

X:PC

14 Charles Lane
New York, NY 10014
October 24, 1979

To: Virginia Garza
Wayne Glover
Osborne Hart
Helen Scheer

Dear

Enclosed is David Weisman's letter of resignation from the party, and other materials, copies of which he sent to a number of party comrades.

This resignation in no way lessens, in fact it emphasizes, the importance of the Control Commission pursuing its inquiry into the questions we discussed.

I hope in the next few weeks we will be in a position to discuss some initial proposals based on our work.

Comradely,



David Prince
Control Commission

October 17, 1979

Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party

Comrades,

I am writing this letter in response to the convening of a Control Commission, whose reputed purpose is to investigate charges I made against the PC in a letter dated July 31, 1979. These charges were that the Political Committee had lied about the receipt of a discussion article I sent in for the Oberlin Convention in order to suppress my democratic rights.

The document is entitled "For a Change in the Party's Line on the Murder of Tom Henehan", and reflects the principled campaign I have taken up within the SWP on this question. As you know, I first formally raised these disagreements at the YSA convention in December 1978. Since then you have initiated a campaign to slander and silence me. Though you have many reports on my views and activities, I will reiterate my position.

On October 16, 1977, Tom Henehan, a member of the Political Committee of the Workers League was gunned down in Brooklyn. Angelo Torres calmly and deliberately emptied his gun into Tom Henehan when he arrived at the door of a dance sponsored by the Young Socialists. Tom Henehan came to the door in response to a disturbance that Torres and his accomplice, Edwin Sequinog provoked. The police knew the names, addresses and workplaces of both men within hours of the killing, yet made no attempt to pick up either one. When questioned about their refusal to apprehend these individuals, the police said: "Nobody's interested in the death of a commie". The police also asserted, without having spoken to the gunmen, that it was a "non-political" murder. Their refusal to investigate this crime or punish the perpetrators was aided by the press blackout organized by the right-wing capitalist press and the Stalinists.

All evidence points to a political murder. Tom Henehan was a leading member of a Trotskyist organization when he was shot. He was killed in an unprovoked attack by a man he never knew. The police allowed the killers to escape.

Within days of this monstrous crime, the leadership replied to the membership by asserting the police version of the murder; "there is no evidence that this is a political murder." On the contrary, all attacks on socialists are suspect. Anyone who denies this is a person who wants to prevent political analysis from taking place. The shoe lies on the other foot-- as the police have no evidence to back up their claim that the criminals they allowed to escape were not politically motivated.

The party leadership has admitted that members of the Workers League called the Militant to ask us to report this crime. Elementary courtesy and basic socialist principles would have required us to take action immediately, yet the Militant refused to report or condemn this reactionary crime. "Fifty years of

the truth" is not a slogan applicable to a newspaper that joins a blackout initiated by the Stalinist and bourgeois press. Novack has quoted the IWW slogan: "An injury to one is an injury to all". The PC's real view can be summarized as "An injury to those who embarrass us politically is an injury for the good".

The leadership's silence on this murder is a criminal and unprincipled act. It aids attacks on socialists. It helps police cover ups. It is completely opposed to the traditions of Lenin and Trotsky.

Many months passed before the Bulletin began to suggest that the SWP's refusal to oppose this act was suspicious. The leadership quickly jumped on this and said "we have been maligned, our silence is justified". The PC doth protest too much. The publication of allegations and slander placed an ever greater responsibility on the party to correct its unprincipled behavior and defend the tainted reputation of the SWP. Unless, of course, no defense was possible.

The Workers League charges that our silence was suspicious are far less serious an attack than Stalin's campaign to slander and eradicate the early Trotskyist movement. Yet Trotsky had no hesitation in defending the Soviet Union. In "The Case for a Labor Jury", Trotsky made it absolutely clear that if opponents accuse us of murder, our responsibility is to reply, and to demand the truth. Trotsky never advocated a cover up.

The Communist Party of the USA not only slandered Trotsky and the SWP, but aided the persecution of the Trotskyists and the assassination of Trotsky. Cannon hadn't the slightest hesitation in defending the CP during the Smith Act trials. Certainly the leadership's practice has far more in common with the tradition of Stalin than the tradition of Trotsky & Cannon.

