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August 16, 1974

To: SWP (San Francisco); SWP-NO; USFI.

From: The members of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective
(San Francisco-Berkeley) currently applying for
membership in the SWP.

Dear Comrades,

On Friday, July 19, the four members of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective who are applying for admission to the SWP (JC, BB, BG, SS) met with three representatives of the SWP in San Francisco (BS, SC, JP) to discuss our application. At the end of a detailed and fraternal discussion, Cd BS of the SWP made a number of proposals for an interim working arrangement of our group with the SWP, proposals revolving around our submission to the discipline of the SWP in all public activities (such as our work on Chile solidarity) and a commitment to the SWP in terms of financial and political collaboration (selling papers, attending forums, working in election campaigns, etc.).

The focus of our discussion at this first meeting revolved around the question of submitting to the organizational discipline of the Socialist Workers Party. In particular, Cd BS focused on the alleged violations of this organizational discipline by the former Internationalist Tendency in the name of "carrying out the line of the Fourth International" and indicated that any such actions on our part would not fulfill the requirements of admission to the Party.

We objected at the time and we object now to the manner in which the SWP comrades introduced the question of the alleged "violations of discipline" of the former Internationalist Tendency. As we understand it, this expulsion is currently a matter at dispute in the FI and its leading bodies, and thus hardly a proper item of discussion during an application to join the SWP. Even were the item resolved, we would still object to the totally one-sided presentation of organizational disciplinary violations (alleged and otherwise) not only with regard to this tendency but to all previous tendencies as well.

However, the matter has been raised by the SWP representatives and is of obvious importance for us given our open and public support for the positions of the International Majority Tendency, (which are by the decisions of the recent 10th World Congress the positions of the FI as a whole). We therefore feel it necessary to give our positions on the major questions of politics and discipline raised by the SWP representatives in order to clarify the future discussion. These positions have been arrived at only after lengthy discussion, which explains the delay in writing our response.

Firstly we must state our belief that the expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency (for it was in fact an expulsion as

we read the documents) was totally unjustified on organizational or political grounds and appears to be an attempt to quash internal and international political differences with the politics of the SWP. Moreover, the references in the document to the Revolutionary Marxist Collective are tendentious, misleading and erroneous. The fact that some members of the RMC know some members of the IT is hardly grounds for insinuating factional activity on either our part or on the part of the IT, which we deny and for which the SWP majority has adduced no proof whatsoever.

Secondly, we must state our total astonishment for the political "deviations" of which the Tendency is accused. Since when is selling the press of the FI or handing out official statements of the FI a crime? Since when is it a crime to know and talk to other supporters of the FI inside or outside the party, or indeed with members of opposing political tendencies or beliefs? Since when is it illegal to organize a tendency inside the SWP, for the new interpretations of the SWP majority of organizational discipline practically make any oppositional tendency inside the party impossible?

It is clear that these "deviations" are also assumed to apply to the members of the Revolutionary Collective. For we have stated our open support for the politics of the majority of the Fourth International as did the Tendency. We have sold the press of the Canadian RMG and distributed the Chile statements of the USFI and sold Inprecor, as has the tendency. Moreover, we have put forward in Non Intervention in Chile and in the San Francisco Chile Solidarity Committee the politics of the FI, as well as in our document on Chile which is largely drawn from articles in Rouge and which applies the analysis of the FI to the current situation in the USA. Finally, we try to talk about the politics of the Fourth International with militants inside and outside the party, as did the Internationalist Tendency.

Which brings us to the question of the conditions the SWP sets for our admission into the SWP. What do these conditions involve? They involve:

- ceasing to put forward the position of solidarity with the workers and peasants of Chile in the Chile Solidarity Movement;
- breaking off the political contacts we have gained through our six months of political activity in the Bay Area;
- ceasing to sell the press of the Fourth International, notably Inprecor and the Old Mole.

At the same time as we are under the discipline of the party, we will not be allowed into any internal meetings of the party and have been told or warned that expression of serious political differences with the politics of the SWP to members of the Party or YSA could work unfavourably against our admission into the Party.

These conditions mean nothing more nor less than the political destruction and suppression of the politics of the

Fourth International in the Bay Area. The position of the International on Chile cannot be put forward, we are told; nor can the press of the International be sold. And furthermore, you had better not even try to put these politics forward within the party for you will not be invited to our internal meetings and discussions with individuals will weigh against you.

We cannot accept these conditions, which amount to political and organizational muzzling of the politics of the USFI in the Bay Area. This is particularly vital given the disgraceful performance of USLA at the recent regional planning conference for the September 11 events on Chile in this area, where the SWP members present publicly spoke and voted against the politics of the FI as expressed in the recent declaration on Chile solidarity on September 11, politics which we are attempting to carry out.

Having stated our positions on these questions, we would like some points of clarification from the SWP and from the USFI regarding certain questions of organizational discipline and political line.

On Chile work: does admission to the SWP/FI mean that we have to drop our current ongoing solidarity work and sales of literature espousing that position and restrict our politics on Chile to those of USLA?

