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EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

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Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part 3

Struggle in the Fourth International

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS 1951-1954

Volume 4 of 4 volumes

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS,
1951-1954

Contents, Volume 4

Section XV: Correspondence Between Ernest Germain
and George Breitman 196

1. Letter from Ernest Germain to George Breitman 196
2. Letter from George Breitman to Ernest Germain 198
3. Letter from Ernest Germain to George Breitman 204
4. Letter from George Breitman to Ernest Germain 209
5. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs 215
6. Letter from James P. Cannon to George Breitman 216
7. Letter from James P. Cannon to George Breitman 218

Section XVI: Correspondence Between James P.
Cannon and Leslie Goonewardene 221

1. Letter from Leslie Goonewardene to James
P. Cannon 221
2. Letter from James P. Cannon to Leslie
Goonewardene 222

Section XVII: The Struggle Over the "Fourth
World Congress" 231

1. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs 231
2. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs 233
3. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs 234
4. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs 236
5. Letter from Farrell Dobbs to James P. Cannon 237
6. Resolutions Adopted by the International
Committee of the Fourth International at
its May 11, 1954 Meeting 240
7. Letter from James P. Cannon to Leslie
Goonewardene 241
8. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs 243
9. Letter from Gerry Healy and Sam Gordon
to Farrell Dobbs 244
10. Letter from Farrell Dobbs to James P. Cannon 244
11. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs 246

Contents of Other Volumes

Volume I

- Section I: Before the Third World Congress
Section II: The Split in the French Section
Section III: The SWP Majority Position on Stalinism
in the Cochran Fight
Section IV: Pablo's Role in the Cochran Fight

Volume II

- Section IV: Pablo's Role in the Cochran Fight
(Continued)
Section V: The Deepening Differences on Stalinism
Section VI: Four Supporters of Cochran-Clarke-
Bartell "Graduate" from the SWP
Section VII: Pablo Attacks the British Section
Section VIII: Is World War III Inevitable? by
Joseph Hansen
Section IX: Preparing an International Struggle

Volume III

- Section X: Declaring an International Public
Faction
Section XI: The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Plenum
of the SWP, by James P. Cannon
Section XII: The Chinese Experience with Pabloite
Revisionism and Bureaucratism (A Letter to
James P. Cannon), by Peng Shu-Tse
Section XIII: Pablo Declares a "Split"
Section XIV: The Struggle in Canada

Introductory Note

In 1953, sharp differences over Stalinism and organizational matters divided the Fourth International into two public factions, the International Committee of the Fourth International and the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. This division lasted until the Re-unification Congress of the Fourth International held in 1963.

The articles, documents, correspondence, and circulars published in these *Education for Socialists* bulletins are presented as an aid in tracing the evolution of this dispute. The material is divided into two parts. The first (Part Three of *Towards a History of the Fourth International*) is composed of four bulletins and contains materials from the International Committee. The second (Part Four of *Towards a History of the Fourth International*) consists of four bulletins containing material from the International Secretariat faction.

Both sets of bulletins begin with the discussion prior to the Third World Congress of the Fourth International held in 1951. They are divided into sections dealing with key stages in the development of the dispute. Each section opens with a brief introductory note. To the extent that these notes include historical interpretations or conclusions, the views expressed are my own.

The documents, correspondence, articles, and circulars have been subjected to minimal editing. In general the style, grammar, etc., have been retained as in the originals. Additions to the text for explanatory purposes appear in brackets.

The term "section" appears frequently in these documents. This word was used in two different senses within the world Trotskyist movement. On the one hand, it refers to those groups which are affiliated to the Fourth International. Secondly, it is used in reference to organizations that are barred from membership in the Fourth International by reactionary legislation, such as the SWP, but are in full political solidarity with the world Trotskyist movement and represent the continuity of Trotskyism in their countries.

The faction struggle in the world Trotskyist movement

occurred when the McCarthyite witch-hunt was at its height in the United States. Similar manifestations of political repression appeared in other capitalist countries, as the ruling class sought to whip up anticommunist hysteria. In view of these sharp attacks on democratic rights, many radicals found it necessary to use pseudonyms or pen-names in carrying out their political activity. This was true of the Trotskyist movement as well. In line with a policy of printing this material as it originally appeared, these have generally not been changed. Instead, a glossary of these pen-names is included in each volume. Note that some individuals used more than one pen-name on occasion.

The 1953-54 dispute was worldwide in its scope and repercussions. Many parts of the Trotskyist movement that participated in the struggle are not represented in this collection. An instance of this is the lack of documentation from Latin America. Material from the dispute in the Latin American Trotskyist organizations is now being translated and will appear in a future volume.

This selection is based on the documents and correspondence presently available to the National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party. Because of the speed with which the dispute developed, once the differences had become apparent to both sides, many aspects of the struggle are not fully dealt with in official documents. Therefore, it was necessary to include a considerable amount of correspondence to allow maximum clarity for the reader.

Hopefully, the publication of these bulletins will inspire others who were involved in the dispute to make available the relevant materials in their possession. Special thanks are owed to James P. Cannon, National Chairman Emeritus of the Socialist Workers Party, and Tom Kerry and Karolyn Kerry for making their personal archives available for this project.

Fred Feldman
February 1974

Glossary of Pseudonyms and Pen Names Used by Key Figures

The individuals' names appear on the left, with the pseudonyms following in italics.

Harry Braverman: *Harry Frankel*

James P. Cannon: *Walter, Martin*

George Clarke: *Campbell, Livingstone, Livingston*

Colvin R. DaSilva: *Roy*

Farrell Dobbs: *Smith, Barr*

Ross Dowson: *Kane*

Leslie Goonewardene: *Tilak*

Sam Gordon: *Tom, Harry, Burton, Joe*

Joseph Hansen: *Herrick*

Gerry Healy: *Burns, Mason, Jerry*

John Lawrence: *Collins*

Ernest Mandel: *Ernest Germain, Albert, Jeb*

Sherry Mangan: *Patrice, Terrence Phelan, Patrick O'Daniel*

George Novack: *Manuel, William F. Warde*

Michel Raptis: *Michel Pablo, Gabe*

David Weiss: *Stevens*

Milton Zaslow: *Mike Bartell*

SECTION XV: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ERNEST GERMAIN AND GEORGE BREITMAN

[This exchange is reprinted from *SWP Discussion Bulletin* Volume XVI, A-14, 1954. Also included in this section are three letters from James P. Cannon regarding this correspondence.

[In the course of his correspondence with Breitman, Germain promised that the correspondence of the central

figures in the "International Secretariat" would be published to disprove the SWP's contention that Pablo had secretly encouraged the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell faction. It is to be hoped that if the correspondence is not to be made public as a whole, that at least the pertinent sections will be made available to researchers.]

1. Letter from Ernest Germain to George Breitman

November 15, 1953

Dear George:

Unfortunately your letter of August 22 reached me only yesterday, when I returned home from my journey to the East. Unfortunately so many sad and unbelievable developments have taken place in the meantime that it may look odd to answer now this letter of yours. I'll do it anyhow, be it only for friendship's sake.

Nobody was happier than I and all of us in the Center about what happened at the one but last Plenum. We all were as enthusiastic as you were about the maturity shown by the majority leaders at that occasion. We hoped sincerely that a period of calm and positive discussion would set in. That's why we wrote our letter, meaning every single word of it (but it's quite difficult to convince of that people who start looking for "duplicity" behind every move you do). That's why we were shocked in the rudest manner by reading comrade Cannon's letter to Tom, written 24 hours after the Plenum, letter which convinced anybody who isn't a babe in the wood that not only was there going to be no truce but that the war was going to be introduced immediately from your party into the whole international movement (the word "war" being no exaggeration because the very word "military discipline" was used).

I think this fact, as well as comrade Cannon's speech to the majority caucus before the Plenum on "Internationalism" of which the minority got hold only after the agreement, turned the tables. I am not responsible in any way for the minority's attitude after the Plenum and neither is Gabe nor anybody else in Paris. I don't know what they did and if they really broke the truce. But if they did it, the only real cause was Cannon's speech and Cannon's letter. What you say about the events in Seattle may have been a minor cause, but it certainly was not decisive. Bigger issues were now at stake, and the minority could not fail to notice them.

I had not much sympathy for the minority's point of view on questions of American policy; it is quite possible that some nervousness got into their leaders. But it seems to me clear as day that after the majority openly attacked the International's line, the minority had no interest whatsoever to leave the party, at the contrary! That is why I cannot accept the charges made, at least not to the extent they have been advanced. The minority had now finally succeeded, through no merit of their own, to get into the position where it had been willing to be since two years, and where finally Cannon's actions had brought

it; to appear before the membership as the defenders of the International, in political association with the International, against a tendency, which was brutally and violently attacking and insulting the International's line, leadership and discipline. Under such conditions, the minority had every interest to stay in the party and to let a political discussion develop. Under such conditions, the majority had every interest to break any discussion prematurely by organizational means. The answer to the question: who is responsible for the split, is easy when we start from the old method of asking "Cui prodest?"—"In whose interest was it?"

And this brings me to the crux of the matter: the unbelievably lightminded, irresponsible way in which the leaders of the majority, in which I have had for many years the utmost respect and confidence have started an international faction fight which, to all intents and purposes, can only result in a major split from the international movement.

In comrade Cannon's speech before the majority caucus in Internationalism there was not one word expressed on matters of political differences. Even in comrade Cannon's letter to Tom, instructing him to build an international faction, the point was stressed that there were no political differences with the International's line. Suddenly in August comrade Stein sprang on the movement his political thesis, obviously written in agreement with the other majority leaders, which I cannot interpret otherwise as deliberate and cynical attempt to find some political justification for an organizational "struggle of power" launched upon the International leadership.

Comrade Stein's document is written in such obvious bad faith, and overthrows so obviously established points of policy commonly accepted by the American comrades and ourselves not only since 1951 but since 1945 that it is hard for me to see how anyone can escape that conclusion.

Is it necessary to enumerate once again for you the innumerable points which show that bad faith? Do you really believe that we are "capitulating before Stalinism," we who have been busy building the Trotskyist movement, not without success, all over the world? More concretely: do you believe that I, who have predicted perhaps alone in the whole world what would happen in Russia and the rest of the Stalinist sphere of influence this year 12 months ago, have "capitulated before Stalinism"? I am the author of the first draft of "Rise and Decline." How can

you hope to convince anybody in the movement with such incredible slander as that saying that this draft proposes to do away with our orientation toward political revolution in the USSR and puts instead the perspective of "self-regeneration" of the bureaucracy, when in the most explicit way the opposite is stated in the document? When we explicitly warn the movement against any illusion as to the possibility of regenerating the Soviet Union in a "reformist" manner? When over and over again we identify socialist regeneration and political revolution? When we try to identify socialist regeneration and political revolution? When we try to awaken the movement to the huge possibilities opened up by the new objective situation in the USSR for a reappearance of our movement and the beginning of the mass struggle against the bureaucracy?

