted? Is this the way to educate the youth? I feel we can afford to be more modest. We have yet to earn our right to leadership of any really effective movement, not to mention a great revolution such as Mao and his collaborators have guided successfully from its initial stage through its continued and uninterrupted development to the present higher social and cultural levels. In its real essence this is more than a socialist cultural revolution; it is simultaneously a political revolution aiming to crush the pronounced bureaucratic and revisionist tendencies that have arisen.

Giving this whole development the serious consideration it deserves, one aspect calls for special attention. I have presented some excerpts from the Chinese position in the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute. That also is more than just a dispute with the Kremlin. It is a conscious effort toward revolutionary reorientation of the world communist movement -- a conscious effort to support the Marxist-Leninist tendencies that may exist within and outside of this movement.

This poses a pertinent question also to the Trotskyist movement -- at least to the section of it which is sufficiently open minded to recognize the Chinese revolution. Trotskyists can have no interests separate and apart from those of the working class. Most certainly, the Chinese effort toward revolutionary reorientation is in the interest of the working class. And just as certainly, it should be up to all revolutionary members and supporters of our movement to work toward a common cause in these efforts. This is the pertinent question that demands an answer.

Hoping that you comrades will give due consideration to the various and important points of this letter, and with best wishes for further progress along the line of the positive steps that you have already taken, I remain

Comradely yours

Arne Swabeck
129 Bimini Place
Los Angeles, Calif. 90004

Motion:

Under date of June 2, 1967, Comrade Arne Swabeck, an advisory member of the National Committee, addressed a letter to G. Healy expressing fraternal solidarity with the Socialist Labor League and attacking policies of the Socialist Workers Party.

His action is a violation of party discipline because it constitutes unauthorized correspondence with a non-party organization.

His action is disloyal to the party because it constitutes fraternization with an opponent organization.

Because of his indisciplined and disloyal conduct the Political Committee recommends that Comrade Swabeck be suspended forthwith from membership in the party.

Article V, Section 3, Paragraph 4 of the Party Constitution states: "Members of the National Committee may be dropped from the Committee and/or from the Party only by vote of the National Convention. Members of the National Committee may, however, for cause be suspended from membership and barred from all rights as members, pending final decision of the Party Convention, by vote of two-thirds of the membership of the National Committee."

In accordance with this Constitutional provision the Political Committee directs the National Secretary to conduct an immediate poll of the National Committee on the Political Committee's recommendation that Comrade Swabeck be suspended forthwith from membership in the party because of his indisciplined and disloyal conduct.

Carried unanimously.

June 22, 1967

Results of National Committee Poll on Suspension of Swabeck

Vote of regular members on June 22, 1967 P.C. motion
recommending suspension:

For: 25

Against: 1

Not Voting: 1

Vote Not Received: 1

Consultative Vote

Alternate Members:

For: 17

Against: 0

Vote Not Received: 2

Advisory Members:

For: 2

Against: 1

Abstain: 1

Vote Not Received: 1

(C O P Y)

July 6, 1967

Arne Swabeck
129 Bimini Place
Los Angeles, Calif. 90004

Dear Comrade Swabeck:

You are hereby notified that the National Committee has suspended you from membership in the party. The action has been taken through a poll of the National Committee on a June 22 motion of the Political Committee, a copy of which is attached.

As provided by the party constitution, your suspension remains subject to final decision of the party convention, but in the meantime you are barred from all rights as a member, except the right of appeal to the national convention from the disciplinary action taken against you.

Comradely yours,

S/ Farrell Dobbs
National Secretary

(C O P Y)

June 13, 1967

Ed Shaw
N.Y., N.Y.

Dear Ed,

The NCers met last night to discuss the Swabeck letter. Present were Coover, Edwards, Jones, Alvin, Taplin, Hansen, Britton, Cannon, Karsner and Ferguson (visiting from Cleveland).

I began the discussion by reporting for Tom on the phone call from Farrell of last Friday and possible disciplinary actions by the PC. I reported Tom's feeling that the minimum that should be done be to suspend Arne.

All those who spoke agreed that writing to Healy was a breach of discipline and that if the only considerations were the Los Angeles ones (Arne's strength here, the branch situation, etc.) disciplinary action should be taken. Some were for criticizing or condemning his action by censure or other less severe means.

