

Letter of Resignation from the W.C.

by former members
of the political standing
committee

April, 1976

"There are true and false friends. But through practice one
can tell the true from the false." Mao Tsetung

Comrades, on April 17, 1976, we formally submitted our resignations from the Political Standing Committee (PSC) and the Central Committee of the WC-ML. In our brief letters we identified our main reasons as being our inability to unite with and support the resolutions of the last plenary session of the Central Committee, i.e., the decisions made regarding Kathy Chandler, and the character of the internal life of the PSC. We added that there were other contradictions, some intertwined to the forementioned two, that made it impossible to carry out our work in a bolshevik style.

From the outset, we would like to make it clear that we have fought vigorously and enthusiastically for what we maintain has been a correct Marxist-Leninist stand on the key questions facing the WC-ML and the communist movement in general. In this document, we will not attempt to speak to each and every question that was a focus of struggle between the present PSC members and ourselves. We will discuss however, several of the most important questions -- democratic centralism, the fundamental principle of party-building, criticism-self-criticism, the Iskra Platform and the Iskra organization, and issues surrounding questions of liberalism and political dishonesty. We will also show how our communist stand brought us into sharp conflict with the petty-bourgeois democratic viewpoint embraced by our counterparts on the PSC, and we will conclude by exposing the philosophical basis of the political line put forward by Howard Engleskirchen and A.

First of all, however, we would like to provide comrades with a capsule summary of the early development of the WC-ML and examine some of the initial roadblocks that confronted the PSC at its inception.

Following the split in the Black Workers' Congress, a steel-to-steel struggle was waged to divorce ourselves from the economist and right opportunist influence that had retarded our ability to move forward as communists and provide overall leadership and direction for the Leninist trend. Such notable forces as the Revolutionary Workers' Congress, the October League, and most recently the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers' Organization, labeled us everything from Trotskyists

and professional wreckers to police agents. We are sure that all comrades are quite familiar with this epoch in our historical development, so it is really unnecessary to review all of the details. The significant thing is that despite our own amateurishness and right opportunist baggage, we were able to publish The Communist once every three weeks and eventually convened a unity conference that formally gave birth to the WC-ML.

Although many comrades were exhausted from the time and energy expended to continue all of the best traditions of the Black Workers' Congress, we were confident that with patience, discipline, and a revitalized commitment to proletarian socialist revolution, we could, with hard work, bring into being a new, multinational communist party. At the same time, we also realized that the influence of bourgeois revisionist ideology, the main danger in the communist movement today, was a mighty barrier, especially in the U.S., a citadel of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The most blatant indication of the impact of bourgeois ideology was reflected at the Unity Conference where it was revealed that two leading cadre of our new organization, Don Williams and Kathy Chandler, had been engaging in a decadent bourgeois adulterous relationship for two years, and that as a consequence of its exposure and the failure of the Detroit Committee to deal decisively with this issue, B., also a leading member of the WC-ML, had threatened to resign. Everyone can recall how nonchalantly this serious issue was handled by Don Williams and Kathy Chandler's vague promises that the situation would be handled correctly, and finally Howard Engleskirchen's comment saying that "we had turned the corner on the woman question and proletarian morality." And although Don Williams and Kathy Chandler had initially been assigned the task for the Unity Conference itself, they were reassigned the responsibility to complete a full criticism and self-criticism of their bourgeois activity prior to the first plenary session of the Central Committee which was to take place at the end of September.

During the month and a half that elapsed between the Unity Conference and the first Central Committee meeting, Don Williams and Kathy Chandler maintained their bourgeois relationship. While Kathy Chandler continued to work consistently on the production of the newspaper, Don Williams steadily retrogressed. By this time, Don Williams was quite ill from a condition that eventually resulted in him spending nearly a week in the hospital for an operation and recovery. His condition was further complicated by the fact that he had been drinking quite heavily to the point that it was necessary for him to abandon his political work, turning the leadership of the organization over to Howard, until the first plenary session of the new Central Committee.

At the first CC meeting, part of the story came out regarding the overall situation in Detroit -- the contradictions in the Detroit district, the lack of leadership provided by the Detroit Committee, and the destructive relationship of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler and its detrimental effects on B., in specific. We say part or at the most a significant portion of the story because we are convinced that the whole story, particularly B.'s and C.'s side, has yet to be told. We have had access to more information than most comrades in the organization, and one thing that is for sure is that the so-called leadership provided by Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, and Howard Engleskirchen, three supposedly "leading members" of the WC-ML, fell far short of the bolshevik standard required to build and guide a communist organization. It was their lack of leadership, their petty-bourgeois individualism, their wavering on Leninist principles of organization, compounded by the instability and right opportunist tendencies of other comrades that led to the decline and fall of the Detroit District. As our comrades on the PSC say, "It is the task of leadership to lead," and as we will see later from the Detroit District, to the Chicago District, to the PSC and the Central Committee, Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, and their staunch defender, Howard, have done everything but "lead." Instead of fully repudiating their errors of the previous period and striving to transform their practice, Don Williams and Kathy Chandler have continued their

behavior that the Central Committee characterized as: "limiting our ability to win over honest forces in the Black Workers' Congress and led some comrades to mistrust the leadership of Don Williams." This problem carried over to the WC-ML and corroded and corrupted our collective life... contributed "to a lack of confidence among the masses in our leadership" and restricted "our influence and ability to win the advanced." (Minutes of 1st Plenary Session of Central Committee, p. 4)