Who is rendering Stalinism a service: those who try to mobilize our movement for profiting from the crisis of the bureaucracy in order to launch our movement again in the countries where it actually disappeared, who try to reassemble forces for Trotskyism in Eastern Europe and look for means for doing the same thing in the USSR, those who want to organize for helping the masses overthrowing the bureaucracy, or those who concentrate in exactly the same conditions upon launching their forces not against Stalinism but against the FI leadership?

Is it necessary to insist once again upon the fact that since 1944 we have been telling Shachtman, Morrow, the IKDists, Geoffroy, Haston, etc., over and over again: the fact that the FI is weak is not an argument to deny the objective rise of world revolution we are witnessing. The strength of the revolutionary movement is a necessary precondition for revolutionary *victory*, but not a necessary precondition for the unfurling of mass revolutionary struggles. At the contrary, these struggles, which originate in the objective historical process, must create favourable conditions for solving the crisis of revolutionary leadership. And now comrade Morris comes along and throws at us the same kind of accusation about "revolutionary romanticism" which we heard from all these skeptics, and that after China, Korea, Malaya, Iran, Egypt, North Africa, Bolivia, Eastern Germany, Ceylon and the literal spread of world revolution—naturally not world revolutionary *victories*—"from continent to continent"!

Is it necessary to tell you that we have come out for the withdrawal of occupation troops from Germany in the QI, in the German review, in the resolution on Germany published in the IS Internal Bulletin? Anybody can read it for himself! If this slogan was not put in the first appeal of the IS, it is only because we wanted at that time when the struggle was still going on to concentrate on the slogans the fighters in Berlin had used themselves (where no one had used that slogan and for good reasons! Did the people come on the street in the February revolution with the slogan: Withdrawal of the Cossacks? When you are busy making a revolution, and not only writing about it, the winning of the troops wherever it is possible becomes task Nr. 1, not the deliberate provocation of these troops into hostile actions. Even the correspondent of Shachtman's review understands this simple basic truth). How is it possible that a member of the New York City committee writes this unbelievable slander that "the international Pabloites refuse (!) to call for the withdrawal of Russian troops"? Who has whipped up such a hostility towards

the International that such kind of hysterical lies can be spread and believed?

The basic thing, dear George, is that for reasons of wrong suspicions and unjustified fears, the majority leadership has launched a preventive faction fight against the International, and this faction fight having acquired now a political basis will develop with all its internal logic, with the immediate threat of a major international split.

The challenge that the majority leadership has thrown at the International is a challenge of the very principle of a democratically centralized *world party*, with one line and one discipline applicable to strong as well as to weak groups. It is a challenge to our whole line, worked out in many years of efforts, to break away from sectarian isolation and sterile dogmatism and to build in practice—not in talk—groups intimately linked with the mass movement of their countries and capable of applying revolutionary Marxism to all new events and phenomena. All the successes we have obtained, in Britain, in Bolivia, in Ceylon, in Germany and elsewhere, are exclusively due to this "new course" of Trotskyism which was unanimously adopted at the 3rd WC. To try and turn back the wheel and reestablish a kind of movement as that which existed in 1939 is suicide for the FI. We shall never tolerate such an attempt to destroy our movement. We shall oppose it with all means at our disposal. And we shall gather the overwhelming majority of the International in this fight.

Make no mistake about it, dear George. Our movement is now passing through its worst crisis since its inception. We were proud of the SWP, its achievements, its "regime," whatever it stood for. I was proud to be called a Cannonite by all the hostile elements and deserters of our movement. I have been traveling up and down Europe for 7 years defending Cannon and Cannonism without any feeling of bad conscience. I knew, as all of us knew, that Cannonism stood for principled politics. Till we received Stein's document, I would have never tolerated any intervention of the International in the SWP conflict, convinced as I was of the principled way the SWP leadership acted in the past in party conflicts. But our confidence is now completely shattered. Our main allegiance is not to a person, or a cadre, but to program, principles and a world organization. Nobody will blackmail us into abandoning ideas which we know to be correct, the only ideas on which our movement will be really built. We wanted to build the movement in the closest collaboration with Cannon. We shall build it, if necessary, without and against Cannon. And we "petty scribblers," as these people now suddenly say, will succeed building this movement, because the correctness of our ideas, confirmed by huge historical events, will bring to us everywhere the best people from the entire labor movement.

The kind of arguments which are now used everywhere against the International have a very particular smell to anybody who knows the history of the communist movement, dear George. One should be very, very prudent throwing about accusations of "capitulation before Stalinism." You will have read—*The Militant* wrote a fine story on it—Silone's anecdote about the manner in which the Old Man was expelled from the 3rd International. When Stalin wanted the EKKI to condemn the Old Man's letter about China, the members were asked

to vote without having read the document. The Italians refused. The meeting was adjourned and old Kolarov came to see Togliatti and Silone, telling them: "What do you want to see that document for? What's going on here is in reality a fight for power between Stalin and Trotsky in the Russian party. You have to line up with Stalin who is winning that fight, because without the support of the Russian party it is impossible to build the International, etc." In the last weeks I have heard many people repeat this kind of argument. As much as we understand the importance of cadre and leadership, we can have nothing but contempt for such arguments. Surely, Trotsky and the Trotskyists didn't break with the Soviet State in order to repeat the same type of unprincipled bankrupt politics on a petty scale. We shall never stand for it, never, never.

Among the many correct things comrade Cannon has been saying for a great many years was that beautiful sentence on the party becoming suddenly a prison for people with wrong ideas or under pressure of hostile forces. When that happens, every petty incident, every misunderstanding is used to kick up constant violent fights. I ask you, comrade George: why has the International suddenly become a prison for the American majority? Why do they suddenly attack in a ruthless, disloyal, unpolitical and slanderous manner a leadership with which they have been associated in the closest manner, with which they have been so intimately collaborating, and to whose construction they contributed more than anybody else? The International has neither provoked, nor attacked, nor threatened the SWP majority in any manner whatsoever! Why did this majority feel itself suddenly like in a prison in that International? Why do they undertake one step after another to break out of that prison? It will

be difficult to answer that question without noticing a grave danger to the future of the SWP and its leadership, for anybody who is a principled Trotskyist.

All political differences which may have been arising on matters of interpretation or tactics toward the events in the USSR since Stalin's death could have been discussed calmly and easily without even leading to a faction fight, I'm quite convinced of that. Because in as much as there are real differences—not cynical slander—they are yet of a minor nature. Such a discussion could have been useful if it had been first led in such a manner as to prevent premature crystallization. Even after that crystallization it would have been a lesser evil. But with organizational measures, reprisals, threats and ultimatums, the International will not compromise. Our movement, which is still very weak, will collapse before bigger enemies, if its leadership will not uphold the basic principles of its discipline and political cohesion. To the surprise of some clever despisers of "scribblers," we shall show the movement that we shall be quite able to defend it in an efficient manner against any attempt to disrupt it.

I'm still ready for any initiative or any move which could eliminate the threat of a major split in the International movement. If you could suggest anything useful in that line, I'm willing to listen to any suggestion, to undertake any action, privately or officially, as long as it is not a betrayal of our organizational and political principles. If anything can be done to avoid the catastrophe, it would be criminal not to attempt it. But you will believe me that I have little hope left after what happened.

Warmest greetings,
Ernest

2. Letter from George Breitman to Ernest Germain

December 3, 1953

Dear Ernest:

Thanks for your letter dated Nov. 15, the same date as the letter to the leaderships of all sections by the IS Bureau, to which you also signed your name. I answer your letter, and in part that of the Bureau, not only out of friendship's sake, but also because I have always felt closer to you politically and methodologically than any of the other European comrades and because I have always highly valued your contributions to the movement and want you to avoid making a terrible mistake. If this reply is poorly organized, it is because I have so much to say and so little time to say it in, and I hope you will make due allowances. If what I say is offensive to you, you will know that is not my intention. If you do not care to answer me, I still believe that you will ponder what I write here, and I hope that you will do so objectively.

The first differences we had with Clarke, and the first signs we had of an unhealthy development in the IS, appeared at the beginning of 1951, at the start of the 3WC discussion, when Clarke wrote to us that it would be necessary to crush and maybe even expel the majority of the French party, Frank and you because of the incipient differences around the discussion. (You then were the "Stalinophobes.") Knowing Clarke, and knowing his close

affinity with Pablo, we realized that he was not expressing a personal opinion. We were alarmed by the ultimatum, bureaucratic conception that it expressed about the international leadership, and Stein, on our behalf, wrote him a sharp letter, warning him that the view he expressed was ruinous and would destroy all possibilities of collective leadership. This marked the beginning of Clarke's break with us, as he told us at our May plenum: our reproach to him was a "stab in the back." Evidently, however, it had a restraining as well as an embittering influence, because although he wrote us back a hot letter, he decided he had to be more careful. We were all happy to see a united IS leadership emerge from the discussion. But we could not help wondering what was going on in Pablo's mind that would enable him to even tolerate the course that Clarke had projected.

Then, after the 3WC, came the fight in the French party, ending in the intervention that removed the leadership from direction and the split. Before the split occurred, we heard a report from Ward. We were appalled by what the IS had done. No one denies the right of the international leadership to suspend or even expel the leadership of a party, or even the party itself. But this is a power that must be used with the greatest care and discretion—when a leadership is betraying or muzzing a revolutionary situa-

tion, for example, and not over tactical questions. Lightly used, or abused, as it seemed to us was done in this case, the movement can degenerate grotesquely. We told Warde of our view, and urged correction. We went along with the IS on the particular issue involved, because we agreed with it on that issue as we understood it. But we were against the organizational measures that had been so lightmindedly applied, and disturbed by the split. We saw no evidence that the French majority was Stalinophobic (and the year and a half since then, in which time and experience have had the opportunity to confirm or refute this charge, has certainly not demonstrated it to us; on the contrary). Pablo's periodic boasts about how the International is growing bigger and better all the time struck us as rather hollow after the loss of the majority of the French party and of the workers in the party.