On publications: does admission to the SWP/FI mean, as Cd BS asserts, that we will not be able to sell the press of other sections and sympathizing organizations of the FI?

On political differences inside the Party: What are exact limitations on organized political tendencies or factions inside the SWP and inside the FI?

On finances: Does the non-payment of 10% of income (a stipulation not in the SWP constitution and not used as the basis for SWP payments, if any, to the USFI) disqualify one from membership in the party?

On party discipline: What are the procedures and approximate time periods for challenging the line of the party on a particular issue, for instance a desire to sell the publications of the FI at a particular demonstration; or the desire to represent the line of USFI statements in public Chile meetings? It seems to us that in certain extreme and very important political situation, political concerns should predominate over organizational fetishism.

In general we would like further clarification from both the SWP and the USFI of what is meant by "carrying out the line of the Fourth International" (which according to its constitution is a democratic centralist International) while at the same time submitting to the organizational discipline of the Socialist Workers Party.

Until such clarification, we cannot foresee agreeing to the complete suppression of the politics of the USFI in this area, which the conditions raised by the SWP for our (possible) admission into the party would involve.

We would suggest a meeting with representatives of the SWP as soon as mutually convenient to discuss this response and related issues. In the interim, we will participate in SWP forums and (wherever possible) we will plan our political activities in collaboration with the Party. One such activity would be the implementation of the political declaration of the USFI on the September 11 demonstrations in solidarity with the workers and peasants in Chile.

Finally, as per our earlier request (at the July 19 meeting), we would request that the SWP make available such documents as further clarify the currently disputed questions, documents from both International and Internal SWP debate and discussion.

Fraternally,
s/Jim Collins
for the RMC members
Jim Collins
Barry Biderman
Susan Schulman
Robert Glick

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August 6, 1974

SWP
1849 University Ave.
Berkeley, Calif. 94703

Barry Biderman
San Francisco, Ca.

Dear Barry,

This letter is to confirm our telephone conversations on July 31 and Aug. 1. During those conversations you indicated to me that the Revolutionary Marxist Collective had rejected our proposals for collaboration. You also indicated that you had your own proposals which you would send to us in writing.

Fraternally,
s/Jeff Powers
SWP organizer
Oakland/Berkeley

cc: SWP National Office
Barry S.
Steve C.
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14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014
July 29, 1974

Revolutionary Marxist Collective

Jim Collins
Barry Biderman
Bob Glick
Susan Schulman

Dear Comrades of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective,

The purpose of this letter is to follow up on the July 19 meeting between you four comrades, the SWP Bay Area organizers, and myself. As you know, we made a concrete proposal to you to facilitate the dissolution of the RMC into the SWP. You indicated that you wanted some time to consider our proposal, and would discuss it further with us when I get back on the West Coast.

To aid our discussion, I would like to summarize our proposal. It was as follows:

That the party branches in the Bay Area and yourselves begin immediately a period of close political collaboration, leading toward the fusion of your group in the SWP. Concretely, we propose the following steps to be taken immediately: 1) That your political work be carried out in consultation with the Oakland/Berkeley and San Francisco organizers; to facilitate this, regular meetings would be set up between yourselves and the organizers. 2) That you begin to make regular financial contributions to the party. 3) That you collaborate with the party in helping to prepare and build the September 11 Chile actions being organized by USLA, and dissolve the Chile Solidarity Committee into USLA to strengthen our common work in this area. 4) That you attend forums. 5) That you undertake regular sales of The Militant, working with SWP members on sales teams. 6) That you help in SWP election campaign work.

Jim raised the question of whether you all could receive the internal discussion material of the SWP and the Fourth International in this period of collaboration, and we indicated that we thought this would be a good idea. Bob also raised the question of his work in the AFT; we indicated that this work, as all your political work, should be done in collaboration with the party. If Susan is in a position to work in building CLUW, she should work with our CLUW fraction.

Jim also raised the question of attendance by RMC members at the Oberlin educational conference in August. If you accept our proposal, it would be a good idea for you to come to Oberlin, since you would then have a chance to see the party as a national organization, and participate in discussions about party work in the period ahead.

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When I arrive back on the West Coast, I'll get in touch with Jim through the Bay Area organizers.

Comradely,
s/Barry Sheppard
Organization Secretary
Socialist Workers Party

cc: Oakland/Berkeley SWP Organizer
San Francisco SWP Organizer
Political Committee

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July 9, 1974

To: Socialist Workers Party Headquarters, NYC

Comrades:

The undersigned members of the Revolutionary Marxist Collective (Berkeley-San Francisco) would like to apply for membership in the SWP (and YSA) on the following basis:

- a) agreement with the positions of the Fourth International as expressed in its world conference documents;
- b) desire to engage in public political practice in the name of the Fourth International;
- c) willingness to abide by the discipline of the Socialist Workers Party, which but for reactionary legislation would be the section of the Fourth International in the United States.