During the period of time from the Unity Conference to the formal establishment of the PSC, there were errors committed that have since set into motion additional contradictions, that as a body have hindered the development of the WC-ML. The first error was our failure to objectively examine the nature of the Detroit Committee and primarily the degenerate character of the leadership, by focusing in more sharply on the adulterous relationship of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler. We both would like to say now that if we had understood the real nature of both this relationship and the destructive activity of the Detroit leadership, in general, we would not have, so readily, joined the organization. However, we did not align ourselves with these forces because of any allegiance to individuals, but because we assumed that since they, too, put forth a generally proletarian line, their interests were in harmony with our, i.e., with the oppressed masses. We were wrong!! And since we were mistaken, what we did in effect, was to try to build an organizational leadership on decadence, decay, and dishonesty, rather than investing in the strength and capacity of the genuine and principled forces in the organization. Coming as it did at the very end of the Unity Conference, the exposure around Don Williams' and Kathy Chandler's affair, the effects were minimized in a conscious cover-up, both by Don Williams and Kathy Chandler and Howard Engleskirchen, as well as the entire Detroit district committee. This group, in its silence, perpetrated destructive conspiracy that was already beginning to influence our direction. Genuine comrades in this organization were being deceived on every hand, by so-called well-meaning individuals, who felt that the cover-up was protecting the reputation of the newly-developing organization.

The question of the relationship that had existed between Don and Kathy was a manifestation in embryonic form of the relationship that the Central Committee was at its first session to set up between these two elements and the organization. Both Don Williams and Kathy Chandler should, of right, have been suspended or purged from the organization no matter how incomplete our line was on the Woman Question, since its main character was the dishonesty, arrogance and bourgeois degeneracy it manifested. Yet the Central Committee, which included ourselves, slapped the back of the hands of these two comrades by putting one on probation from the Central Committee (virtually promising reinstatement in that body) and suspended the other from the Central Committee as his crimes manifested grievous crimes against women, i.e., the principal aspect of the contradiction. Clearly, the contradiction that should have been weighed, was the contradiction between these two forces and the entire organization, B., and the multinational working class. If we had considered this contradiction in the primary light it deserved, our task would have been clear -- suspension from the organization for both these elements. They were at that time and are to this very day interested not in the collective forward motion and growth of the WC-ML, but in their own selfish interests. Even though there have been declarations to the contrary from both of these comrades, and Howard Engleskirchen, who has remained their ally in his unprincipled vacillation, liberalism, and blind support of these forces, this is still the case.

What we want to point out here is that **everything** is determined by the principle contradiction in a thing. Thus, the Workers' Congress development was influenced by the contradiction that existed between the destructive behavior manifested by these comrades and their right opportunist allies on the one hand, and the genuine comrades who were dedicated to building a disciplined organization capable of forging the new communist party on the other hand. The abilities, then, of

either of these comrades to give communist leadership must be analyzed in the context of their history and their influence on comrades in the organization. At the first Central Committee meeting, everyone spoke to both Kathy Chandler's and Don Williams' history in the communist movement and focused particularly on the positive contributions they had made to the development of the WC-ML.* Far too little attention was paid to their negative traits, how both comrades were compromised in the course of the struggle in the Black Workers' Congress and in their ability to wage struggle against petty-bourgeois opportunism. (See C.C. Minutes) It is this contradiction that has continued to influence our motion during this period, i.e., the strivings of these two forces and their allies to seek their own ends versus the infant strivings of the Workers' Congress to win millions to the side of communism.

"The issues around this comrade (Don Williams) and his activity have consumed more time than any other topic of discussion (other than the newspaper) by the PSC, up until last month, has at certain times undermined the unity within the PSC, and has served to divert the work of the local district." (PSC Self-Criticism, p. 5)

And, once again, talking about Don Williams (we would add Kathy Chandler) the PSC Self-Criticism states, "The struggle has consumed an enormous amount of time and energy of the PSC at the expense of our many tasks" -- primary of which was to construct a strong center and consolidate the collectives that composed the WC-ML. Yet for reasons we will examine shortly, Howard and A. have done almost everything imaginable to sacrifice the interests of the entire organization in order to save at least one of these forces, Kathy Chandler.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND DISCIPLINE

At the first plenary session of the Central Committee, "comrades agreed that the fight against liberalism and petty bourgeois opportunism had to be ruthlessly waged, and especially among our leadership, if we were to successfully bolshevize the ranks -- there can be no double standards." In this section we will review the practice of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler since that meeting and the attitude taken towards their behavior by Howard and A.

In the first of a series of meetings with Don Williams, we took up his request for the PSC to lift the ban on his drinking. Don Williams felt the ban was "wrong because it made him look like a cripple and hampered his political work." We refused his request, only to find out later that he had in fact been drinking ever since the Central Committee meeting. This was exposed when the people with whom he was staying discovered several partially filled and empty liquor bottles hidden at different locations in their apartment. And as a result of this obvious hypocrisy and dishonesty, Don Williams was issued a serious warning by the PSC. A second confrontation between Williams and the PSC came about as a consequence of a struggle that erupted in the Chicago district over the plan and direction for the work of that collective. Of particular concern was a plan for a party or workers' school, proposed by Don Williams and supported by Kathy Chandler. Although the proposal was rescinded by the PSC because of its dominant social-democratic character, at two consecutive meetings in the district, sharp struggle ensued. The first meeting concluded abruptly when the district chair became angered during the heat of debate, and the second meeting also ended early when Don Williams charged that the contradictions which arose in the first meeting were not being placed squarely on the table to be resolved. As a result, Don Williams declared that he would not fulfill his responsibilities until these problems were dealt with

* Don Williams had a long history in the BWC. Kathy Chandler had been a leading member of the RU. Don was a member of the secretariat of the BWC.

thoroughly. Thus, it was on the basis of Don Williams' refusal to carry out his political work that he was removed from the district's life.