When Clarke returned, it was not to collaborate with us on the line of the 3WC, which we welcomed and accepted although the Congress had never acted on our amendments because Clarke, in consultation with Pablo, had burned them (hardly an act of the maturity and principled conduct that Pablo claims), but to fight us in the same way that he had fought the French party. As you say, the Minority has for two years been trying to put itself in the position where it would appear to be the defender and representative of the International (rather the IS, and still more precisely, Pablo). (I don't claim to be the first to recognize what Clarke was up to; on the contrary, I was among the last.) He proceeded to form an unprincipled combination of those who blamed our difficult objective situation on the leadership, those who were looking for a bridge out of the party, and those who had become so disoriented by the new situation in the world that they took the 3WC line to mean that Stalinism is the wave of the future, everywhere, including countries like the US, Ceylon and Bolivia. Knowing Clarke, both his limits and his strong side, some of began to wonder about the source of his arrogance and assuredness as he set out to divide the party over a line that all of us had agreed on. And when he began to recruit people on the ground that he really "represented Pablo" and that the party leadership did not really accept or understand the line it had voted for, there was a growing uneasiness as to just where Pablo did stand. When a member of the Minority broke away from it and informed us of what basis he had been recruited on originally, we felt it necessary to let Pablo know about it, in order to clear the air. But Pablo refused to give us a clear answer. He refused to say that Clarke's claim was a lie. His reply was evasive and weaselworded. To us this was not the behavior of a principled collaborator.

Abe Lincoln was fond of the story about the backwoodsman engaged in a struggle to the death with a bear, and the man's wife who watched the struggle and showed her "impartiality" by shouting, "Go it, husband! Go it, b'ar!" In the American view, this is not real impartiality, considering the relation of the woman to the man. Throughout its history our party has been accustomed to getting the support of the International against all revisionist developments that arose in our ranks. We always got it from Trotsky, that is sure. But perhaps the IS, not as

experienced as Trotsky and not as well acquainted with our Minority as we are, did not yet recognize its revisionist character? Good—or at any rate if not good, then at least understandable and permissible temporarily. But under the circumstances if the IS was not to help us against the revisionists for whom our party had become—yes—a prison, then the least that we could expect of its members was that they should not give backhanded help to the Minority—which was what Pablo was doing when he refused to disavow the Minority's claim of his support. Was this too much to expect from one with whom we had collaborated in the most loyal fashion? Against our wishes the conviction began to grow that apparently it was too much to expect. Try to put yourself in our position, Ernest—wouldn't you have been put on guard by all this?

At the May plenum we defeated the Minority, and extracted from them a pledge to abide by majority rule. Put on our guard by Pablo's evasions and feeling that the truce in the party could last only if the Minority did not see a chance for help from outside the party ranks, we decided to investigate Pablo's attitude. Read non-factionally, that was the purpose of the Tom letter: to discover the reason for Pablo's attitude in the past, to be alert to his moves in the future. I do not have the letter before me but it (or the speech on Internationalism and the SWP) explicitly stated that we had no intention of making the first hostile move on the international field. How then was this a declaration of war against Pablo or anyone else? No, it was a declaration that we were on our notice—and after what had happened, we would have been fools to take any other attitude. Meanwhile, we intended to remain in a state of military discipline in our party—just as the Minority was—until either the differences were resolved or the fight broke out anew. This is the simple truth. The Minority's different interpretation was factional from beginning to end, the pretext (not the reason) for breaking the truce and renewing a fight that could only end in split.

I turn now to the charge that our course has been unprincipled in this fight (in contradiction, as you admit, to our entire past). "Their 100% about-face of today dates only a few months back. How then to explain it? When were they sincere: when they affirmed their total solidarity with the line of the Third World Congress, or when they today affirm, with an unheard-of cynicism, that we are quite simply Stalinists and even agents of the GPU?" (IS Bureau letter, Nov. 15.) This is what we call a "have you stopped beating your wife?" question. Has it occurred to you that it is possible both that we were sincere then and are sincere today (I leave aside the tendentious way in which the quotation is phrased)? At any rate, please consider the possibility.

About our sincerity and the principled character of our support of the general line of the 3WC, there never was any doubt. I can assure you of that personally, Ernest, because I was among the last to understand and to come to agree with this line, and I was aided in this not only by the general correctness of the line but by the patient, persistent and helpful persuasion of most of the Majority leaders. What reason was there for them to do this if they secretly did not accept the line or had so many reservations about its correctness? It wouldn't make sense,

and it flies in the face of our whole tradition. We were all sure that the 3WC line was not the real basis of our differences with our Minority, and that is not involved today either. No one will profit except factionally in trying to rewrite this section of our movement's history. As to our relative understanding of the line, we did not interpret it to mean a turn to the American CP, and could not. The Minority did, despite their protestations to the contrary because it was so flagrantly in conflict with the text of the documents, and that will be proved now in action, and already has been proved by their first independent activity—an influx into the ALP as their major point of concentration in New York.

At the same time, we could not help realizing that there were some important deficiencies in the 3WC documents when it could be interpreted so differently by groups which both claimed adherence to it. At best, therefore, it suffered from some ambiguity. This was not a mere suspicion: real life in our party demonstrated it. This was the first time in the history of our movement that such a thing had happened. It pointed to the possibility that the documents straddled two different conceptions. In that case, two different views had converged around the line of the 3WC, and it was going to take time to determine how different they were.

Murry Weiss has recalled to us that in 1924 Trotsky and Stalin signed the same resolution on the need to promote democratic centralism in the party. Later Trotsky could be reproached for this, perhaps was, as insincere and unprincipled. That is an unhistorical view of political development. They signed the same resolution, and then real life illuminated the fact that they had different conceptions. This should not surprise us. As you well know, all splits begin in identity at one point or another; in fact, split presupposes previous identity. That is the dialectical conception of development, isn't it (although of course not all identity leads to split in a given situation)? Why then should the fact that there was identity in the past and split now necessarily lead to the conclusion that there was something unprincipled about either the identity or the split? (Even in the case of Shachtman, we had unity of views on the defense of the Soviet Union at our July 1939 convention. Yet we had to break with him two or three months later and split with him the next April on that same question when certain events took place that showed he placed a different construction on our previously common position. Yet there is no doubt in my mind that he was sincere and principled on this issue in July.)

As our fight here developed, it became evident that our common line meant different things to different people. Yet we were extremely careful not to leap to conclusions of a drastic character about the IS, and Pablo especially, because we know that not every difference becomes basic and develops all the way to the point of irreconcilability. This responsible approach guided us in our attitude to Pablo; we refused to declare differences that we were not sure existed in reality; we moved slowly, extremely slowly, not lightmindedly suspicious, but ready to give Pablo the benefit of every doubt, despite his peculiar attitude toward us. The fact that we now see vital differences is cited against us as a sign of lack of principle since "only a few months

back" we didn't or weren't prepared to declare them. Does that really make sense to you? Would we be principled to suppress differences now because we did not see them, or because they did not exist, a few months back?

Great events took place in these few months, and they tested the differences and showed that they were not minor. (I refer to the events in East Germany, France and the conceptions about the political revolution in the SU.) Could this have been foreseen a year or two ago? I don't think so. At any rate we didn't foresee them. Ah, but it was foreseen! So says Shachtman. So too now say the Cochranites. But Shachtman's premise was all wrong (the premise that defense of the SU leads to Stalinist conciliation) and the Cochranite premise was no more correct. (Anyhow, we know that even a correct conclusion or prediction is no proof that the reasoning employed to reach it was necessarily correct.) We still hold to the main line of the 3WC, but *new events* have shown that we have different conceptions of the analysis to be made today. To us the entrust conception of the 3WC is only that—a method for building our own movement. To the Minority and Pablo it is a bridge to liquidationism (maybe that's what the 3WC was to them two years ago too—but that's not certain, maybe it wasn't that to them then; but anyhow it is a secondary question). And there is a third tendency, which I am not sure but I think you represent, which has failed to understand what the real issue in the International is today, and makes the mistake of accepting the Cochranite interpretation of the relation between the 3WC and the present struggle.

Try to get it clear, Ernest: this is not a fight over the 3WC. We have been angered by the devious and miseducational campaign of the Minority to make something sacrosanct of the 3WC. A WC is only a WC—it's not for all time. That's our attitude to all the congresses of our movement—the first, the second, and the third. Time tests all the predictions and prognoses they contain. We must retain what is still useable, and replace what is not. We hold to what is good in it, but we're not bound by every word for all time, any more than Lenin felt bound by last year's resolutions. Otherwise, we become truly sectarians and fossils. We must review everything in the 3WC documents, and we will—the imminence of war, the effects of revolutionary upsurge in Europe on war, the possibilities of an American depression before a war, despite Washington's *wish* to have it otherwise, etc. We no longer will permit our movement to be frozen in its thinking by our Minority's campaign around the 3WC. To us the 3WC documents as written contain no support for liquidationism or conciliation—not when they were written, not now. And if it did (which I deny, although I admit it's a valid question for examination in view of certain ambiguities in the text) then it's our job to correct it now. What's unprincipled about that?

The same criteria apply to leadership. The fact that we supported Pablo up to a certain point and don't after that point is no proof that we're unprincipled (unless it can be shown that he hasn't changed—and that can't be shown). We went along with him at the 3WC for one reason—we agreed with him, or thought we did. We broke with him for one reason—we found ourselves in disagreement with him on basic issues. What's unprincipled about that? We weren't liquidationist or conciliationist then, and as far

as we could make out he wasn't either. We aren't liquidationist or conciliationist now, but the test of events shows that he is today. What could we do but break with him? Wouldn't it have been unprincipled if we hadn't? (I must add here that a genuine Pablo cult has been developed by the Minority in this country. The mere idea that we would dare to differ from Pablo on any question brought a scream of anguish and even astonishment from the Minority—sincerely from the Clarke wing, and for factional purposes from the Cochran wing. We're not cultists, and I hope never will be. No one is immune from criticism in our movement—Pablo, or Cannon, or anyone else. Our attitude to leaders is based on what they are and do as well as what they were and did. The handraisers are not on our side, despite all the slander to the contrary, as you will find out yourself if you choose to associate with the Cochranites.)

But I've been wandering a little, and I want to get back. As you state it, your view is that we "launched a preventive faction fight against the International" and are guilty of "a deliberate and cynical attempt to find some political justification for an organizational 'struggle of power.'" You evidently regard this not only as cynical but unprincipled.

