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July 12, 1973

Dear Comrades,

The enclosed letter and petition to the National Committee were delivered to Milt by Bruce Bailey at 2:00 this morning.

Neither Bruce Bailey nor Dennis King was selected as a party delegate to the convention by the NYC ^{community} section committee. Their names were not placed in nomination at the section-wide meeting that took place on June 24. They did not attend the meeting. It is true that Bruce, who meets in a club with Dennis, was told late about the meeting, but he was told nonetheless, and he was informed of the subjects the meeting would cover. Both he and Dennis could have attended.

Bruce and Dennis submitted lengthy position papers differing sharply with the party line on major questions (C-D, united front work, 30/40, etc.). These papers also sharply criticized the party leadership and methods of organization. These papers were submitted too late for printing in any of the pre-convention discussion bulletins.

Despite the fact that neither Bruce nor Dennis were named convention delegates, the National Steering Committee and the New York City Committee proposed that they be invited to present their viewpoints at the convention as special guests of the National Committee. Efforts to reach them were under way when they delivered the enclosed material.

Obviously, this invitation is no longer valid. It was extended for the purpose of sharpening political discussion at the convention and strengthening the party. The enclosed material indicates that Bruce and Dennis are not interested in this kind of constructive activity. In the name of "avoiding inner-party factionalizing," they are attempting to factionalize against the party among non-party people on the West Side. There is no reason why our party's national convention should legitimize these attacks by providing a forum for them. Sharp debate, political discussion and criticism are one thing. Public slanders against the party by party members are another.

Comradely, NSC

By Bruce's and Dennis' own admission,

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MR. MILTON ROSEN
APT 8-6

To the National Committee:

We have taken the steps of circulating the enclosed petition to protest the undemocratic and illegitimate convening of this convention. One of the worst results of the arbitrary selection of delegates to the convention is that the party's two most active community organizers in New York City do not have an ~~ax~~ opportunity to represent their base to the leading body of the party.

We wish to make it clear that we carefully did not circulate this petition among party members or among Challenge sellers close to the party, because we did not want to do damage to the ongoing activities of the party in the neighborhood. We do not yet believe that inner-party factionalizing is a proper mode of struggle.

Instead, in keeping with the spirit of Road to Revolution III, we are circulating this petition among our base--the leaders and members of the center organizations in the neighborhood who are close to us. None of the people on this petition are ideological enemies of the party; in fact, through us all of them have a friendly view of the party. All of them are people known throughout the neighborhood for their ~~sqxx~~ ~~xx~~ qualities as fighters and their involvement in community activities.

We are aware that this petition is in violation of Section IV, Number VIII of the party constitution. However, we have no choice but to ~~xxxx~~ violate this section of the constitution, for the following reasons: 1) The party leadership did not deign to respond to Bruce Bailey's criticism of the illegitimate delegate selection. 2) The party leadership has simply ignored the primary provisions of the constitution and the basic principles of democratic ~~edm~~ centralism pertaining to the necessity for election ~~mixdewigatextxtxtaxpartyixixiazixgxbny~~ (election by the clubs) of delegates to the party's leading body--the ~~lx~~ national convention. 3) The party leadership went further and insulted any member capable of independent thought--by claiming the authority of a fictitious constitutional amendment that allows them to select delegates. This is a trick ~~xxx~~ cheap enough to be worthy of the shadiest union hack bureaucrat. 4) This is simple authoritarianism. We cannot stand by but must respond in a manner worthy of Road to Revolution III's best aspect: go to the people!

(over)

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Does the party leadership take its own theory and constitution seriously?

From "On the Party," by Milt Rosen: "These are three concepts to be fought for to make democratic centralism work. First, the ability to engage in full, frank discussion from top to bottom on basic political questions. Second, ties to the people, to prevent the discussions from becoming academic personal exercises in rhetoric. Third, the willingness to subordinate your individual desires and thoughts to the will of the majority.

"By utilizing these three concepts, we can accomplish the following: arrive democratically at decisions; be able to carry them out among the masses, and at a later date re-evaluate experiences democratically, based on serving and learning from the ~~people~~ people...

"One could say that our leadership is thoroughly committed, but not fully developed. Therefore, our leaders need a lot of help from the members. The democratic aspect must be xx developed with a capital D." (emphasis ours)

Also from "On the Party:"

"Too many of our people take a casual attitude to party ~~decisions~~ decisions....All of these faults indicate low political level and poor leadership. Democratic centralism can become an abstraction (this rule to fight over and that rule to fight for). Our members and leaders must be vigorous, conscientious and responsible--all adding up to doing real political work on the job or in the community."

Which one of us ~~has~~ (the national committee--or Bruce and Dennis, rank and file members) has taken upon himself to modify the constitution in the spirit of Road to Revolution III? Which one of us is following the spirit of democratic ~~centralism~~ centralism--from the people, to the people?