During the course of further consultations with Don Williams, three in all, Williams expressed his disagreement with our analysis of his first self-criticism paper, as well as with the manner in which we were dealing with him, characterizing our method as "all wrong and representing formalism." He stated that he disagreed with our decision to rescind the party school, said we had a sectarian attitude towards the October League and the Communist Party of Canada (M-L),* and continued by declaring that the "PSC had no organizational direction, and that he had a totally different conception of how to proceed, that the PSC had abandoned national activity for integration into the Chicago district, and that we had failed to provide the WC with any overall guidance." He went on to accuse the PSC of being "afraid to lose its leadership because of its phobia and sense of self-righteousness." And finally, Don Williams concluded by stating that the PSC was "racked with petty-bourgeois democracy and that we were the same as the old ISC, although the material basis was different." (Note: The ISC, or Interim Steering Committee was a temporary leading body of the BWC during its political and organizational crisis.) After concluding his attack on the PSC, Don Williams requested a leave of absence from the organization because of "his political differences with the PSC, his inability to function under its leadership, and his desire to spare the WC(M-L) from a bitter struggle."

This aforementioned meeting was the final in about a half dozen sessions between Don Williams and the full PSC. What occurred in the meeting described above is reflective of the dominant character of all those meetings which began with his request for us to remove the ban on his drinking and ended with his request to be given a leave of absence from the organization. Although from time to time he gave lip service to having unity with the PSC and the Central Committee, no sooner were those words out than they were followed by contradictory words and deeds. Thus, we felt it would be the height of folly to attempt to continue to try to engage in principled ideological struggle with someone who had repeatedly refused to boldly and resolutely repudiate his errors but instead unleashed unprincipled attacks on the PSC, maintained a virtual position of all struggle and no unity and had once again abandoned his political work. And furthermore, when criticized for such philistine behavior, he stooped to the old trick of crying personal attack, claiming to be hurt or injured, or retaliated with criticisms based primarily in personal considerations rather than in forwarding the collective growth of the organization. Hence, it was our position that Don Williams should be immediately suspended.

Well, although it was generally agreed that a leave of absence was out of the question, there was not agreement that the comrade should be suspended. A., who had from time to time expressed the opinion that Don Williams should be purged, stated that Don Williams should be suspended, but "not right now." Howard, on the other hand, would have nothing to do with suspension, and thus, suggested that we should continue to wage ideological struggle with Don Williams, while insisting that he carry out the other tasks assigned to him. During the course of several sharp struggles around this topic, we stuck to our position, while Howard and A. wavered back and forth until they united on a position that committed the PSC to a course of bourgeois debate and compromised our ability to provide strong leadership and insist on "unity of will and unity of action of all Party members... without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the party is conceivable." (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p. 114)

At every step along the way that the PSC attempted to carry out its primary responsibility to build the center and provide overall direction for the WC, it

* Communist Party of Canada (M-L) is a fraternal organization of the Central Organization of U.S. Marxist-Leninists (COUSML).

was consistently delayed by its differences on how to deal with Don Williams and Kathy Chandler, and the intertwined questions of how to construct a disciplined communist organization, in general. The PSC took up the question of Don Williams once again after he failed to meet his deadline to submit a new self-criticism. It was our position that Don Williams' failure to do a new self-criticism and his continued flouting of the discipline of the PSC had to result in suspension from the WC. For us the words of the first plenary of the Central Committee rang clear: "we must consider no leader indispensable if he fails to meet bolshevik standards and that strong discipline was required if leadership was to be in a position to forcefully carry forward the struggle to bolshevize our ranks." (Central Committee Minutes, p. 4) Evidently, Howard and A. did not hear as well as we did for they disagreed with our proposal, saying that the issue related to "not a question of principle, but to a tactical question and one of political judgment," and in opposing our correct stand they added that "we had to prepare the Central Committee before suspending Don Williams."

Comrades, as we stated in the introduction, this struggle around Don Williams' role in the WC represented just one in a number of debates in connection with topics of both major and minor concern. However, one thing that became obvious at this juncture, if not earlier, was that there was a two-line struggle in the PSC. There was no way in the world that we could have so many differences on such a variety of questions without this being the case. Particularly as regards the principle of democratic centralism, the cornerstone of party-building, there was a

"conflict between autonomism and centralism, between democracy and "bureaucracy", between the tendency to relax and the tendency to tighten organization and discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and that of the staunch proletarian, between intellectualist individualism and proletarian solidarity."

(Lenin, One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, P. 198)

As we will see, this right deviationist tendency, this philosophy of tailism in matters of organization, was repeated again and again, but first we will examine their three part proposal on how to deal with Don Williams: 1) that we had to prepare the Central Committee, 2) it was a question of tactics and 3) a question of political judgement.

A. and Howard's creative thesis flies in the face of the resolutions of the first plenary session of the Central Committee stating the the "PSC was to serve as the day-to-day practical and political leadership of the organization when the Central Committee was not in session." And further,

"when the Central Committee is not in session the PSC centralizes the collective of the Central Committee and exercises the functions and powers of the Central Committee, and the PSC has the power to issue binding directives to every Central Committee member and every member of the WC(M-L)." (Central Committee Minutes p. 4)

It is quite interesting that these two comrades would assume such a hypocritical, vacillating and spineless posture in light of the fact it was they who fought so relentlessly and vigorously at the first Central Committee meeting for the full and unchallengeable authority of the PSC. As a result, the comrades, B. in particular, who wanted to place certain restrictions and qualifications on upholding directives of the PSC were criticized and the Central Committee as a whole agreed that "the PSC, in every instance has the full authority of the Central Committee itself, whether exercised well or badly."