We have different ideas over who launched the fight; you think we did, we think Pablo and Clarke did. But who launched it is really secondary if the issues are fundamental. Far more important and revealing is the relationship between politics and organization struggle, and I'd like to go into that a little in connection with this fight.

I think you're making a mistake in the way you view the relationship in this concrete case. Let me put it another way. Suppose yourself in our position. You have just endorsed the 3WC line, and a most vicious campaign is opened up on you by a faction in which you recognize all the earmarks of revisionism and which attacks you as an opponent of the line you have voted for. This faction derives its strength not from its own views but from its claim that it represents the International leadership with which you have worked in honest collaboration. You present the claim to the IS secretary, and he refuses to disavow it. The party heads for a split. You prevent it for the time being and create conditions of truce in which the party work can go forward—a test for the minority. They accept, and then break the truce at the first pretext. You become convinced then that the minority no longer wants to be in the party, it feels stifled, it wants to break out. Then you begin to detect signs that the IS secretary is not only continuing, but deepening his collaboration with this minority—all the while (to use the phrase used against us) that there are no apparent political differences between you and him; for the truth is that he has never up to this point expressed a single difference with the policy you follow. What do you do then?

If you are a responsible leader, then you ask yourself: "Why is he behaving in this fashion? Why does he ally himself with a revisionist faction in our party, though he does not yet do so openly? Is it merely that he finds Clarke's character more charming than Cannon's?" And you are forced to a different conclusion: "No, it must be more fundamental than that, it must be that he has an affinity for Clarke's politics and a distaste for ours. If

faction fights have any meaning—and they generally do—there must be a political basis for his behavior." And unless you are something other than a Bolshevik politician, you begin to search to find the answer to the puzzle. What's unprincipled about that? Isn't that what the Nov. 15 IS Bureau letter also purports to do?

Yes, faction fights, if they are deepgoing, have a political basis, even though it may not be fully clear to everyone involved at the start. And organizational practice has a meaning in such a context—a political meaning—and one can go very far astray if he overlooks this fact. When a faction begins by challenging organizational tradition, by departing from democratic centralism, by resorting to intrigue and deception, then you can be sure, if the history of the Bolshevik movement means anything at all, that behind it or at the bottom of it revisionist politics is also being hatched. The way the Minority faction was formed, the way it conducted itself, was even more revealing than the political arguments it found it expedient to put forward at the start—half-way arguments, half-presented arguments, the traditional method of revisionists, who naturally cannot begin by fully presenting their own real views at the beginning. What applied to the Minority also applies to its behind-the-scenes ally and protector, Pablo. There is, there must be, some political basis behind his role, we concluded.

But even so, when the IS resolution on "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism" arrived, we did not leap to rash conclusions, and we weighed the matter carefully. I don't mind telling you my initial reaction: I thought it was on the whole an excellent document, despite some deficiencies and ambiguities I wanted to question you about (as I said in my letter to you). There were others who shared this view. We began to discuss our attitude toward it. There were those who thought that we should prepare a number of questions to be submitted to the IS to clarify ambiguous or uncertain sections, with the thought that depending on the replies we would either vote for the document as it was, or propose amendments, or prepare a counter-document. One thing we were sure of—we did not again want any document adopted unanimously, after which we would be confronted with the same situation that arose after the 3WC, when we were told we did not know what we had voted for, that we were not carrying out the line, etc.

We had barely begun the discussion among ourselves when Clarke put out the FI, without showing it to the majority of the editorial staff, which contained his new thesis about the "sharing of power" between the bureaucracy and the workers as an alternative to the revolutionary upheaval of the masses against the bureaucracy. This revision he labeled as "political revolution" and, he assured us, it was in full accord with the resolution on Stalinism. Is it hard to understand that this decided to make us take a second, third and hundredth look at the resolution?

The text of resolutions is important but I need not tell you that we have learned that in the hands of unscrupulous people the text itself alone is not enough to indicate the real line intended. And it soon became clear to us that whatever you, the author of the resolution may have meant by it, and whatever we thought it meant, Clarke—

and Pablo—clearly meant something else. Such a resolution, whatever merits it may have, is inadequate under such circumstances.

Then came the IS letter of August 10, signed by you, Frank and Pablo. I don't have the documents before me, but I recall that you said you had seen Cannon's speech and letter and were distressed by their false implications, etc.; you also said twice that you did not intend to do anything about it. Because of the French strike, we did not receive the letter until Aug. 31. We began to compose a reply. Before we had finished, and without waiting for the reply, the IS three days later sent another letter. (This one was not signed; I assume and hope that you had left on your trip by then.) The tone of this was altogether different, although nothing new had happened in the meantime. Pablo denounced us for "the latest issue of the FI." What was this issue? It was the one in which, in the most guarded language, we let the readers know that we repudiated the conception on "sharing of power" that Clarke, in violation of his post, had smuggled into the previous issue of the FI. (In addition, we reprinted without comment Pablo's own article on the post-Stalin period, despite our strong opposition to much of it.)

What did this mean? One would have to be blind not to understand it. Pablo, instead of congratulating us for repudiating a revisionist article, was condemning us for doing so. To us that spoke more clearly than a thousand resolutions as to where he stood in the fight against revisionism.

Furthermore, he demanded that we stop printing what we were saying about the Soviet Union, Germany, etc., because our articles were not in line with what he was saying. This—mind you—in the midst of a pre-world congress discussion, on new events on which the International had not yet adopted a position.

And to make his attitude clearer yet, he attacked us for distributing our bulletins directly to the sections, instead of through the IS.

In other words, he wanted us to publish Clarke's line and held over our head the threat that if we didn't we'd be acting in violation of the 3WC, which never even took a line on these questions, and he threatened us because we were distributing bulletins in a way we have been doing ever since our movement was formed, with the knowledge and approval of the IS. To us, it was clearly an effort not to promote an international discussion on a correct and objective basis, but to strangle the discussion by creating an atmosphere of organizational threats which could only muddy up the political discussion.

This was followed by his organization of a faction in Britain, and an attempt to intimidate and throttle Burns and prevent him from participating in the international discussion on an equal basis.

And this was followed by what for me was the final straw. He had asked us to meet with either you or him. As soon as we heard that your trip, unlike his, was actually going through, we accepted. On the same day that we got your letter saying that for financial reasons you might not be able to complete the trip (to which we replied in a wire you may not have received that we would raise the money for the completion), we got a letter from Pablo informing us that it would not do for us to meet with you because you were not an "official" representative.

What had changed your status from Ceylon to here he did not explain. But it was plain enough that *something* had changed.

All this, plus the political issues clarified by East Germany and France which I do not go into here because they are in our Letter, which by this time you have seen, cleared away the last doubts. We were dealing with a revisionist opponent who did not scruple to use his post for the most devious maneuvers and deceptions. He was bent on splitting the British party because the majority there opposed him, just as he had done in France. Turning minorities into majorities, while the real majority is expelled, is his forte (also known as great advances on all fronts). He was bent on splitting our party too, and that was what his allies proceeded to try to do here.

Perhaps we were late in recognizing this reality. Perhaps we did not recognize it in the ideal order—from theory to politics to organization—but in another order. But we have recognized it now, and we will fight it to the end. Lenin, you may recall, failed to recognize the revisionist ulcer in the Second International until the war showed him what Kautskyism was. This took him a long time. But it did not take him long to recognize revisionism in his own party, and he fought it from the beginning. We too recognized Pabloism in our party fairly soon (although we did not know its full name at the start) and it was only as the fight developed that we recognized its kinship with the International revisionist leadership. But our slowness, if that's what it was, does not overshadow the fact that we did catch on before it was too late. We hope you'll do the same.

Your method of determining who is responsible for the split—find out "Cui prodest?"—is interesting, but rather limited. In some splits (politically unmotivated) it's in no one's interest. In others it can be shown (and I think this is the case most of the time) that it's in the interest of both sides.

You say, "Under such conditions (where the Minority appeared to be the defenders of the International politically and organizationally) the minority had every interest to stay in the party and to let a political discussion develop." That sounds reasonable, I admit. If I was in such a situation as you describe, that's probably what I would do: I'd not only want to remain in the party, but I'd fight to remain in, and I'd subordinate every other consideration of an organizational character to stay in just so long as I'd have the right to continue to present my political views. But the question then arises: Why didn't the Minority do that? Why, on the contrary, did it follow precisely the opposite course?

Why did it start sabotaging party work? Why did it insist that it was bureaucratic for the Majority to publish its Plenum resolutions in the magazine unless it also published the Minority resolutions? Why did it discontinue daily activity? Why did it withhold party funds? Why did it insist that there could no longer be educational discussions in the branches but only debates ("even on The Origin of the Family")? Why did it refuse to accept the offer to run Bartell for Mayor in New York? Why did it refuse to allow a debate on East Germany? (With regard to your explanation on the slogan of withdrawal of the troops in East Germany, I don't find it very strong. The fact is that in action the masses were demanding such a withdrawal,

whether or not they raised it vocally—and while I won't dispute that point, we have considerable evidence that they did—and it was our job not only to repeat what they were saying but to go beyond that and raise the slogans that were needed, even if the masses were not in position to voice them then. This whole business of East Germany, which I can't go into properly here, was most revealing to us. When the news came, we were happy, elated; the faces of the Cochranites became grim and moody; it was evident even physically that the news was not welcome to them: they no longer wanted to learn from events. And one of their top leaders (not a rank and filer) told us that it was correct not to demand the withdrawal of the Soviet troops because that would play into the hands of US imperialism! That was how the American Pabloites were educating their followers, not along the lines of your explanations.) And why did they impose faction discipline on all their members, subject to expulsion from the faction, not to attend the 25th Anniversary meeting in New York? Is that the behavior of people who think they have every interest in remaining in the party? Is that the kind of behavior that supports your theory?

The truth is that there was nothing in the world that could keep them in our party any longer—at least not on a basis acceptable to the practices of democratic centralism. They were eager to go, they were wild to go, not even a brick wall would have kept them from going, and as they left they heaved a sign of relief. (Only five of them were suspended by the plenum; the others could have remained by simply repudiating the anti-party boycott, and without giving up any of their rights as a minority, including the right to differ on the suspensions of the five. But they didn't even respond to this possibility; they fled.) This is the only revolutionary party in this country; the only one that has a generally correct position on all the basic questions, but they were acting under pressures that made it impossible for them to remain any longer as a minority within it. There was also another reason, to which I will return.