Cannon, Milt and Oscar spoke for consulting Art Sharon and the English comrades before taking any action because they felt that the letter was a deliberate provocation designed to create a scandal that would take the heat off Healy for the Robertson and Tate episodes. The "scandal" would be that the SWP expelled one of its founding members just before their pre-convention discussion and on the eve of a discussion on China in the International.

The "educational" value of not taking disciplinary action against Arne was also raised by Jim and others with several precedents from our history and the history of the Russian party.

It was my opinion that the "educational" question can cut both ways and that while it is sometimes correct to not take action as soon as a violation of discipline occurs, especially if the minority is a large one and the party is in a discussion of the political differences, it can also be of "educational" value to take disciplinary action when there is a flagrant violation of party discipline as in the case before us, where the Swabeck minority has been defeated politically and reduced to a small handful and there have been a whole series of formal violations of discipline.

Jim pointed out that the Constitution provides that an NCer can only be suspended by a 2/3 vote of the NC, which in this case would assume a mail vote.

I spoke for the strongest possible disciplinary action by the PC. Bea was also for strong action.

It was generally agreed that the English co-thinkers should be consulted, but that was the end of the agreement. When the question came up of reporting the sense of our discussion to the N.O., I suggested that since there was not a consensus on how to proceed, that each comrade who had strong feelings should write or call the N.O. At that point Jim said he would call and report. He also said then that he was against any disciplinary action at this time.

S/ Joel

(C O P Y)

Los Angeles, Calif.
June 26, 1967

Political Committee

Dear Comrades:

I have your letter of June 22nd requesting a vote on the motion to suspend Arne Swabeck.

It is difficult for me to vote on this motion without knowing exactly why the PC is proceeding as it is. In addition you must have information in N.Y. on the views of most of the N.C. people in this area which are different from those of the P.C.

Under these circumstances it seems to me that it would be preferable for the P.C. to send an explanation of its motivation to the N.C. members in the field and to answer the point of view held by those comrades in this area who have a different position. Since there are differences among us, it would be best to discuss these and try to reach agreement on what to do. I do not know of any reason for haste in moving against Swabeck. As you know, his group is very small and not a factor of any kind in the L.A. branch, to say nothing of the party as a whole.

You will recall that we adopted, by agreement among ourselves, a certain course in the Kirk case about a year and a half ago. This turned out to be the better way to procede and his faction left the party on its own decision, in a clean break which did not cause a ripple in our organization.

For your information I would like to summarize my own position on the Swabeck case. I consider his letter to Healy a flagrant violation of discipline and a disloyal act. What he has done should be condemned by the P.C. and the facts in the case made available to the entire membership. The entire matter should be referred to the coming convention for appropriate action, which in my opinion, should be expulsion from the party.

However, I think a summary suspension at this time, just prior to the opening of our pre-convention discussion and the international discussion on the Chinese question would be a tactical error which could play into the hands of Healy. If we suspend Swabeck now, Healy could turn the discussion of his internal regime into a discussion on ours and

turn the attention of his own present followers away from examining his methods to an examination of ours. Instead of focusing attention on the Tate case, he could call attention to the Swabeck case.

We have nothing to lose by taking our time to take formal disciplinary steps against Swabeck. We should make our decision, not on purely formal constitutional grounds but on what favors us politically.

The timing of Swabeck's letter and the way in which he made a copy of it available to the P.C. suggests that it was done in such a way as to prevent the recent plenum from taking it up. This is unfortunate from the standpoint that it prevents us from considering the steps to be taken in a meeting. Of course, it would be unrealistic to have another plenum just to settle whatever differences there are among us on this point now.

As a substitute, I suggest that we have an exchange of views among ourselves in the following manner: The P.C. send a summary of its thinking to the N.C. members in the field and invite their comments and opinions. When these are in they could be distributed to the N.C. Then, if the P.C. wishes to proceed to a vote on its motion to suspend, it can go ahead. This procedure would have the advantage of giving full information to those comrades in the field who now have only the Swabeck letters and the P.C. motion but do not have the motivation for the P.C. motion.