Hence, comrades, there is no question of whether the PSC had the power to suspend Don Williams. We had not only the right and the power, most importantly, we had the responsibility, because the comrade had continued his petty-bourgeois individualistic activity, had made no serious efforts to transform, and had violated a fundamental principle of communist organization by failing to "be bold in making criticism-self-criticism." (Article 3 of the Constitution of the Communist Party

of China) And finally, too much time had already been spent trying to rehabilitate this element to the detriment of the advanced cadre in the districts who were trying to implement our line and sink firm and deep roots among the industrial proletariat. We argued and pleaded that we had to be decisive and firm, lest we prolong the struggle, further compromise our leadership, and neglect the rank-and-file, who were crying for direction.

A. and Howard's insistence that whether to discipline Don Williams was a question of tactics in light of the principles involved is a blatant reflection of how petty-bourgeois democrats bastardize the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism. To paraphrase Marx, communists may compromise on tactics, but they never compromise on principles. And, as Chairman Mao teaches, the question of discipline is inseparably bound up to the principle of democratic centralism:

"Both democracy and freedom are relative, not absolute, and they come into being and develop in specific historical conditions. Within the ranks of the people, democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline. They are the two opposites of a single entity, contradictory as well as united, and should not one-sidedly emphasize one to the denial of the other. Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without discipline; we cannot do without democracy, nor can we do without centralism. This unity of democracy and centralism, of freedom and discipline, constitutes our democratic centralism." (Mao, Selected Readings, p. 438)

Although we have from Day One recognized the importance of a new communist organization to be built on a strong foundation cemented by centralism, Howard and A. have fought for, in practice, a loose, amorphous and ultra-democratic organization. It has been their lack of firmness on Leninist principles, their petty-bourgeois wavering, and their liberalism, that extended Don Williams' political career in the WC, deadlocked the PSC, and contributed to its stagnation and eventual degeneration.

Side by side with their right opportunist and conciliatory attitude toward Don Williams, went an equally capitulationist stand taken on Kathy Chandler. Although she has given lip service to repudiating her petty-bourgeois individualism, political dishonesty, and white national chauvinism, her practice in the recent period has reflected a continuation of that activity. Earlier, we presented some of our views regarding Kathy Chandler; here, we will summarize our position of why she should not have been restored to the Central Committee and later we will review several incidents that have occurred since the second plenary session of the Central Committee, that only reinforce our views. In the main, Kathy Chandler has contributed to Don Williams' disruptive activity. That is precisely why it was such a farce and a mockery at the last Central Committee meeting when Howard suggested that we do "a scientific investigation of Don Williams' practice and that Kathy Chandler should be relied on to bring Don Williams forward." In almost every point of difference between the PSC and the comrade, Kathy Chandler stood solidly with Don Williams in opposition to her own primary collective. She supported with Don Williams the proposal for the workers' school even after the PSC rescinded it. When he abandoned his work in the district, she continually raised questions in the district regarding why he had not been reintegrated into the work. In a meeting prior to the extension of her probation she was warned against raising questions that should have been discussed first among Central Committee members, but afterwards she persisted in violating the directive of the PSC. Based on regular reports from A. and his wife, who was the district chair, we know that Kathy Chandler took on little initiative to develop the local work, but instead played a divisive role here. Of particular importance, however, was the halfhearted manner in which she chose to move in rectifying the errors of the previous period. In fact, during the three month period of her initial probation, she failed miserably in carrying out the tasks assigned to her by the Central Committee and the PSC. As a result,

a proposal was made to extend her probation. Although we cannot go into all the details of the debate here, the general thrust of it was quite revealing. Howard opposed the continuation of Kathy Chandler's probation on the grounds that "she had made an effort to carry out the tasks, that the decision to extend was contrary to the line of the Central Committee, and finally since our performance had not been all that good, it would be bad political judgment to take such action." Initially A. had a very hard and firm position. For some time he had suspected Kathy Chandler and Don Williams of factionalizing and had even suggested that Kathy Chandler be removed from the Central Committee, then. However, as the struggle proceeded, A., as usual, began to vacillate. This was Howard's cue, for when he saw that the extension of probation was imminent, he did the next best thing -- unite and take the lead in drafting a proposal that would be watered down and imply that the PSC needed more time to investigate the situation, as occurred recently with Don Williams.

The most vivid indication of Kathy Chandler's determination not to abide by the directives of the Central Committee was her failure to make any attempt to build a firm political relationship with B. While she admitted that she helped destroy the relationship between Don Williams and B., because the relationship with Don Williams was something "I just wanted," she still claimed she had "political respect" for B. Nevertheless, at no time from the Unity Conference to the last Central Committee meeting, did she make any effort to resolve the contradictions between B. and herself. Although she was instructed by the PSC to write the comrade and go visit her in Detroit, neither was done. A contributing factor to this failure was Howard's instruction that "she need not bother because it would not make any difference anyway," but, in the main, this lack of concern is indicative of her lingering white national chauvinist sentiments. Kathy Chandler felt that "90% of the Black women in the WC(M-L) did not trust her." Although she has since denied making the statement, her denials will not erase the words that were spoken. Such a view is not only subjective, but it also belittles the consciousness of Black women, and projects narrow nationalism, instead of white national chauvinism, as the primary obstacle to the ironclad unity of the multinational proletariat.

Comrades, in a letter written to A. and Howard, we stated in connection with Don Williams and Kathy Chandler that:

"we must try to put the negative aspect of the contradiction behind us, build on the positive attributes of both comrades, and help them move forward so they can play an instrumental role in the growth and development of our organization. Key to all of this, however, is the firm and constructive leadership we exercise in directing their remolding. Don Williams has historically been a leader without any leadership. We must change that. While we must encourage the comrade's leadership abilities, we must lead."