The following individuals are applying for membership in the following branches of the SWP:

Jim Collins	SWP	Oakland-Berkeley
Barry Biderman	SWP	San Francisco
Bob Glick	SWP	San Francisco
Susan Schulman	SWP and YSA	San Francisco

We have sent letters stating the above to the appropriate branches of the SWP (San Francisco) with a copy to the USFI in Brussels. These letters also include information about where we can be contacted. The following letter is to inform you directly about our application (on learning from the Berkeley SWP that this was correct procedure) in the hopes that we can be admitted into the SWP as soon as possible.

Yours fraternally,
s/Jim Collins (for the
four names above)

[Letter from Jim Collins to the I.T. party]

July 19, 1974

Comrades,

This letter is in lieu of minutes about the recent activities of the RMC and particularly our relations to the SWP and the IT.

After the discussions with Charles, the RMC had a number of meetings where we discussed carrying out the mandate of the IMT as outlined by Charles about the specific way of applying to the SWP. Three of us decided to carry out this way if that became necessary at the end of our outside group discussion; SK decided against; CA and EB were not in town at the time, but EB is leaving the country and CA is not returning until the end of August (?). Neither was likely to agree to the perspective of the IMT in any case.

On hearing of the expulsion of the tendency, the three of us who had decided to comply eventually by the IMT perspectives agreed to carry out the application in that manner immediately. A letter was written and sent yesterday; also the first personal contacts with SWP members indicating our decision was made by JC in Berkeley yesterday.

As expected, the only thing the SWP was interested in was "Who we talked to in the tendency and the IMT". They said that all other considerations would be handled by their national office in New York. We have decided to tell them that we spoke to the following people on the following occasions, who tried to convince us to join the SWP:

Massey at the regional Chile conference in May

Garth at the meeting described in the SWP split document

Charles at the Chile Solidarity Committee film

None of these was prearranged; there are no letters; the other interchanges that have taken place were at public meetings of various types (particularly Chile), etc. It is important that this information be understood and accepted by the Tendency here (Garth) and nationally (Massey) and by the IMT (Charles). Also that Jim received letters with Zaslow and Rich in Baltimore if they demand that type of information; but the letters were thrown away; and we don't volunteer the information.

We intend to follow up our application with appearing and perhaps intervening at SWP public meetings; and discussing the applications with individual members and sympathizers of the SWP and the YSA. We are going to contact the tendency here about also indicating our knowledge of the expulsion of the IT from the SWP and our disapproval of that. If okayed, we will start discussions on this next week in private discussions with SWP and YSA members.

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We also intend to work closely during this whole process with members inside the SWP, particularly Garth and Carlos. We would suggest the tendency approve joint meetings under adequate security precautions. Of course to refuse such meetings in the guise of security seems incorrect given our current need to coordinate strategy and tactics closely. We would also hope that in future the tendency leadership would contact us directly about any big change in the situation nationally; we can be conveniently reached at Barry's office or personal phone number, which we believe is in the hands of the IT.

For the next month, at least, we have defined our main area of work as being in and around the SWP-YSA and with the IT on this question. We are also continuing our work in the Chile Solidarity committee and NICH though little happens in either at the present time. A full discussion on Chile perspectives will take place this Sunday.

Our study group has been going now for two weeks; we are hoping to continue this as a permanent thing with a stable and growing number of supporters. A copy of our subject matter is enclosed (this is an abbreviation and alteration of suggested study matter from an outline for the IMT by Blackburn).

At the present time, we are trying to get together some analysis of the other formes on the far left, notably the Maoists and the anti-Leninists (SR, RA, NAM). This will be for some newspaper or journal articles as well as for internal discussion.

We are sorely in need of sufficient and timely publications of the FI. We would like to know if Chicago can handle these for us or if we should order directly. We intend to send in a check for INPRECOR subscriptions shortly; in the meantime we must report that we have only been getting ten copies of cc 0 and "1" which is entirely insufficient; we want 30 cc an issue please.

Secondly, our RMC postal address works if addressed not to any individual or another person than RMC. We would like mail to be readdressed to this PO Box.

Thirdly, we have received no copies of the OLD MOLE since May. We have not even received the Chile supplement as yet. Can Chicago check on this or are we to deal directly with Toronto?

Fourthly, we have not received the new copy of International as yet. Have these been sent out?

Fifthly, are we to receive copies of the IT internal mailings? In particular, we would like to receive all the information everyone else in the tendency gets about the recent expulsion from the SWP. We would also like to be

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included in any preparations for a Central Committee meeting which may be planned in the future, and some information about our representation in such a meeting now that we have applied to the SWP.

As a personal aside, I would hope that documents would be prepared for the eventuality that the tendency will not be allowed back into the SWP; and also some statement from the leadership of the tendency for the joint functioning of the tendency and the outside groups in the interim, as well as afterwards.

Yours,

s/Jim Collins

P.S. As indicated by phone, cd. SS has joined the RMC and is applying with us to SWP and also YSA.