Fraternally,

S/ .Milton Alvin

(C O P Y)

June 27, 1967
Los Angeles, Calif.

To The Political Committee
New York, New York

Dear Comrades:

I am opposed to the motion adopted by the Political Committee recommending the immediate suspension of Comrade Swabeck.

As you have been previously informed, I favor a different approach to the problem raised by Swabeck's letter to Healy. I explained my views to Art Sharon during his brief visit here, and I presume that he communicated it to you. Also, Joel showed me a copy of his letter to the National Office in which he reported the discussion which took place at a meeting of the N.C. members here.

I consider it rather unfortunate that these divergent views were not incorporated in the P.C. minutes of the meeting which decided to recommend the suspension of Swabeck -- so that the other members of the National Committee would have a chance to consider and discuss them before casting their vote on the ballot sent to them together with the P.C. minutes.

My approach to the problem can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. Since Swabeck's letter to Healy deals with two questions of great world importance -- Chinese developments and our policy and tactics in the struggle against the Vietnam War -- which are now properly up for discussion in the international movement as well as in our party, any action of a disciplinary nature which we may propose should be closely coordinated with international comrades, particularly the comrades in England, and carried out in agreement with them.

2. Since we are just now opening up our pre-convention discussion, where the questions raised by Swabeck will properly have their place on the agenda, it would be rather awkward to begin the discussion by suspending the one articulate critic of the party's positions and actions. A more effective procedure, in my opinion, would be simply to publish Swabeck's letters (to Healy and Dobbs) with comprehensive and detailed answers.

If past experience is any guide, the education of the new generations of the party and the consolidation of party opinion would be better served by this procedure. Examples in favor of this subordination of disciplinary measures to the bigger aims of political education have been richly documented in the published records of the fight against the petty bourgeois opposition in 1939-40, and in the internal discussion bulletins dealing with the Goldman-Morrow affair in 1944-5-6.

3. In the course of discussion, during a number of years of opposition to party policy, Swabeck has managed to isolate himself to the point where the immediate effect of the party's reaction to this new provocation will not be very great one way or the other. But the long range effect on the political education of the party, and its preparation to cope with old problems in new forms, can be very great indeed.

It is most important that our party members, and the international movement, see the leadership once again in continuation of its great tradition -- acting with cool deliberation to serve our larger political aims without personal favoritism or hostility.

Fraternally,

S/ James P. Cannon

JPC:bh

Statement by Political Committee

In his June 27 letter to the Political Committee, Comrade Cannon wrote: "I explained my views to Art Sharon during his brief visit here, and I presume that he communicated it to you. Also, Joel showed me a copy of his letter to the National Office in which he reported the discussion which took place at a meeting of the N.C. members here. I consider it rather unfortunate that these divergent views were not incorporated in the P.C. minutes of the meeting which decided to recommend the suspension of Swabeck -- so that the other members of the National Committee would have a chance to consider and discuss them before casting their vote on the ballot sent to them together with the P.C. minutes."

It did not seem to the Political Committee that impressions of Comrade Cannon's views, relayed at second hand by Comrades Sharon and Joel, constituted a valid basis for purporting to communicate those views to the National Committee. In addition, we noted that Comrade Joel's June 13 letter, commenting about the discussion among N.C. members in Los Angeles, said: "When the question came up of reporting the sense of our discussion to the N.O., I suggested that since there was not a consensus on how to proceed, that each comrade who had strong feelings should write or call the N.O. At that point Jim said he would call and report."

Nearly two weeks elapsed between the time the Los Angeles N.C. members were first notified of Comrade Swabeck's indisCIPLINED and disloyal action and the date on which the P.C. adopted its motion recommending that he be suspended from party membership. During that period we heard nothing directly from Comrade Cannon. We, therefore, assumed either that he was still considering the matter, or that he was waiting to express his views in the poll of the National Committee, as he has now done.

Adopted July 6, 1967.

Remarks by N.C. members in poll on Swabeck suspension

J. Johnson: This action is a planned one by Swabeck. For what purpose I do not know, for in the long run there is little he can gain from it but being cut off from the party.