Chairman Mao says that we should "learn from mistakes and cure the illness to save the patient." However it is impossible to remold someone that does not sincerely believe they have erred, to cure someone that does not admit they are sick. Thus, the combination of Don Williams' and Kathy Chandler's refusal to see themselves as patients, compounded by Howard and A.'s failure to act like doctors by relying on the science of Marxism-Leninism, made it impossible for the PSC to deal firmly and decisively with these elements. Because of their lack of confidence in our political judgement, their overemphasis on these two individuals, and their own inexperience and political narrowness, they embraced the theory of overcoming some day, and made a blind commitment to ideological struggle, thus capitulating in the face of Don Williams' and Kathy Chandler's blatant opportunism. In Foundations of Leninism, Stalin warns against the pitfalls of having petty-bourgeois democrats and opportunists that come out of the same mold as Kathy Chandler and Don Williams in the party, and urges communists to deal decisively with these forces or they will under-

mine the unity of the leadership and the rank-and-file cadre:

"The theory of "defeating" opportunist elements by ideological struggle within the Party, the theory of "overcoming" these elements within the confines of a single party, is a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the party to paralysis and chronic infirmity, threatens to make the Party a prey to opportunism, threatens to leave the proletariat without a revolutionary party, threatens to deprive the proletariat of its main weapon in the fight against imperialism."

And again:

"Our party succeeded in achieving internal unity and unexampled cohesion of its ranks primarily because it was able in good time to purge itself of the opportunist pollution, because it was able to rid its ranks of the Liquidators and the Mensheviks. Proletarian parties develop and become strong by purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists. The party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements." (p. 116-7)

Instead of insisting on building the WC(M-L) on a solid framework and foundation with the highest of bolshevik standards, Howard and A., in the name of being tolerant, patient, and objective have attacked and compromised the fundamental principle of party building, democratic centralism. Instead of requiring that the WC(M-L) have complete freedom of factions and opposite lines, they have railed and cried against our insistence that it is anti-Leninist to have cadre on the Central Committee with blatant political differences with the leadership. A and Howard, in particular have consistently in practice shown that they, like all revisionists and right opportunists "conceive of the party as an inn with two doors, as a talking shop and they consider this as the climax of democracy." (See Foto Cami, Objective and Subjective Factors in the Revolution, Albania Today #1 1973, p.23-4).

THE SECOND CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING AND OUR "FUNDAMENTAL UNITY ON LINE"

The second plenary session of the Central Committee came at a stage when resignations and disillusionment was occurring on a number of fronts. The both of us, at the time, were mentally and physically fatigued and spent owing to our attempts and frustrations in trying to make sense out of the disorder and the hundreds of hours invested since September struggling against the opportunism of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler and the empiricism and ineptness of their conscious ally Howard and their unconscious ally A. Contrarily to the recent paper presented by the two remaining members of the PSC, we have struggled incessantly for a strong and determined leadership position inside the PSC, criticising both the work of these comrades and our own. No one who has known us can say that we do not fight for principles and against opportunism, yet we are now painted as spineless and whimpering pups with our tails between our legs, "resigning ourselves to our fate." A struggle on a host of issues had continued unbroken until the Central Committee meeting, sometimes very emotional, but always on our part principled and unrelenting. We have been criticized at times for our constant struggle, with primarily Howard, who has manifested deeply rooted commitment to salvage Don Williams and Kathy Chandler at any cost.

By the time of the meeting the internal struggle in PSC had reached its highest pitch. The work that was carried out by the PSC in the days and weeks leading up to the Central Committee meeting was accomplished because

more than a month earlier a division of labor had been established. Thus, in spite of our inability to provide unexampled collective leadership certain gains were being made. Nevertheless, Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, and Howard had been constantly singing their refrain that the PSC was a passive body, balancing this charge with the charge of political narrowness. The fact that the real reasons for this seeming passivity were not dealt with by these comrades was because they themselves, Howard included, were the forces that had tied the hands of the organizations' leadership. Our last official act was to painfully grind out the PSC Self-Criticism, which would not have reached the light of day had we not compromised in order to produce a document that would generally inform the rank and file of the situation in the organization. (Note: The PSC Self-Criticism was a document summarizing the work of the PSC).

In the meeting itself the major tasks of the Central Committee should have been to resolve the question of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler's role in the organization, which until this day still influences the direction of the PSC, and begin to plot the course for the Leninist trend in light of the imminent danger of war.* However, because we had become an obnoxious thorn in the side of Howard and A. for their vacillation and nihilism, the primary struggle against Don Williams and Kathy Chandler and all the other right opportunists was sacrificed to mount a campaign against us. One of the reasons that things were so turned around was because we had allowed ourselves to be disarmed, first by illness and then by frustration and stress as a result of the lengthy struggle. Even though the PSC was set the task of objectively analyzing the practice of Kathy Chandler and Don Williams, there was no way that this could have been done given Howard's blind support and political dishonesty regarding these two elements and A.'s failure to prepare a report on Kathy Chandler's activities in the Chicago district. Although reports had been made to the PSC by the district chair of Kathy Chandler's disruptive actions, and while this comrade's husband on the PSC constantly cited examples of this divisiveness and violations of democratic centralism, he was either unable or unwilling to prepare an objective report of these practices for the Central Committee meeting. Eventually, he threw his hands up in despair and called for this comrades reinstatement to the Central Committee because his report "did not hold water." We found this to be a despicable and cowardly position from a PSC member who had constantly decried (and has until this day) Kathy Chandler's unprincipled behavior and inconsistent work in the Chicago district. Though it was not the task of either of us to prepare the case for Kathy Chandler's removal from the Central Committee, we know now that in view of A.'s vacillation it was idealistic to have done otherwise. In fact while Don first raised the proposal to remove Kathy Chandler from the Central Committee, a position we had maintained for sometime, prior to the Central Committee meeting A. asked one of us to write the proposal because he stated, "I have vacillated on the question." We as well as the other members of the PSC had specific assignments flowing from a division of labor for the Central Committee meeting. Nevertheless all of us should have been, in light of our experiences, in a position to make an objective appraisal of the situation, however, in view of the wavering, we did fail to prepare our case adequately.