Finally, whatever you think of the politics of the Workers League, you must admit that the police, the Stalinists and the capitalist press welcomed Tom Henehan's murder.

These considerations led me to raise questions about party policy. Although I expected my intervention to touch raw nerves, I thought a clear argument might lead to a change. I was totally unprepared for the reaction and treatment I received.

Immediately after the YSA Convention the Political Committee assigned Larry Siegle to interrogate and intimidate me. I spent over an hour closeted with Siegle and Cathy Sedwick, during which his argument's ranged from crude justifications to outright falsification. He even stated that "Maybe some black guy got tired of whites coming into his neighborhood and decided to blow Henehan away. If I were there I would have done the same thing." This racist remark shows agreement with the attack on the Workers League. The SWP has had white members work in Black communities, and Latin communities, as well as straights with gays, etc. Would Siegle have supported the murder of a party member under such conditions.

I was also harangued by Joel Britton for my political disagreements, and he, too expressed support for the murder of Tom Henehan. Similarly, Linda Jenness once said "Someday we'll line the Healyites up against the wall and machine gun them all."

Two things emerged from these discussions. First, individuals such as Siegle and Britton were incapable of understanding a political argument. Second, the comments they made demonstrated that they both welcomed the assassination of Tom Henehan. Of course, both Siegle and Britton assured me of my democratic rights to raise political disagreements.

But surreptitious machinations of the Political Committee were in full swing. A whisper campaign was launched against me, insinuating that I was an agent of the Workers League. A discussion was initiated in the New York branches on the SWP's position on the murder of Tom Henehan, with the avowed intention of "helping Weisman get this Henehan thing out of his system". More to the point, these reports had the goal of creating the conditions to slander, isolate and intimidate me, as well as attempting to justify the leaderships newest proposition--sabotage the Workers League campaign for an investigation into Henehan's murder. Two weeks after I summed up my disagreements in the Lower Manhattan branch, the branch Executive Committee was reduced in size and new elections were held. The branch organizer, Mike Lux stated that the main reason was my political disagreements. Of course, the conscious manipulation of the branch discussion and EC elections by Britton were a significant factor. I did not take the hint about shutting up.

The SWP's campaign to sabotage the Workers League's attempts to discover the truth about Tom Henehan's murder and punish the killer is probably one of the vilest political actions taken by the Party. A cowardly, dishonest, even sinister behind-the-scenes campaign was launched. Endorsers of the Workers League's campaign were approached individually and pressured into withdrawing their support. Many were told that a successful campaign would lead into an investigation into the SWP. Perhaps this is so. Does anyone in the SWP have something to hide?

The party also increasingly denounced the Workers League as "violent", though the Workers League was itself the victim of a violent crime. Have any members of the SWP seen these "violent" incidents that the SWP alleges? Certainly comrades have seen violent attacks on us by Maoist organizations--sometimes resulting in the hospitalization of members. But these Maoists are treated almost like fraternal organizations. Why does the Workers League deserve such special treatment?

As Oberlin approached, I put my disagreements into writing and submitted them to the National Office. I placed them in a large manila envelope, clearly addressed "SWP National

Office", and sent a cover letter in a separate envelope. Considering the sorry state of affairs within the SWP, I took the precaution of mailing the package by registered mail. Within a week, I received verification of delivery on July 20, within the deadline for acceptance for publication.

Yet my precautions were confirmed when I received a letter from some unknown political figure named Rob Cahalane. This individual asserted that my document arrived on July 21!

Even more amazing, the package was signed "The Militant". Anyone familiar with the layout of the National Office knows that postal deliveries requiring signatures must be brought to one of the windows open to the external staircase-either the PRDF, Pathfinder Press, or the National Office. There is no Militant window open to hand deliveries of the mail. Normally the PRDF or Pathfinder staffers would direct the Postman to the top floor. The only reason any of these departments would have to sign a package addressed to the N/O "The Militant" is that they were instructed to falsify receipt of my document.

Though Cahalane didn't deal with the impossibility of a Militant staffer receiving my document, he invented an even more fantastic version of the events. A Militant writer supposedly signed for the package, noticing that it was addressed to the N/O (two weeks before Oberlin), decided that it was probably convention discussion material and forgot it for a day! This individual then as remarkably as before, remembered it the following day, waited until the national office was deserted, and then left it on a desk and walked away!