We await your response,

Bruce B. Binkley
Dennis King

P.S. ~~ix~~ This was done in one day. Given a week, we would have had the signatures of many more leaders and activists in all areas of community life.

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PETITION

To the National Committee of
the Progressive Labor Party

We, the undersigned, are active participants and leaders in the community groups on the Upper West Side that are engaged in daily battles with Columbia University, the landlords, Grosvenor House, the supermarket chains, St. Luke's Hospital, the Board of Education and all the other forces that prey on our community. Many of us are Challenge readers and have participated in PL and WAM demonstrations and rallies.

We are concerned with the fact that West Side PL members Bruce Bailey and Dennis King are not delegates, representing our community, at the upcoming PL convention. We understand that the West Side is being represented exclusively by individuals who are not involved in the people's movements in the community. Bruce and Dennis have, for many years, always been there as PL members when the squeeze was on: fighting urban removal and evictions and in a hundred and one other struggles. We rarely ever see the other West Side PL members except when Bruce or Dennis mobilizes them for struggle. At least one West Side PL member, Ruth Leacock, has engaged in ~~an~~ slander against the Committee for Community Control of Grosvenor House--the leading independent organization in the fight against racism in our community--and is proud of maintaining her ties with the Uncle Tom flunkys in the community who have sold out to the Grosvenor House Board of Directors (composed of the wives of the top financiers of U.S. imperialism). Furthermore, we have heard that a leader of PL on the West Side, Lenny Dick, recently approached Bruce and Dennis and tried to pressure them into withdrawing their support for the Committee for Community Control, attacking the committee's correct political struggle against the Uncle Toms in the community as "malicious." Finally, we understand that Bruce and Dennis were pressured by the PL leadership to go along with a plan for the West Side work that would have required them to abandon their work with us--in the organizations and struggles that already exist and are of vital importance for the community--in order to build a rival, exclusively PL-led movement that, as proposed, would have looked for support from the very Uncle Toms who do the dirty work in our community for Eugene Callender, Percy Sutton, and the racist Grosvenor House Board.

Furthermore, we understand that the Columbia student/faculty community is being represented at the PL convention by an individual, Robby Nerenberg, who last year abandoned the Columbia Tenants Union--the key community organization in the fight against the Columbia administration--when the CTU was under sharp attack. We recall that at this point Bruce and Dennis began to work with the Tenants Union, stuck with it, helped to beat off the physical attacks of the police-anarchists, and helped to build it into an organization of over 250 dues-paying members. We also understand that Robby Nerenberg rebuffed repeated attempts to get PL students involved again in this key battle--claiming he was too busy "fighting on the ideological front." We also understand that this individual then had the effrontery to slander the honest fighters among the Columbia students--who happen to be members of C.A.I.M. (the Columbia Anti-Imperialist Movement)--terming them "right-wingers," although these so-called

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right-wingers have stuck with the CTU through thick and thin from its very inception and have never pushed tactics detrimental to its growth.

We believe that a party of the people (such as Bruce and Dennis represent PL to us as being) needs constant criticism from fighters outside its ranks to help strengthen its relevance to the struggles of the people. We are concerned that the current organizational manipulations and slander campaign aimed at Bruce and Dennis within PL will prevent the party from developing further as an important and positive force in the united struggles of the West Side community. We think that if the attacks on Bruce and Dennis within PL continue, it will discourage honest fighters among the people from continuing to cooperate with PL in common struggle.

We strongly question the legitimacy of a PL convention which excludes the PL members who are most deeply involved in the people's struggles. We are offended by a policy which penalizes PL members for refusing to abandon their friends in the community and for taking a principled stand in the fight against racism.

Such exclusion is tantamount to exclusion and penalization of the people (including ourselves) and ill becomes a party which, in the past, has often professed its aspiration to be a vanguard of the people.

We understand that the delegates to the PL convention have been chosen by the leadership, not the membership--in violation of PL's own constitution. We understand that Dennis King was not even informed of the meeting at which the rank and file "approved" the West Side community delegate slate (and that Bruce was only informed a day and a half beforehand--without being told what the meeting was about).

We are offended that our community is being represented at the convention by a Robby Nerenberg, who abandoned the struggle, and a Lenny Dick, who is so ignorant of the problems of our community that he ends up defending the enemies of the people.

We believe that delegates to a convention of a party such as PL should be freely chosen by the party membership in consultation with the people of the community who fight side by side with them in the common struggle against the common enemy. We do not believe they should be chosen by a few top leaders who have never set foot in our community.

We demand that Bruce Bailey and Dennis King be seated as the delegates representing our community at the PL national convention. We also demand that the other criticisms we have voiced be acted upon as soon as possible.

(signatures on following page)