In the same meeting, the chairman of the organization was a better spokesman for Kathy Chandler's reinstatement than Kathy Chandler herself. He, too, was fully aware of the opportunism of Kathy Chandler and the reports of errors the comrade had continued to commit. Yet in the Central Committee meeting he piled accolade on top of accolade, he praised Kathy Chandler, and commended her for her contributions to the organization saying that "her skills were much needed in the WC because of her broadness of view, because she had almost single handedly constructed the line of the WC, and she had submitted more reports than anyone else in the organization." Comrades, not once did Howard list one

* Note: These comrades are deepening their study of the international situation. This reflected their views in Spring of 1976.

of Kathy Chandler's weaknesses or make references to the errors she had committed, or allude to the struggles that the PSC had had with her. We should, however, mention that he did make a comment about the battles that A. and one of us had with her by implying that they had been "interrogating Kathy." And Howard concluded his testimonial by saying that he had gotten a clear indication of Kathy Chandler's work through the "consultation he had with her." Incidentally, the other PSC members have not to this day received one written report on Howard's so-called consultations with Kathy Chandler!

While there were, as we stated, certain limitations to the presentation made by A. and our supplementary statements calling for Kathy Chandler's removal, we feel that there were at the very least enough questions in the air to warrant extended probation pending further investigation. That is at the very least, but there was certainly enough information, if comrades had been honest, to remove Kathy Chandler from the Central Committee; for the burden of proof lay with Kathy Chandler and her defenders to show objectively how she deserved to be a respected member of the Central Committee. Nevertheless, Kathy Chandler was restored to the Central Committee. We should point out here that it was not more than several weeks after the Central Committee meeting that Kathy Chandler displayed many of those "great virtues" that Howard extolled her for at the Central Committee meeting. In a meeting with Don Williams, attended by Howard, one of us, and Kathy Chandler, our restored and "remolded" Central Committee member, she joined Don Williams in his attack on the line of the Central Committee:

"Don Williams stated that he would attempt to carry out the terms of the directive, but the bulk of the meeting was spent in struggle over his position that our views as to how to proceed generally and in his case was incorrect. He feels that the proposal is anarchistic in that it relies on his initiative rather than putting forward a nationally coordinated plan of action. He does not feel that building a newspaper and building factory nuclei are a nationally coordinated plan of action, since these are only tools to accomplish something else.....In the meantime, the question was whether he would take up the tasks outlined in a disciplined way. He said he would certainly try to, though he didn't see very well how.

"Kathy Chandler participated in the meeting. However, she did not support the line of the proposal, but supported Don Williams in his attack on the line. I suggest Kathy Chandler be formally censured for this. Whatever confusion may have existed in her mind regarding the character of her participation should either have been taken up beforehand, or resolved by her silence. If this has also characterized her district role, this should also be added to the censure, making clear that her reinstatement does not mean that we have given up the fight against her errors. On the question of Don Williams her first loyalty is to her collective and to its leadership." (Howard's Weekly Report to the PSC, 4/17/76)

First of all, there should have been no question in Kathy Chandler's mind of where her allegiance should be, for all the way back in January, in a collective meeting with the PSC, she was told that Don Williams was in the main responsible to us, and that any questions she had about his future, or any other differences she had around line or policy should be taken up with the PSC. Furthermore, it was clearly stated that her primary collective was the PSC and the Central Committee, and she had the responsibility to be disciplined and uphold the line of the Central Committee. The fact of the matter is, that ever since that day, she had continued to flagrantly and blatantly violate that directive. It has been Howard's refusal to call her errors just that and to fight against them that has enabled her to be in the position she is in now. No, Howard certainly has not, as he said, "given up the fight against her errors," because he has never admitted that she has, down

the line, committed serious errors, and he has never begun to fight them.

Also, let us say that Howard was well aware of the continuation of Kathy Chandler's disruptive activity in the district. In several meetings following the Central Committee meeting, there were discussions centered around where Kathy Chandler should work. While she was now a full-fledged member of the Central Committee, with impeccable character, there was apprehension about her doing newspaper work. A., in his weekly report of 4/10/76, a week before the aforementioned meeting with Don Williams, said that:

"I believe we must do a better job of giving Kathy Chandler a collective life. The way it is now the only place she can struggle is within the district, and already the both of us have been criticized for having differences that shouldn't exist among Central Committee members. The line differences that have existed between Don Williams and Kathy Chandler on the one hand, and the Central Committee on the other are nothing new. The line differences between us and Kathy Chandler, in particular, should have also been reviewed prior to her restoration. I am sure that comrades have disagreements over her appraisal of the PSC and Central Committee, her suggestions for preparation for War,* and her proposal along with Don Williams for work in the local African Liberation Support Committee, headed up by DB. Initially Howard supported this proposal and told Don Williams that he would fight for it within the PSC. Kathy Chandler not only pushed it in the organization, but 'sought contact with the Central Organization of U.S. Marxist-Leninists.... and was planning to raise with them the question of African Liberation Support Committee' prior to a decision being made by the PSC." (See A.'s report of 4/10/76)

A. not only went on to raise concern about Kathy Chandler's plans and warned her not to contact COUSML because of their fiasco around the Zimbabwe African National Union, he later struggled with her around her views on the PSC handling of Don Williams. He concluded that:

"Kathy Chandler does still encourage Don Williams' backward aspects by still uniting with him that there are legitimate political differences he has with us that could legitimately result in demoralization, etc., which I believe is based on pure subjectivity and represents a form of capitulation even though on the other hand she might struggle with him on various issues like his attitude." (Report of 4/17/76)

Despite all that has occurred since the Central Committee meeting and all that went down prior to the Central Committee meeting, A. and Howard, by word and deed have displayed the rankest kind of liberalism and political dishonesty, fanned the flames of Kathy Chandler's opportunism, and attempted to cover their errors in the field of ideology, politics and organization by turning everyone's attention to our statement on the lack of unity in the PSC.