A. Harris: I always feel a reluctance to take a measure against a political opponent (I so classify Swabeck, of course) that the opponent wants and expects. For this reason I opposed suspending Fraser two plenums ago -- and I think not suspending Fraser at that time was correct. But in Swabeck's case, his actions are so flagrant, so against the Party, that he must be suspended. I can't see any other course.

J. Simon: If the poll should receive less than the 2/3 vote necessary to pass, or if, on the basis of additional information or considerations of international needs, the motion should be modified, I feel a motion of censure should be passed to characterize Comrade Swabeck's for the breach of discipline and violation of party rules that it is, so that there is no precedent provided for the idea that we have one set of rules for some and another for Comrade Swabeck.

L.P.Trainor: No doubt, Swabeck is in the wrong. The question is how to proceed during the International discussion re this matter. Should we take organizational steps against a completely isolated individual -- thus throwing a fog over the discussion -- or should we let the whole of the international co-thinkers get acquainted with his ideas?

I believe during a discussion period we should "bend over backwards" to a minority. We have always proceeded in that fashion -- through Oehler, Shachtman, Morrow, etc. We have nothing to loose -- and a lot of education to gain, particularly among the younger comrades.

Don't let our enemies claim we settle political differences through organizational means.

J. Liang: Suspension of Comrade Swabeck from party membership would be too precipitate and too severe. Most judges wisely refrain from imposing a maximum sentence, especially for a first offense.

Comrade Swabeck is a founding member of the party and of the Trotskyist movement. He has spent a lifetime in the fight for socialism and is rightly respected for his record. This dictates restraint.

Assuredly, it is necessary to uphold party discipline and to discountenance disloyal acts. But the need in this case can be met adequately by a lesser sanction.

J. Liang, cont'd: I urge, as an alternative to the PC proposal, a vote of censure, coupled with an admonition not to repeat.

Duncan (Control Commission member): Since my vote is only consultative and cannot affect the out come of the N.C. voting on this question, I have decided, after much thought, to defer any full statement of motivation and argumentation until the occasion arises -- presumably at the Convention -- for a full discussion and interchange of opinions on this issue.

Suffice to say that I consider the action proposed by the P.C. motion for suspension of Swabeck, to be untimely.

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Statement by J. Hansen on the Suspension of Swabeck

The response on the question of suspending Arne Swabeck from membership shows that there is virtually unanimous agreement that his action of taking his differences outside the party and solidarizing with an enemy of the party was undisciplined and disloyal. This testifies to the homogeneity of the view of the National Committee on the principle that is involved.

The disagreements on the motion to suspend Swabeck are all based on tactical grounds. These include questions about the severity of the action and its timing, the possibility of missing an opportunity to further the education of the ranks in handling a matter like this, the risk of adversely affecting the international discussion that has been opened in the world Trotskyist movement on the question of China, and the danger of playing into the hands of the Healyites.

All these tactical questions demand consideration and it is quite understandable why comrades should be concerned that they receive due attention. They were in fact intensively discussed in the Political Committee.

The question given the greatest weight was the international discussion. The analysis of this proceeded along the following lines:

Swabeck occupied a unique position, not only in our party but in the world movement as a whole. At first he advanced proposals for altering the position of the SWP on the general formula calling for a political revolution in China. This required discussion on its merits both in estimating the nature of the Mao regime and in determining our attitude toward it. But from his early position, Swabeck evolved into an utterly uncritical and even devout Maoist. Not even the rise of the cult of Mao's personality and the excesses of the "cultural revolution" caused him to reconsider. Instead, he accepted these highly unfavorable developments at face value as promulgated by Mao. The result was that Swabeck became completely isolated. So far as the SWP is concerned, the discussion with Swabeck on the Chinese revolution was finished long ago and the recent events in China only served to confirm the majority opinion as registered repeatedly at party conventions.

Consequently any disciplinary action taken in regard to Swabeck can scarcely affect further discussion of the issues which he raised, since inside the SWP they have been definitively settled politically.

In the world Trotskyist movement, Swabeck is, if anything, even more isolated. So far as is known, not a single individual shares his views.

The discussion in the Fourth International concerns something else -- the further consolidation of the reunification of the movement. Two problems are involved: (1) The clearing up of certain ambiguities relating to the general formula of a political revolution in China. (2) Analysis of the current developments so that a common position can be reached on them, particularly in relation to the various factions in China, at the next world congress.