As for us, we had no intention of trying to do the impossible. Moreover, we had no intention of destroying the party in the process. What kind of party would it be if we surrendered to such a boycott without any disciplinary measures? If they could get away with that, what couldn't they get away with? It would mean the end of the party as a disciplined organization. That price would be too high to pay under any circumstances, and we certainly would not pay it under these.

There was another reason why they wanted to leave now, and I will tell it to you in case you do not know it. Shortly after Clarke left, the Minority began to take stock of the International situation and, under pressure of questioning of its members, began to tell them that although it had Pablo, that is, "a majority of the ideological leadership in the International," it unfortunately did not have the support of the majority of the International itself, which tended to give the Majority tendency a "mechanical majority" in the International. Simultaneously Bartell and the others began to denigrate the size and influence of the International just as he did that of the SWP after it became clear that they had the support of no more than one-fifth of our members. We took stock too, and came to the conclusion that in an honest 4WC our view would be

able to win the support of a decisive majority of the International. Note, I said "honest"—that is, unrigged, on the basis of the real relationship of forces in the International. But that was just the rub. Neither Pablo nor the Cochranites wanted an honest congress to settle all questions. That was the reason for their raising organizational questions to embitter and confuse the atmosphere. That was the reason for their wanting and organizing a split in our party and in the British party. With such splits, Pablo would use his position to recognize the minority in each case, and thus turn up with a "majority" at the WC—as he showed he knows how to do by the French split. And that, Ernest, is another reason why there was nothing we could do to prevent the split of the minorities either here or in Britain—or elsewhere if necessary.

You refer to Cannon's remark about the party suddenly becoming a prison for those under pressure of alien forces. You don't try to explain why that happened to our Minority, or maybe you haven't yet figured it out. But you turn it around and ask why has the world movement become such a prison to us? The answer is that it hasn't. This is our ideological movement and we have no reason or wish to break out of it. On the contrary, we intend to live in and build it, and we are quite confident that we will succeed. But Pablo's regime *has* become a prison to genuine Trotskyists—for the reasons given above. We do not trust it any longer, we have no confidence in it politically or any other way. We see an irreconcilable conflict, and we propose the genuine Trotskyists replace the Pablo regime by a Trotskyist regime, free of all trickery and manipulation and guided by a line that will be both orthodox and alert to all the revolutionary opportunities for building the party of world revolution. We hope that you will join in this work. I know that such a step will not be easy for you, but I hope that you too can reconsider and review the past and not hesitate, out of such subjective factors as the fact that you wrote the resolution which means one thing to you and another to the Pabloites who will have the power to enforce it, to take this course if it seems the correct one to you on further reflection.

I haven't touched on everything I'd liked to, but my time is running out, and I want to finish by posing a few questions to you:

1. Why should the SWP leadership, which you acknowledge has always practiced principled politics in the past, suddenly change so radically? (The "explanation" in the IS Bureau letter is hardly worth discussion and I cannot believe you take it very seriously. Why should it be assumed that the SWP Majority rather than the Minority has succumbed to the difficult objective conditions here? One must do more than make arbitrary statements.)

2. Sweeping aside the Pabloite bombast, why is it that the International has suffered so many losses and splits since the 3WC? Is "Cannonism" to carry the brunt for this too, and is Pabloism free of the responsibility?

3. Why is it in your letter to me you say you have always considered us to be principled up to now, while on the same date you allow your name to be signed to an IS Bureau letter which repeats every calumny that has ever been directed against us, and applies them not only to the present but to the past?

With warmest greetings,
George Breitman

3. Letter from Ernest Germain to George Breitman

December 9, 1953

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter of December 3. Frankly, I was quite a bit astonished by it. If I am to follow your representation of events knowing persons, facts and thoughts on this side of the ocean as I do, I should arrive at the conclusion that the most serious and deep-going crisis in the history of our movement is nothing but a tragi-comedy of errors and misunderstandings. Pablo failed to write explicitly to Cannon that Clarke was *not* his agent and that he had neither instigated nor advocated nor even supported the minority's faction fight (a fact which stands established not only from what I know but from the very letters of the minority itself)! The second IS Bureau letter of August 1953—which, it is true, I did not sign because at that time I had already left—destroyed the positive effects of the first letter. The IS failed to express its disagreement with the idea of "sharing of power" in the USSR, with which it most certainly disagrees. I myself didn't get in time money and mandate to arrive in Canada. . . . If all these small incidents wouldn't have happened, i.e., if Pablo would have given the clear answer asked for, if there wouldn't have been a second August Bureau letter, if we would have published a criticism of the "sharing-of-power-idea" and if I would have succeeded to complete my trip with a clear mandate in hand (by the way: I did not receive your cable)—then there would have been no international split, no public attacks against the Stalinophile leadership of the FI, no break between the majority of the American cadre and the quasi-totality of the world cadre. . . . Do you really believe that this is the way things usually happen in our movement?

Of course, you were due to say that *a posteriori* the split reveals "deepgoing political differences," "differences of a fundamental nature, on basic issues," which, again *a posteriori*, justify the organizational course taken. Pardon me, what are these "fundamental differences"? If one cuts through the obvious slander contained in the paper's Open Letter (that the IS is "revisionist," that it "capitulates before Stalinism," that it is "working consciously and deliberately to liquidate the FI"), one sees differences in appraisal of the events following Stalin's death in the Soviet Union and the glaciis countries; one sees differences in policy toward the workers' uprising in Eastern Germany; one sees differences in estimation and approach toward the public servants' general strike of August 1953 in France. That's all. Even to arrive at that sum, it is necessary to stretch things quite a bit. I myself have failed to grasp till today the differences in approach to the Eastern German events, for example. Surely, by repeating a thousand times that the IS "capitulates before Stalinism," is in reality opposed to a political revolution in the Soviet Union" or is "revisionist through and through" (what part of our program we are charged with "revising" nobody yet bothered to tell us), you will not change the fact that these charges are untrue and slanderous, which is proved not only by resolutions, articles, speeches, appeals, but also by practical action.

Now all the differences which are till today actually revealed are of course of a tactical nature. They don't

put a question mark on any of the basic principles of our estimation of Stalinism and the USSR. They are, in fact, slighter than the differences between the French majority and minority in 1951-52, differences which involved the whole of the practical work of that section and which, nevertheless, in your opinion remained "purely tactical." They are certainly slighter than the differences between the 1940 majority and minority in the USA, differences which, in the Old Man's opinion, wouldn't have necessitated a split even if the Shachtmanites happened to find themselves momentarily in a majority at the convention.

Yet on the basis of such tactical differences you go ahead and break publicly with the International, attack publicly its leadership, call publicly for a world-wide extension of the split, in short disregard completely all established organizational rules and behavior of discipline and act like our movement acted not even in 1928 but in 1933 toward the Komintern, like Lenin acted not in 1903 but in 1914. *This* is a principled difference, the main and only fundamental difference which I see at the present stage of the fight: the overthrow of the principle of *one World Party* in a manner which, I regret to have to repeat this, I cannot characterize otherwise as criminally lightminded, irresponsible and cynical.

I don't know if you understand how we—and I don't say this for five IS members but for the great majority of the World movement's cadres—felt about this action of yours. For us it denotes a basic break with the principle of the World Party which is the only organizational framework in which our movement can be built. One doesn't break with an International for tactical reasons. One doesn't break with an International because, hypothetically, it is wrong on the issues of your own country. One doesn't break with an International even when the first basic, principled differences develop. One sees in an International a whole epoch of world history and of the development of the labor movement. One breaks with an International when it has finished its historical mission. Remember when Lenin and Trotsky broke with the Second and Third International: after the betrayals of 1914 and 1933. Historical betrayals of such a dimension as the capitulation toward the imperialist war or the fascist dictatorship were necessary to convince our principled masters that the International they lived in till that time had become hopeless and couldn't be reformed any more from within. Even when such grave events happened as participation in a bourgeois government and acceptance of this betrayal by the Second International, Lenin didn't break with it, not because he "underestimated" or "misunderstood" the gravity of the event but of course because he rightly thought that one had to correct these deviations from within. When such grave events happened as the betrayal of the General Strike in England with the co-responsibility of the Third International or, worse, the betrayal of the Second Chinese revolution, Trotsky did not break with the Komintern, did not bring the conflict out in public, did not attack in the public press a single time the criminal leadership of the Third International. He didn't even do that when mass expulsions of Left Oppositionists had already started, and he and his followers were ready to accept discipline even after 1927 if only they would have received the right to defend their positions inside the movement. Was this course

wrong? Did it prove, like Shachtman and other neo-Mensheviks today have discovered, that Trotsky "underestimated" the degree of degeneration of the Komintern? Not at all. This course was the only principled course to be taken, i.e., the only course which corresponds to the Marxist understanding of the meaning and the role of the Workers' International.

Now compare with this principled attitude of our masters on the basic question of international democratic centralism the attitude of you people. Let us admit one minute that all your suspicions and misgivings about "Pablo"—in fact the IS myself included—were correct. Has the IS betrayed any revolution? Has it done anything comparable to participation in a bourgeois cabinet or allying itself with counter-revolution in the midst of a growing revolution? Have we lived our 1923 or our 1927, not to speak about our 1933? Surely the very question sounds so incongruous that no one can hesitate one second how to answer it. Surely, all differences should then be exposed first inside the movement, probed and discussed inside the International. Surely then the correct course to follow was to attempt reforming the movement misled by Pablo *from within*. Surely then the correct course to follow was to come to the normal leading bodies of the International, to bring the differences before these bodies, to wait for the verdict of these bodies and, in case this verdict would be negative, to start patiently convincing the rank-and-file of the incorrectness of the leadership's decisions, culminating in a proposal to the next WC to do away with that leadership. But what you did was in fact to pick up the characteristic Shachtmanite-IKD sentence of 1947-8, "to disregard all IS, IEC, WC" and to address yourself to the "real movement." Which is this mysterious "real movement," outside of the normal sections and the normal leading bodies of the International?