When the question was posed as to whether the PSC as a unit was characterized by unity or disunity, our position was that, in the main, it was disunified, whereas these two comrades, along with some other members of the Central Committee said it was characterized by unity. We at no time said that everything done by the PSC was negative, but we did say that the work as a collective was characterized by

* Note: A proposal that we should join with OL, RCP, etc., in a united front against war and fascism.

fierce struggle and disunity on ideological and political line. A., Howard, and Kathy Chandler attempted to take the resolution of the Central Committee saying the PSC was in the main united, a little further to indicate that for us to put this forward was a manifestation of subjectivity, flew in the face of our fundamental unity on the Iskra Principle, and that we were the "main danger to the unity of the PSC." While the majority agreed with the first two points, they refused to give credence to the last. It is a clear sign of A.'s liberalism for him to base part of his blistering criticism of us for our failure to expand our thesis on the disunity of the PSC by calling for a change in the composition of that body, and then turn around and declare we are the main danger, call for our removal from the PSC, and full repudiation of our errors.

Of course, we would not have united with their position anyway. To this day, we maintain that it is easy enough to talk about "unity on line" or unity in the abstract where everyone, as was the case at the Unity Conference, declares, "WE AGREE WITH THAT," yet it is totally another thing when this agreement, as we have seen in the last six months, is practically implemented in a plan or program. There is, as these comrades have said, a dialectical unity between theory and practice. And we know that anyone can give lip service to unity and Marxism-Leninism and yet act in the most opportunist fashion, such as Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, Howard, some of the comrades that left the organization, Lin Piao, Teng Hsiao-ping,* CPUSA, CLP, etc., etc., etc., claiming that everything is relative and there is no definite path and way to proceed that flows directly out of theory. In the Central Committee meeting these comrades said this was an immutable principle of Marxism-Leninism -- that if we are unified on line, our unity in practice is a principle, not a question of fact. (Also see the PSC's letter on our resignations, 4/27/76)

Comrades, our position is that principled unity on ideological and political line does not exist solely on what we see in black and white, or from verbal commitments, and it certainly does not fall miraculously from the sky. The test of whether unity is a figment of some foolish metaphysician's imagination, or something that exists for real in the objective world, is determined not by rhetoric or lip service, but by one's practice in attempting to make proletarian revolution.

For a further explanation of this point, comrades should consult two important works, Stalin's little pamphlet "On Organization," and Mao's classical work "On Practice." Addressing those comrades who speak at length about "our fundamental unity on line," Stalin said:

"Some people think it is sufficient to draw up a correct Party line, proclaim it from the housetops, state it in the form of a general thesis and resolutions, and take a vote and carry unanimously for victory to come of itself, spontaneously, as it were. This, of course, is wrong. It is a gross delusion."

It is the right opportunist who overemphasizes the level of unity, belittling the level of struggle, as A. and Howard have done in relation to us, saying that the differences were minor or a result of our political narrowness, and thus raising unity to the point of being a principle. They have compounded this error, by negating the fact that "Good resolutions and declarations in favor of the Party line are only a beginning; they merely express the desire for victory, but not the victory itself." Stalin said this because he realized that there also had to be a sharp and fierce struggle for the application of the Party line. It is certainly true that "there are going to be differences," and as Mao says these "differences in the party are a reflection of class struggle," but unless these differences are resolved in a manner that is favorable to the proletariat, the line of the party and the correct solutions will be seriously prejudiced. Furthermore, said Stalin, "After the correct political line has been laid down, organizational work decides

* This was written shortly after Teng's ouster from the Central Committee of the CPC.

everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its success or failure."

A. and Howard will admit that differences have and will emerge concerning the application and development of line. But what they fail to understand is that it is the resolution of these organizational questions, "the proper selection of personnel and the way a check is kept on the fulfillment of the decisions of the leading bodies, etc." that will determine the success of your ideological and political line, regardless of how correct it may be. No matter how much you subscribe to the correct line of the Communist Party of China, unless your practice is in harmony with your line, you will be disappointed by constant failures and setbacks.

"That is why practice is the criterion of truth and why 'the standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge.' Stalin has well said, 'Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if tis path is not illumined by revolutionary theory.'" (Mao, Four Essays on Philosophy, p. 15)

Comrades, just as there is a correct and revolutionary communist line on a given question, regardless of the varying views, there is only one correct and Leninist manner to apply and implement that line.

Thus, for anyone to bluster about "our fundamental unity on line," to talk about our unity on the written word without speaking to the transformation of these words into deed, i.e., the transformation of revolutionary theory into revolutionary practice, is a blatant manifestation of a one-sided, static, vulgar evolutionist and metaphysical idealist world outlook, the perspective of the bourgeoisie. As the Albanians say,

"The unity of the ranks of the Party consists in the unity of thought and action, in the unity of word and deed, in the mobilization of all the communists to achieve a single aim: the faithful implementation of the program, tactics, and organizational rules of the Party. 'The Party is not merely a union of people of one mind,' comrade Stalin says, 'it is also a union of people who act and fight relying on a common ideological basis.'"