Of the two problems, the latter is unquestionably the more important inasmuch as the International Executive Committee has shown through its statement opening the world discussion that it accepts the general formula of a political revolution.

It is thus clear that Swabeck cannot be considered to be either a leader or spokesman on the question of China for any tendency in the world Trotskyist movement extending beyond the SWP.

He himself has shown in his own way, through his letter to Healy, that he recognizes this reality. From this, unfortunately, he has concluded that so far as he is concerned, he is uninterested in pursuing the discussion any further inside the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement and has withdrawn from it. It is quite significant in this respect that he addressed himself to Healy after the IEC made its position clear on the question of a political revolution in China.

So far as the international discussion is concerned, Swabeck's withdrawal should make for a freer atmosphere, since participants who may want to express differences or speculate on possibilities need not fear that these may be given unwarranted interpretation through the unsought-for intervention of a confirmed Maoist.

The possibility of playing into the hands of Healy was also weighed. Here it was noted that Swabeck's praise of Healy and Healy's recent espousal of Maoism might be received with mixed emotions in the headquarters of the SLL. The fact is that Healy has held Swabeck up as one of the most horrible examples of the "degeneration" which he ascribes to the SWP. Does Healy then switch on this simply because this prime "degenerate" praises Healy? It is something to be considered.

In addition, Healy's playing around with Maoism appears to have purely local objectives; he is interested in certain Maoist currents that have appeared on a small scale in the British CP. Peking's current ultraleftism, it is true, coincides with Healy's ultraleft binge; but a fusion is excluded by the sectarianism of both sides, so that the gains Healy may expect from this source are completely unrealistic. The

lack of any practical successes complicates the problem Healy already faces due to his switching on Maoism in a completely abrupt and unprepared way. Swabeck's praise makes matters worse rather than better in this respect.

Finally, it must be completely clear to Healy that Swabeck is not and never will be a Healyite. Swabeck is a Maoist. He is tipping his hat in Healy's direction on the way to one of the genuinely Maoist groups where, perhaps, he hopes to play the role of a theoretical Anna Louise Strong. The difference between Swabeck and Healy is indicated by Swabeck's criticism of Healy for not having advanced far enough along the Maoist road.

The upshot is that Healy will be inclined to ponder this one carefully before he makes up his mind on precisely how to use it. He will, of course, be greatly tempted to try to exploit it as a one-day sensation, playing it up for whatever it is worth and then dropping it save for his usual lying and slanderous references in the future to such happenings. The sensation, from Healy's point of view, is those sections of Swabeck's letter attacking the SWP. He cannot make much of a sensation of any disciplinary action which the SWP takes as a result of such an attack since this is a minor matter compared to the attack itself. From all that is known about the British situation, no one there will pay much attention to it; and any laudatory publicity Swabeck receives in Healy's press will only serve to discredit him in the left wing of the Labour movement.

The most probable variant is that Healy will consider most closely how Wohlforth might utilize Swabeck's move profitably. It will not be wholly disadvantageous to us if this course is decided on and Wohlforth goes through the educational experience of serving as editor for Swabeck.

As for the other tactical considerations involved in the disciplinary action taken against Swabeck, it was recognized that if the situation were such as to involve the leader of a grouping at the beginning of a discussion in which precipitate disciplinary action could prejudice clarification of the issues then it would be necessary to defer such action. There is no doubt that the party ranks would appreciate the political need for this and that there would be little difficulty in explaining it both by analysis of the specific situation and by reference to the various excellent precedents established in the history of the party in regard to this.

But for the reasons outlined above, it was felt in the Political Committee that the situation is not analogous and that under the specific circumstances it was a better tactical course to proceed with disciplinary action.

It should be added that there was general regret that one of the founders of the party, one who has earned the highest respect for his many contributions and long service, should at this stage have taken the course he has. These feelings, however, could not be permitted to affect our political analysis, particularly in view of the importance of the issues involved.

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[The following has been distributed by Arne Swabeck to opponent tendencies and some individual party members.]

(C O P Y)

Statement by Arne Swabeck

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.

* * *

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.

July 1967