You say you don't want to quit the International, you want to live in it and to build it? You say only the "Pablo regime" has become a prison to you? Pardon me: haven't we heard that before? Didn't all the people who run away from us use the same subterfuge? Didn't they always claim in the States they ran away not from the Trotskyist organization, but from the "Cannon regime"? Doesn't Shachtman claim even today to be a genuine representative of the "real Trotskyist movement"? Unfortunately, Lenin—and Cannon!—have educated us to be very suspicious of people who love "the movement" a lot but just hate "the regime" and therefore betray the *organization*. You think the "Pablo regime" is bad? That is your full right. You want to fight that regime? We may disagree, but we certainly will not deprive you of your rights to do so within established rules of organizational behavior. But when, under the pretext of "breaking with the regime," you publicly break discipline and trample down with heavy boots of "military factionalism" the normal framework of international democratic centralism, anybody with some experience will tell you: "Please drop these silly pretenses and speak out openly that you broke with the FI as an established *organization*, with its established leadership and statutes, whatever may have been the reasons which led you to do such a thing." The Old Man never played around with the fact that Stalin succeeded in precipitating a split between the Left Opposition and

the Komintern—not just a break of the Left Opposition with the "Stalin regime." That split he considered at that time historically unjustified. You, by your action, consider today the break between your part and the FI—not the "Pablo regime"—as inevitable and justified. That's where you act in the most cynical and unprincipled manner imaginable.

You say you have the support of the world movement, but that this would not find expression in a "rigged world congress." This is again a subterfuge too cheap to be used in our movement. Either you consider the FI *your organization*, whatever may be the "regime" and its tactical mistakes. In that case, surely, you could find or at least propose some organizational device for rigid guarantees of internal democracy. Why, even Shachtman found them as late as 1947, and God knows he had more "fundamental differences" with the FI than you people have. We could get together any time and draft rules of representation of sections which would satisfy everybody, e.g., give voting rights to all sections or expelled groups of sections which were members of the movement at the time of the Third WC, or any other expedient. If you were really eager to have a democratic WC with all members expressing their opinions, there could be no difficulty in finding such a device. If you thought you had the slightest chance to get a majority or even a strong minority under such circumstances, you would have rushed forward with such proposals, as in fact you intended to do first if I'm not mistaken. You would have sent your criticism to the IEC, prepared a strong plea for the WC and fought it out in that forum. But that precisely is the course you have *not* taken. You have acted implicitly on the presumption that the FI is *no more your organization*, that you don't want to abide to any discipline regardless of the fact that you are minority or majority, that whenever the movement puts you in a minority you will grandiosely "disregard" the movement. That is the meaning of disregarding IS, IEC, WC, etc. That is the meaning of this new talk about a "rigged WC." In that frame of mind, any WC is going to be declared *a priori* "rigged" if it places you in a minority.

This opinion was already clearly expressed in Cannon's speech on "Internationalism." Suddenly he discovered that, in opposition to what had been his practice in his own party and his advice to us in the past, one had to be extremely liberal in the International. Suddenly he discovered that the International was composed of "weak groups," that the International leadership was even "weaker" and especially "young and unexperienced," and that under these conditions it should limit itself to ideological work and "advice," i.e., it should dissolve the movement as a World Party and keep only a federation of national sects, "an international letter-box" like the Old Man used to call contemptuously similar set-ups of the pre-war centrists. What else was the meaning of this sudden revision of our basic organizational principle—democratic centralism *on a world scale*—if not the fact that your party's leadership was not going to recognize any discipline towards international bodies in which it happens for once to be in a minority? What else was the meaning of the mechanically theoretical justification Cannon tried to give to this behavior—"The American revolution will decide

world revolution; the SWP will decide the American revolution; the present leadership will have to lead the SWP if it has to fulfill its role; therefore the fate of world revolution hinges not on the building of the FI as an organization, but on the permanency of the SWP leadership; therefore, the basic allegiance of the world Trotskyist has to be not to the FI as an organization (it's much too weak!) but to the SWP leadership" — ?

The same opinion is even more clearly and naively expressed in your own letter, dear George. You write about Pablo's letter in answer to Cannon's request concerning his dissociation from the minority, that this answer was not "the behavior of a principled collaborator (!)". You write that "throughout its history our party has been accustomed to getting support of the International against all revisionist developments that arose in our ranks." You write: "Was this too much to expect from one (!) with whom we had collaborated in the most loyal fashion?" In other words: you only saw a relationship of friendly collaboration, with an individual, not a relationship of organizational allegiance to a world organization! What do all your sentences mean but one single thing: that your adherence to the world movement is subordinate to complete and full endorsement by the International leadership of every single move of your party's leaders? That, in other words, your basic organization is the SWP and not the FI, and that the FI is only accepted, tolerated and helped with "freedom of criticism" as long as it "goes along" with the SWP leadership?

Can't you visualize how the world movement reacts to opinions like these? Don't you see this is exactly the same thing Stalin asked for the Russian party in the mid-twenties from the Komintern, and got away with it, and destroyed the International for that reason? Can't you visualize a situation in which, not because of sordid maneuvers, but for valid—even if you think incorrect—political and organizational considerations the International leadership may disagree with your party, may want to end a faction fight by a compromise and not by a split, may have misgivings about the political turn the fight takes, without therefore either "aiding and abetting" that fight or becoming *ipso facto* "pro-Stalinist," "revisionist" and "liquidationist"? If you can't visualize such a movement, in which its leadership takes a principled stand on matters in dispute following its own convictions and not always and automatically supporting the SWP leaders' actions, then really the building of the FI was a big misunderstanding on your behalf right from the start. You will never build a Trotskyist International with people ready to act in that way—real agents in the worst sense of the word. You will only build an international clique. Is that what you want?

Perhaps it is not unnecessary to repeat once again that it was never in Pablo's or the IS's or the IEC's intention to "remove from office" the present SWP's leadership—only a mind grotesquely distorted by fear can conceive such a ridiculous proposition. Even if we thought, and wrote, that Hansen's article on Stalinism was not very good or that we didn't like the harsh tone of the discussion, this surely does not imply such diabolic intentions. Isn't it the right of an International leadership to judge things in their own merit? But I'm afraid Cannon him-

self did not believe the story that Pablo wanted to remove him from office. What he feared, with some reason indeed, was that the IS was not ready to accept passively any form of bureaucratic expulsion of the minority. You may think this is wrong. But frankly is it a principled and justified reason to split the International?

In the mass movement, the masses themselves put a check on all irresponsible factionalists and splitters. These drift away or are driven out, and when they represent no historical necessity of any kind, just wither away; in any case, nobody cares. In our movement, unfortunately, the check of a strong mass basis does not yet exist. Irresponsible people can start all kinds of fights and splits and think, at least temporarily, they can get away with it. Given a minimum material basis, they can put up quite a show for a certain period. Even today the Shachtmanites continue to exist on a level which is not qualitatively different from ours, and so do even the DeLeonists. Under such conditions, in a movement like ours where every talented cadre looks upon himself as a Lenin or Trotsky in being and where sad experiences of the past have taught everybody to be over-sensitive for ideological *nuances*, there would be an uninterrupted series of brawls and splits without some basic loyalty which checks such people. This basic loyalty cannot be only the one to the program, although, of course, this is a fundamental one. It is well-known that a common program has never prevented a periodic appearance of tactical differences and will never do so. Therefore, there is only one basic loyalty possible to keep our movement together: the loyalty to the International! One has to penetrate oneself in one's most intimate consciousness with the conviction that the International, not only as a program or a body of ideas but as an organization with a given structure, represents all hopes of mankind in our epoch. Thousands of people have died, not for Cannon or Pablo or the SWP nor even for the Old Man, but for that International. To split the International before it has demonstrated its inadequacy in events of colossal historical scope is a real crime against the labor movement. It is a thousand times preferable to find some organizational *modus vivendi* and to have confidence in the ultimate lucidity of our world cadre, a healthy cadre, which in due time will correct all mistakes it occasionally makes. As long as everybody does not adopt such a rule of behavior, any national section or faction of a national section will be liable to split away lightmindedly on the basis of some occasional difference or organizational dispute. We shall never be able to build the movement as long as people show such an attitude. And that is precisely the attitude your leadership has shown in an extreme manner during the final stage of the present dispute.

Surely these ideas are neither new nor surprising for you. You yourself express the very same principles—when you think of your party on a national scale. You write that if you would happen to find yourself in some tactical difference with your party, but would be sure of the support of the majority of the world movement—isn't that what you claim today for the SWP majority?—you would then act in the following manner: "I'd not only want to remain in the party, but I'd fight to remain in, and I'd subordinate every other consideration of an organizational

character to stay in just so long as I'd have the right to continue to present my political views." I am therefore justified to ask: Why didn't you people act in this same way — on an international scale? Why on the contrary did you follow the opposite course, to rush out and denounce the whole outfit as "pro-Stalinist" and "liquidationist"? Don't tell me you were afraid Pablo would have you expelled because you sent Internal Bulletins to all sections, or that you feared to be confronted with a "rigged WC." If one really wants to stay inside an organization, one always finds organizational expediences for such kind of problems. So the question remains: Why has the International suddenly become a prison to you? Because the IS wasn't ready to approve the expulsion of the minority, didn't give Cannon "loyal support" in his fight against the minority? But isn't this utterly unprincipled and cynical? Isn't this destroying the basic principle of internationalism, of democratic centralism on an international scale, of the meaning and mission of the FI?

Need I add that what you think to be "stages of Pablo's intrigue" against the SWP leadership are mainly misunderstandings indeed? Need I add that Clarke most definitely was *not* "Pablo's agent," that Pablo urged him in many letters not to attack the party's leadership, to stop the fight, to accept every reasonable organizational truce? We shall publish the letters and you will be able to see for yourself. Need I add that our June 1953 IEC letter to your leadership was a genuine expression of satisfaction with the truce, that all of us were sincerely convinced this was going to work — except of course Burns who already had information to the contrary from Cannon? Need I add that the second IS-Bureau letter of August was a natural reaction upon the Stein document and all other many indications that you were rapidly heading for an international split? Need I add that Pablo wrote to you about my trip in the sense you indicate only because I had not yet received the information about the latest developments and was therefore unable to represent IS opinion after these developments? Need I add that even given all these misunderstandings, some organizational compromise could have easily been found at the eve of your last Plenum? Really, the organizational procedure we have followed in the past should have warranted that to you. Didn't we discuss with the Bleibtreu group for over two years, notwithstanding repeated and open breaches of discipline (recognized by Cannon himself as late as his May speech on "Internationalism")? Haven't we cohabited with the Swiss section, which violently disagrees with us on every major political issue which cropped up since the end of the war? Even if you were so afraid of Pablo's "apparatus," haven't we got a world cadre of fine comrades who think and judge by their own mind, their own convictions? Your party's action implies in fact a terrible contempt of the real world movement, which is only the sum of our sections. The break-away from the movement is a logical outcome of that contempt. The political nature of that contempt is unprincipled through and through. As for its social nature, what name can you give it?