(The Party of Labor of Albania On the Building and the Life of the Party, p. 146)

THE ISKRA PLAN AND THE JOINT EDITORIAL BOARD

Our lack of unity with A. and Howard was not only manifested in relationship to points already mentioned, but also in connection to a number of other issues, the foremost of which was the further development of our line and program for building a new multinational communist party in the U.S. The chairman's proposal for a joint editorial board was the topic of numerous discussions and debates within the PSC. Uniting with the proposal, A. stated that "we might as well try it to see if it works since nothing else seems to." While we pushed for consolidating our ties with collectives like the San Diego Organizing Committee, the Party Building Committee (two local collectives that joined the effort to build The Communist) as well as other collectives and individuals that had written to our Post Office box from all over the U.S., Howard in particular had come up with a scheme that would have presented overtures to everybody from the OL and the RCP to PRRWO, ATM, RWC, Resistencia and MLOC. Of course, comrades that have read the proposal now know that it has been refined to include primarily MLOC, PRRWO and a number of other organizations. Although all the mechanics of this proposal are not clear, two things are obvious: 1) it is incorrect and a deviation from the Iskra Plan, and 2) Howard and A. are empiricists who do not really understand the task Iskra set for itself, which was to develop around it an organization capable of constructing the Bolshevik party. Howard wants to throw in the towel after six months because "nobody is listening to us." In its place, Howard would like to substitute a plan

to pull together newspaper after newspaper and make them better.

The roots of this bourgeois democratic view on party building can be traced all the way back to the Unity Conference. It was there that a number of comrades, us included, criticized some for the timid and half-assed manner in which they approached telling the communist movement that we were going to build the Iskra-type newspaper. We thought The Communist came closest to resembling the Iskra, and consequently we wanted all genuine Leninists to join us and build The Communist in order to lay the groundwork for bringing into being the new party. Hence the task was, and still remains, for us to insist, struggle for, and demand, in a bold and principled fashion that those who call themselves Marxist-Leninists, that those who see What Is To Be Done? and One Step Forward, Two Steps Back as the ideological and organizational foundations of the Marxist party join with us in combining our human and material resources to build The Communist. In the recent period, we began to see both individuals and collectives come out openly and express their unity with the Iskra Plan, showing that like Iskra, The Communist, too, can be a collective organizer. The Communist, also, had begun to provide common activity -- through distribution, reporting, and correspondence -- upon which we could patiently unite the Leninist trend. However, The Communist must not, as is with the case with Howard's proposal, be seen as something in and unto itself. It is precisely "with the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organization will naturally take shape..." (Lenin CW, Vol. 5, p. 22) Thus instead of trying to build some nebulous editorial board, we should have been uniting with the correct, as well as struggling with the bankrupt, views contained within the columns of papers like Palante, Revolutionary Cause, Unite, and so on, but most of all, we should have struggled against the very existence of what amounted to regional and local newspapers. Instead, we should have been calling for a greater centralization of a common ideological center and relied primarily on those comrades who, through thought and action, displayed a commitment to build the Iskra organ and most importantly, an Iskra organization. The task before us, was and remains to build The Communist to be utilized as a mechanism to build a disciplined Iskra organization for the expressed purpose of constructing a genuine party. As Lenin said, it is necessary to place:

"special emphasis on the demand for the unification of, more accurately the actual restoration of a united all-Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, by means of joint work which should begin with a rallying around Iskra so as to convert it into an instrument of genuinely nationwide agitation which would lead to the creation of a militant all-Russian organization capable of launching a determined onslaught on the autocracy." (Lenin CW, Vol. 6, p. 176-7)

The proposal for a joint editorial board, leads us away from this lofty goal.

CONCLUSION

Our history is as long as any comrades presently in the organization. We think one would be hard pressed to show that we have been cowards or passive in the struggle for clarity of principles and developing a strong organization. Individualism has not been one of our characteristics, and we have striven from the very beginning to immerse ourselves into Marxism-Leninism and the life of the class of the proletariat -- though we both originate, by education only, from the strata of the intellectuals. We have always considered our interest as the interests of the class, but now we are "liberals" who cringe at the thought of criticism and self-criticism, although both have always been in our arsenal since inside the BWC and the WC(M-L).

We resign from the WC(M-L) not only because we will not uphold the decisions of the second plenary session of the Central Committee, but also because we no

longer have any trust or confidence in several of the people who were involved in the passage of those resolutions. Included in that list is Kathy Chandler, A., and Howard Engleskirchen, the organization's chair. We are mentally and physically exhausted from what these comrades would have you believe has been an imaginary struggle, concocted and fought in our own subjectivity. It became impossible for us to continue the struggle inside the WC unless we were to lose our principles. However, we have done nothing that we, at this time, desire to repudiate, other than the position of supporting the Detroit Committee (Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, and Howard Engleskirchen) which caused the loss of a number of genuine forces, and others will surely be lost.

In the document circulated by the remaining PSC members, in which they lay out quite a mysterious account of the resignations of the last period, there is only a hint that this goes back to the bankruptcy of the BWC. Indeed a part of it does -- but the great majority of this corrosiveness has its origins in our failure to deal decisively with opportunism and nihilism that was born of the Detroit Committee. This trend will not be reversed, as they insist, by writing letters to the two of us.* It will only be reversed with the purging of these forces from the ranks of the organization -- it will only be under these circumstances that this so-called trend will be reversed.

As for our political future, we know we will continue to study to further grasp the science of Marxism-Leninism while continuing to sink deep roots among the working class. That is for sure. We will not, however, in the foreseeable future, seek membership in the Workers' Congress.

* Note: The PSC organized a letter-writing campaign for people to write and denounce these comrades without studying the issues.