

October 2, 2018

Open Letter of Resignation from the Party of Communists USA (PCUSA)

In the last several weeks, an intolerable situation has reigned within the Political Bureau (PB) of the PCUSA. Certain secondary contradictions have been allowed to become increasingly hostile, leading to the expulsion of one long-time member of the PB and the resignation of several others.

Details of events

For a while there have developed contradictions between certain members of the LGBT+ Commission (LC) and certain members of the Women's Commission (WC). I and others had suggested that the best way to deal with this was to have an open meeting including members of both commissions to try to "clear the air," even if this did not resolve the differences. This suggestion was rejected by the General Secretary (GS), who felt it would only inflame the situation.

On Monday, September 24, there was a meeting of the Southern District of the Party. For reasons that are not entirely clear to me, the meeting so upset the only African-American woman in the Party that she resigned.

At the PB meeting the following day, Tuesday, an agenda was put forward without my input (although I was supposed to be on the 3-person committee that drew up the agenda) that ignored the growing problems in the Party. The member of the Woman Commission who has since been expelled (WC1) and I both requested that the problems in the Party be added to the agenda. Instead, the GS had on the agenda a motion that future meetings of the PB, which for most of the Party's history have been open to any member of the Party, be closed (without any explanation that this was to deal with the problems in the party). This motion passed by a vote of 9 to 4; it became a barometer to show where the majority of the PB stood on the problems in the Party. After this, members of the LC, having tasted blood, used this as an opening to launch vicious attacks against WC1. One of the other members of the PB, who has hardly uttered a political word in any Party meetings, slandered both me and WC1 (I will call him the slanderer (SL)) by saying that we didn't do any work for the Party anyway, although people in the Party know that she and I have always been among the most active members of the Party.

The following day, one of the members of the LGBT+ Commission (LC1) sent out a reprehensible email to members of the Party, calling on them to basically shun WC1 (to block her emails and phone calls). At a separate meeting, when WC1 announced herself on the call, the member who usually runs the machinery to control the calls as he later showed himself to be) instructed the member controlling the machinery to throw her off the call. Another of the 4 who had voted against the motion in the PPB the previous day was blocked from being on the call at all. When I later raised this with the GS, he tried to blame this on problems with the phone,

although he must have heard SL call to block WC1. Besides, WC1 sent emails to the GS asking that she be unblocked, to which he never replied. It should be noted that the GS did nothing to stop these attacks on any of the people who voted against the resolution at the PB meeting, although at the point not only were they active members of the PB but also no charges had even been brought against any of them.

The following day, Thursday, the two members who had been blocked on Wednesday were again blocked on another phone call. When I asked why, I was given no answer and I said that then I would not stay on the call and hung up. Again, the GS made no move to stop this travesty of comradely behavior.

The GS called for an emergency meeting of the PB for the following day, Friday, to discuss the immediate expulsion of WC1 for having been a “disrupter” and “factionalist” for taking Party business outside the Party. This can be shown to be false. As a matter of facts, the GS admitted to me that another member of the LC, call her LC2, had posted a message on the PCUSA’s open Facebook page saying that WC1 had already been expelled and another minor statement that I personally know to be a lie. Again, there was no criticism of this action by the GS.

Despite two lengthy phone calls among the GS, another member of the PB and myself to try to reach some sort of agreement what would prevent the splintering of the Party, this proved to be impossible. The GS continued to put the full blame, on WC1.

The “charges” against WC1 were sent out at most 5 minutes before the emergency PB meeting on Friday. They included a lengthy, unsigned statement (presumably by LC1) that included various unfounded statements that WC1 was “harassing” members of the LC, and also attacked me for being disruptive of the Tuesday PB and for “parroting” WC1. When I got on the call, I asked who was running the controls, as I did not want to see anyone be silenced by an unknown “moderator.” There was no answer, even when the GS also asked the same question. I then announced I was hanging up as I refused to take part in a meeting where anyone could be silenced by an unknown “judge.”

The farce continued (to call it a “kangaroo court” would be an insult to kangaroos, leading to the foregone conclusion: WC1 was expelled.

The Political Significance of the Problems in the Party

Contradictions will always arise in a revolutionary party – the question is how they are handled. Here the main fault lies with the GS. Although he has always tried to hold the party together – I used to call him “our glue” – in this case he apparently felt he had to side with the people in the LC because he thought it was easier to isolate WC1. This was of course totally unprincipled. Moreover, as he has himself admitted, he finds it easier to sweep problems under the rug. In this case, the Party tripped on the mess under the rug. It fell on its face and I doubt that it will be able to pick itself up.

The question has been raised as to whether agents caused the problems within the Party. I have no direct evidence about this. However, quite some time ago I asked the GS, if he knew that a member of the party was an agent, would he have the person expelled. His answer was something like: “I don’t know. It depends on whether they did good work.” It is known that George Soros has lavishly financed some LGBT groups (see for example, <https://4thwavenow.com/2018/05/25/the-open-society-foundations-the-transgender-movement/>) and to promote contradictions with women’s groups. Of course, this is not proof that agents were operating here. This is also in no way to say that LGBT groups are tools of the ruling class anymore than it would be to say the same of women’s groups because Gloria Steinem was an agent of the CIA. Besides, except for assassinating or arresting members of revolutionary groups, the government can only undermine such groups by using the groups’ internal weaknesses. And the PCUSA had plenty of these.

Other Long-Term Weaknesses of the PCUSA

One of the major problems in the PCUSA was that it was very weak in carrying out work outside the Party, or what I called work in the “real world.” It is true that it printed and distributed thousands of copies of a (quite irregularly appearing) newspaper, and contributed to a similarly irregular labor newspaper. It also took part, to the extent of its ability, in anti-war work, labor activities, and celebrations of important working class holidays, such as May Day and November 7. Certainly it was hampered by the fact that its members were scattered around the country, that many were new to Marxism-Leninism, and few could provide independent leadership for work in their particular areas.

These problems could have been counteracted by the PB providing leadership to the members taking part in the broad class struggle. However, the PB spent the great majority of the time in most meetings discussing bureaucratic issues (such as who should head what commission, what should be discussed in commission meetings, etc.), what the GS called structural issues. That the GS used his mobility problem (partly of his own making) as a reason why he could not give leadership in this area (his preferred work is talking on the phone with members, and being on almost nightly telephone conferences) did not help the problem.

I have no animosity to the PCUSA, to the GS or to any of its members except for the small number of liars and slanderers mentioned above. I simply no longer think that it can play much of a positive role in the communist movement any more.

I will definitely continue my work in that movement, and especially in the work to build a genuine communist party of the working class.