Cahalane's ability to confidently assert such unbelievable statements make it completely certain that the decision to block my document was taken by the Political Committee as a whole. In effect, a political conspiracy was launched, with plotters and henchmen willing to invent fantastic falsifications and swear for each other. Yet those cowards who ordered Cahalane to perjure himself refused to speak to me when I demanded a discussion of my document. Jenness was too "busy".

At Oberlin, Jenness became less "busy" when he found time to tell the National Committee that I was suspected of being a Workers League agent. When I approached Jenness at Oberlin, he had time for only one lie before he fled. He stated that my "letter is a moot point, we couldn't print it now anyway!" If this leadership had any concern with democratic discussion, they would have mimeographed my document the same way that they printed up revised convention schedules.

Ironicly, those who a year ago had used the cry of "agent-baiting" to suppress party discussion, now indulged in it themselves for the same purpose. The leadership managed to scare the National Committee away from me at Oberlin, as well as many other individuals.

The lies continue to this day. Last week, Mary Roche joined the gang of liars at the national office when she called me

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twice during the week to anxiously ask for another copy of my letter of July 31. This letter seemed to be "misplaced" in the same manner that my document was "misplaced". Roche took the liberty of referring to my document both times as having arrived late.

I must conclude that the leadership of the SWP has been motivated not by factional considerations, but by real fear. Within the leadership are individuals who may well be involved in the murder of Tom Henehan. The most suspect individuals are those who are the strongest opponents of an investigation. The leadership has gone to great lengths to silence me as well as to prevent an investigation into the murder of Tom Henehan from taking place. They have lied, spread lurid allegations, resorted to racism and even anti-communist arguments, intimidated opponents, and welcomed as well as threatened physical violence. Anyone can see that the SWP's position on Tom Henehan is a monstrous political crime, carried out by people who could not possibly be socialists.

The Control Commission has been convened. Two months after Oberlin is too late to correct undemocratic actions. Of course, the Control Commission is made up of the same mold as the National Committee, and must be considered equally willing to stoop low.

I cannot remain on this organization any longer. Not only do I not have any confidence in the leadership, but I believe that I am in physical danger for raising a dissenting voice. There is a logic of its own to this cover up. I would like to suggest that there is absolutely no reason for the Control Commission to investigate my allegations that the Political Committee has tampered with Convention discussion. There is not the slightest doubt as to the correctness of my charges.

Instead I propose that the Control Commission investigate the Political Committee. Why are these individuals so afraid of a democratic discussion? Why do they wish to prevent an investigation into Tom Henehan's death from taking place? What are the roots of the criminal behavior of the PC? I leave those answers to you. In the meantime I have no reason to remain a member of the Socialist Workers Party.

Yours,

David Weisman

Dear Comrade,

Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter I have just sent to the Political Committee. I have also included earlier correspondence and documentation exposing the leaderships censorship of my political views.

Most of you are familiar with my disagreements with the leadership of the SWP and its reactionary position on the murder of Tom Henehan. Few of you are aware of the sordid and suspicious activities carried out by the PC to silence me as well as prevent an investigation into the murder of Tom Henehan.

The total abandonment of democratic procedures by the leadership has forced me to resort to this unconventional way of communicating with you. I have no reason to believe that a letter mailed to the Political Committee would not join the many skeletons hidden in the closets of West Street.

I have worked for several years with quite a few of you and have respected the political work many have carried out as well as valued your friendship. I hope you will take the time to read and think about this letter.

Yours,

David Wiseman

14 Charles Lane
New York, NY 10014
July 26, 1979

David Weisman
New York


Dear David,

Unfortunately, your contribution, "For A Change in the Party's Line on the Murder of Tom Henehan," arrived after Friday, July 20. The Convention Call (see Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 36, No. 3, p. 2) stipulated "a deadline of the last business mail of July 20, 1979, for acceptance of preconvention articles for the Bulletin."

Although you mailed your article on July 19, it was not received until July 21. Regrettably, the postal service delivery was not in time for your article to be included among those for printing in the bulletin.

Therefore, your manuscript is being returned to you.

Comradely,



Rob Cahalane
National Office

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