Faction fights and splits have a logic of their own, dear George. This logic has already brought you in few months' time to a radical change of opinion on our "Rise and Decline of Stalinism." Yesterday you thought it "on the whole

an excellent document." Today you accept Stein's view that it is "the most revisionist (!) document ever written in the history of our movement." To justify your retreat, you write: "The text of resolutions is important, but I need not tell you that we have learned that in the hands of unscrupulous people the text itself alone is not enough to indicate the real line intended (!)". You certainly *need* tell me that, for it is the first time I hear about it in our movement. The Stalinists used to tell us that all our theses, resolutions, articles, books, speeches, were of no importance. Important, you see, were only the hidden intentions of that arch-traitor Trotsky. You try to get away with the same method in our movement, by simply substituting Pablo for Trotsky? You won't succeed, I can tell you that in advance. I told Bleibtreu the same thing three years ago. Ours is a principled, serious movement, a conscientious cadre. If you have misgivings about a document, you present amendments or counter-documents, and everybody will judge them for their own merit. But if you use the smear-tactic, if you don't discuss what people say and write but what they intend and hide, i.e., what they don't say and don't *write* — you won't get the support of any serious principled revolutionist. Cannon, not so long ago, wrote the very same thing to Renard. Have you already forgotten this serious lesson?

It will not be possible to convince the movement that "fundamental issues" are involved in the "suppressed sentence in the quotation of the Transitional Program," or in one wrong sentence in Clarke's article (sentence with which we disagree, I repeat once again). We shall put the "suppressed sentence" back in our document this very minute. We shall dissociate ourselves in the same document from any "sharing-of-power-ideas." You can't go on living just on "intentions." You need more substantial nourishment. It will come, don't worry. The behavior of the Bleibtreu group, since it split away from the International, is a clear example of this; sad to say, this group is now in the process of becoming the political advisor of your paper! You have already completely modified your position on the Chinese revolution (I remember vividly, like all IEC members do, Manuel's excellent speech on that subject!) for the purpose of an unprincipled bloc with Peng, who doesn't represent the Chinese section but just his own egotistic warped personality. Suddenly you discover that Peng always followed a "principled course," the principled course of calling for a truce and "elections for a Constituent Assembly" late in 1947, after the decisive offensive of Mao Tse-tung had already started, the principled course of calling as late as 1951 the Chinese CP a "peasant party," the Chinese government a "coalition government with the bourgeoisie," and the conquest of power by Mao as "instructed by the Kremlin diplomacy." Thank you for these principles; they are certainly not ours nor Trotsky's! For a short time you'll have to satisfy yourself by playing around eclectically with all kinds of conflicting hypothesis, like Hansen did in his latest series. That too was a sad sign, to see a Trotskyist paper which nothing else to say on perspectives than "perhaps this is going to happen, perhaps this is not going to happen, let's just wait and see." But it won't stop there. Worse will come. You'll have to swallow the Bleibtreu-Swiss line hook, line and sinker. That will really give you some

"fundamental differences" with the FI: the idea that not a revolutionary upheaval but capitalist restoration is brewing in the USSR; that not world revolution but world reaction is on the move; that as long as "we" don't lead the masses, there will be no change in this trend of events (nobody yet explained how "we" can capture the mass movement if world reaction grows stronger and stronger as in the pre-war period); and that therefore the danger of barbarism grows from day to day. These ideas will transform your party into an inept, sterile sect. They will cover you with ridicule, like they covered with ridicule the Bleibtreu group which has replaced Marxist analysis by fantastic stories, like the one that Stalin has been secretly poisoned; that Beria and the GPU leaders of all people represented the left, i.e., Reiss wing of the bureaucracy; that Malenkov wants to send the workers back to the farms because he is afraid of the numerical strength of the proletariat, etc., etc. It is a sad perspective for me, who felt closer to the SWP than to any other Trotskyist organization in the world. But it is the price one pays for a political and organizational break with the FI, the only revolutionary organization on a world scale, the price one pays for unprincipled politics.

As you certainly did not lose your capacity for sober thinking like the Bleibtreu group has, it won't take you long to have a second look at the International situation and to "take stock" a second time. You will have found out by then, on the basis of the answers to your Open Letter which will pour in from all sections, that you did not just break with the "Pablo" regime but with the FI organization and nearly all its sections. Perhaps that will give you some food for thought, and many things you don't grasp today on the basis of illusions as to the recruiting possibilities of Cannon's prestige in the International, will become clearer at that time. You will have to ask yourself over and over again if it was justified on principle to break with the FI on the issue you broke with it. You'll also take a look at some of the fancy people you certainly will attract: all the kibitzers and splitters who broke away in the years since the 2nd world war, all kinds of people opposed to the defense of the Soviet Union, all types of hopelessly ossified sectarians, in which you yourself won't have any confidence whatsoever. Perhaps some of you, all of you, will reconsider then their organizational attitude and come to the conclusion that it has been wrong. We on our part will always keep the door open for any group agreeing with our program and willing to function within the normal framework of our statutes and organizational tradition.

I shall answer presently your questions:

1. The immediate reason why the SWP leadership changed so radically its course of principled politics in the past is the fact that for the first time it was confronted with a situation in which it was not sure of the International's support for its actions. This was a test of the seriousness of its international allegiance—and in this test it failed miserably. Underneath there is a reaction of self-consciousness and self-delusion towards the growing objective difficulties—an escape from reality of a sectarian type. I would add that objectively this is a result of alien class pressure, without saying that your party has already succumbed to that pressure. (But breaking away from the FI definitively would certainly be a very bad sign

indeed.)

2. You are profoundly misinformed about the International situation if you think we have suffered "so many losses and splits" since the 3rd WC. Until the crisis your party started in the International, I know only of 2 splits, the one in France and the one in the Indochinese group (where we lost 1/4 of the membership in France but gained important forces in Indochina itself); much less than in the period between the 2nd and 3rd WC when there was no question of the "Pablo regime." In Ceylon we didn't have a split but an epuration of the party which was due for a long time given the character of that party. In most cases, as in Ceylon itself, there have not been "losses" but big organizational gains, as in South America, in Germany, in Britain (till Cannon ordered Burns to repeat Operation Killer on the "Pabloite" majority of that party. Do you know that between 2/3 and 3/5 of that party remain with the International?), in Italy, etc. The only serious crisis that existed at the time of the 3rd WC, the split in Austria, has been healed in the meantime. And the one important section which had been much weakened, the Indian section, has greatly recovered since.

3. I consider the FI the only organization I owe allegiance to. When my organization is attacked in the most unprincipled and slanderous manner, I'm not going to squabble about words with my comrades who defend my organization. Isn't that the way you also act—on a national scale?

It is now my turn to ask some questions:

1. Why should Pablo, Frank, Germain and the other "followers of Pablo," i.e., 17 or 18 of the 23 members of the IEC unanimously elected by the 3rd WC, comrades in whom you always had the fullest confidence, after having faithfully built the movement for many years, suddenly transform themselves into criminals who "are working consciously and deliberately to liquidate the FI," i.e., into Stalinist agents and spies, for what else can be the meaning of that formula?

2. Is it true or isn't it true that the basic reason why your Plenum wrote the "Open Letter," i.e., called publicly for a split of the FI, was the fact that you had become convinced that the IS and the IEC wouldn't approve the expulsion of the minority? Is it tolerable from a principled point of view to break with the International on such an issue?

3. If you really don't want to break with the FI, but only want to "fight the Pablo regime," are you ready:

(a) To participate in a WC of our movement representing all the sections at the stand of the 3rd WC, on the basis of representation modus adopted at the 2nd and 3rd WC or any other basis usual in the revolutionary movement and acceptable to both sides?

(b) To declare at the beginning of that WC, like we ourselves would do without hesitation, that you would abide by its decisions, regardless of the fact that your proposals would be adopted or not?

(c) To accept an organizational compromise for re-establishing the unity of the world movement, e.g., the reunification of the British section and the recognition, both in France and the USA, of both groups as affiliated to the FI with certain forms of non-aggression agreements, based on a functional division of labor?

(d) To call publicly (in forms adapted to security), on the basis of an agreement with points (a), (b), and (c), upon all sections of the FI to participate in the 4th WC regularly convened by the regularly elected leading bodies of the movement (in which, if you wished, you could of course occupy the position you always occupied in the past), while keeping all your rights to defend your political views in the pre-Congress discussion, with the clear understanding that any public attack on the international leadership would be answered publicly by that body?

To accept such proposals would have been of course normal procedure for all groups, tendencies, parties or individuals who recognize the principle of democratic centralism not only on a national but also on the international field. Allow me to repeat what I already wrote in my last letter: on the basis of your friends' actions of the last months, I do not have much hope left as to your and their answer to these questions.

Fraternally yours,
E. Germain

4. Letter from George Breitman to Ernest Germain

January 15, 1954

Dear Ernest:

Your letter of December 9 was painful to read. I had hoped that a meeting of minds was possible. Instead, you have so far chosen to misunderstand, employ debaters' tricks and ignore most of what I wrote you. You evidently feel you must defend "the International" against us, and this has led you to indefensible statements. I asked why you had signed your name to the November 15 IS Bureau letter containing numerous gross slanders against us, applied to our past as well as present course, when in your letter to me you said you did not consider our past course ever to have been unprincipled. In the December issue of the French Pabloite paper, which I had not seen when I wrote you, you claimed among other things that our minority represented "more than a third of the members" and that they committed "no public act of indiscipline." Do you know how ridiculous this makes you appear here, where everyone knows they represented only 18 percent? Do you see why no one can give the slightest credence to your equally inflated figures about the British Pabloites? And don't you feel silly, writing there was "no public act of indiscipline" at the very same time that Cochran, weeping on Shachtman's shoulder, publicly refutes you by explaining that his faction deliberately organized the boycott of our 25th Anniversary celebration? By the way, what do you think of this boycott? Why do you evade all mention of it? Are you, like the real Pabloites, an enemy of our 25 year struggle and all that it represents? If you had been in New York, would you have joined the boycott?

Your answer to the question I asked you last time is, "I'm not going to squabble about words with my comrades who defend my organization." Does this mean that you will sign or write anything, no matter how far from the truth, just so long as it is conceived as a defense of the IS? What kind of defense is it, and what is being defended, that requires lies? How can I have confidence in what you write when you tell me in advance that you will not "squabble about words" with slanderers because they are on your side, or because you are on theirs? How can I tell what part of what you write is actually your opinion of the facts, and what part is concession to your slanderous allies?

Nevertheless, I want to try again to reach through to you—for your sake, for ours, for the sake of the International.

You make a joke of my letter when you ask if I think the present situation is the result of "nothing but a tragi-

comedy of errors and misunderstandings." No, what my letter tried to do in good faith was answer the charge that our course was unprincipled by reciting the events and the evolution of our thinking under their impact. What we reached was not a misunderstanding, but an understanding. An understanding (1) of the profound political differences that separate us from the Pablo faction, which are set forth in our Letter and to which I shall return. An understanding (2) of the new slogan, "Junk the old Trotskyism," not as an expression of a desire to bring our program up to date, correct our errors and adjust our tactics to new needs (although that is how it was represented), but as an expression of a desire to junk Trotskyism itself as outmoded and to replace it with an opportunist orientation to Stalinism as the channel through which the revolution will pass everywhere in the world. And an understanding (3) of the necessity to determine who the real Trotskyists in this International are.

You condemn us for openly publishing our Letter in which we broke politically with the Pablo faction, an act which you claim represents "a break with the International." The reasons why we published the Letter have already been stated by Cannon in the December 28 paper. What do you mean when you accuse us of "a break with the International" by publishing a defense of orthodox Trotskyism against deliberate public attacks on it? Didn't Clarke publicly violate our program by forecasting the possible self-reform of the Soviet bureaucracy in the magazine behind the backs of its editorial board? Haven't the new Pabloite conceptions about Soviet development, to which we object, been published? Didn't the French Pabloites publicly defend the Stalinists against the criticism of the French Trotskyists of the Majority in a public leaflet? Is it "loyalty" to the International to defile its program and tradition in public, but "a break with the International" to defend this program and this tradition in public? The members of the SWP don't think so, and no pontifical pronouncements, factional expulsions, excommunications or "removals" will change our opinion. I agree that, as a general rule, internal disputes in our movement would perhaps better be discussed internally, although a public discussion is nothing new. We conducted a limited public discussion before the 1940 split in the SWP, and Trotsky did not hesitate to attack in the public press the capitulationist position of Roman Weil and others in the German section in 1932. Trotsky's polemic against Urbahns, in the formative stage of the International Left Opposition, was also published in *The Militant*. In any

case, we will never agree to a one-sided rule whereby revisionists enjoy the right to attack the program in public and the orthodox have no right to defend it in public.

And I urge you: Please don't pretend that the publication of the Letter marked a qualitative change in the relations between the IS and us. Because on November 15, *before you had even heard of the existence of our Letter*, the IS Bureau, writing to the leaderships of all sections, had already excommunicated us (and without even waiting to hear of the circumstances under which we had disciplined the organizers of the boycott, had already pledged to "never permit the expulsions effected by Cannon").

Elaborating on "the main and only fundamental difference which I see at the present stage of the fight: the overthrow of the principle of one World Party," you write many things about international discipline and democratic centralism that we would never quarrel with. But many of these things are also beside the point. I said we want to know who the Trotskyists in this International are. With Trotskyists we always have found and always will find agreement on organizational procedure. With Trotskyists we are willing and eager to discuss. But we want to be sure that they are Trotskyists, and not something else. Stalinists and apologists for Stalinism we will fight as enemies, not engage in discussion on the basis of democratic centralism. This is not a difference of nuance; it is the first condition of democratic centralism. (The American Pabloites understood this and that was why they refused to be bound by democratic centralism.) The selection is now taking place in the International. Far from having contempt for the majority of the International, as you charge, we have the greatest confidence that a decisive majority will understand the real issues and show themselves to be Trotskyists.

I would make a second condition. When someone talks to us about democratic centralism, we want to make sure we are talking about the same thing. Tell me, do you think democratic centralism is possible internationally where an international leadership does not recognize and defend democratic centralism on a national scale? I don't believe it is, and I think this question is most pertinent to our discussion.

Here we were in the SWP, contending with a minority that blatantly violated discipline in the name of a "higher allegiance." The Pabloite faction in England were doing the same thing at the same time. This, you will recall, was what happened first, *before* there was any disciplinary action against them, *before* there was any Letter. What, in your opinion, were we supposed to do—grit our teeth, smile and console ourselves with the merits of democratic centralism—as applied internationally? Oh, you tell us, "some organizational compromise could have easily been found at the eve of your last Plenum." Really? Such as what? Without anyone else's help, we found the means for a truce at the May plenum. But it wasn't worth the paper it was written on as soon as the minority saw it could not survive a truce. Why should we have your faith in "some organizational compromise" when we could see that the minority was driven by fundamental political pressure that made them feel we were incompatible? Does your conception of international democratic centralism require the leadership of a national party to permit it to be wrecked as the price of international democratic centralism? It's not our conception anyhow.

As I say, the minority violated democratic centralism. Here then was an excellent opportunity for the IS to show how devoted it was to this principle. Did it do it? On the contrary, Pablo directly instigated and encouraged the deliberate violations. (You may not know the whole American story, but you certainly know that this was what happened in Britain.) Is that how you expect to create devotion to this principle on the international field? Instead of joining us in our defense of democratic centralism in our party, the Pabloite IS attacked us for bureaucratism and brutality and degeneracy and pledged that it would "never" permit the violators of democratic centralism to be disciplined. And after that you expect this IS to be taken seriously when it preaches the necessity of democratic centralism on an international scale?

I am not sure, because I don't know all your ideas on the subject, but I have the feeling that your views on the International suffer from a tendency to regard it as a sort of collective substitute for national parties. I know that is the real Pabloite conception; that is why the Pablo faction is so eager to break up the solid national cadres who assert independence of judgment. Without the International, in our view, there can be no national parties worthy of the name of Trotskyist. But that doesn't mean that the International can substitute for them, for their organic development, for their selection of a leadership that really represents them, for the experiences they must pass through if they are to be fit for their historic role. Against these truths, which must be accepted as the necessary basis for a healthy relationship between parties and International leadership, we are offered a caricature of Cannon's remarks, according to which the International must be a "letter-box," exercising no discipline, having no common line. Will it really surprise you to learn that we reject this caricature. Don't you know, or have you forgotten, that we got along with the International for 25 years? At the same time we flatly reject the genuinely bureaucratic—to speak plainly, the Stalinist—conceptions and practices of Pablo, which enabled him to dispose of a critical majority in France by disposing of the majority of the party, and which supplied him with the gall to issue his ultimatum that we'd better abandon our revolutionary anti-Stalinist line on Germany and the Soviet Union because they didn't conform to his private line, or else! We reject the caricature of Cannon's views and the tested reality of Pablo's views, and demand a healthy relationship between parties and International leadership, which will permit the parties to grow, and the International leadership, expressing the positions of the majority, to guide, coordinate and where necessary discipline—all this, of course, being possible only on the basis of a common general (that is, Trotskyist) line.

On the basic point in your letter: You emphasize "loyalty to the International . . . as an established organization, with its established leadership and statutes," while our main emphasis is on loyalty to Trotskyism, that is, the program, the body of doctrine and the tradition that the International had up to and through the 3rd World Congress. Where we see fundamental political differences between ourselves and the Pablo faction, you see only differences of a "tactical nature," none of which "put a question mark on any of the basic principles of our estimation of Stalinism and the USSR." That, in our opinion, is where you make the

biggest mistake of all. You will end in a blind alley, totally unable to influence the development of this struggle in a revolutionary fashion, unless you probe the already visible differences to the bottom and take your stand on the basis of the political lines that are tearing the International apart, rather than on the basis of an organizational loyalty, and an essentially abstract organizational loyalty at that.

I won't repeat what has already been written about these differences in our Letter, resolution and press. But I am forced to return to the German question when you say, "I myself have failed to grasp till today the differences in approach to the Eastern German question when you say, when you say this, but that amazes me all the more. Why don't you ask Pablo? He grasped it sufficiently to use the authority of his post—without any protest from other IS members—to try to bludgeon us into substituting his approach for our own. Instead of accusing us of "inventing" differences, why don't you find out from Pablo why he regarded our differences on this issue so important that he felt he had to resort to the heavy hand to try to stifle our views?"

I don't know what Pablo would tell you, but here is what we think: There was a fundamental difference between him and us on the omission from the IS manifesto of our demand for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from East Germany in June. I know what you wrote me on November 15—that it was omitted "only because we wanted at that time to concentrate on the slogans the fighters in Berlin had used themselves (where no one had used that slogan and for good reasons! Did the people come out on the street in the February revolution with the slogan: Withdrawal of the Cossacks? When you are busy making a revolution, and not only writing about it, the winning of the troops wherever it is possible becomes task nr. 1, not the deliberate provocation of these troops into hostile actions)."

Fundamentally this explanation strikes me as a lawyer's argument. (1) As I told you before, the evidence we have collected shows that the demand for the withdrawal of the troops *was* raised; but let that go—I will agree that it probably was not raised as widely as other demands. (2) But must the raising of such a demand necessarily constitute a provocation of the troops into hostile actions? Not necessarily; in fact, such a demand, linked with appeals and acts of fraternization, etc., could have just the opposite effect and win the troops to friendly actions—it all depends on the way it's done. (3) Let's distinguish a little. There well might be situations in which the masses in the street could not raise such a demand, no matter how much they wanted to. But the IS statement was not written in the street. If it is true that the masses didn't raise this demand because they couldn't, then it all the more became the duty of the Trotskyist IS to express the demand for them, to voice it in their behalf, to use the occasion to drive home the lesson that the withdrawal of the occupation troops is an indispensable necessity for the successful completion of the revolution they had begun (I don't think your comparison of invading, occupying troops with Cossacks is a helpful one in this situation). (4) Don't say that the IS wanted to concentrate on the demands that the Berlin fighters had used themselves—say *why* it wanted to do only that. Since when are we constrained to limit ourselves only to those demands already raised by the

masses—isn't that called tail-ending? (5) And finally, in support of my opinion that you have given us a lawyer's argument, I want to remind you that the IS statement was dated June 25—more than a week after the Soviet troops had already engaged in hostile actions, that is, had saved the regime from almost certain overthrow by shooting down and jailing revolutionary workers. How could the omission of the demand in the IS statement on June 25 have had any effect in warding off the counter-revolutionary actions of the Soviet troops?

"But," you can say, "even if this was a mistake, couldn't it be a mistake in tactics?" It could, and that was why we were slow to draw conclusions, and why I wrote to ask you about it last summer. But when we began to hear the arguments of the American Pabloites, we saw that it went far beyond tactical differences. For their basic point in support of the IS's omission was that to demand withdrawal of the Soviet troops from East Germany while imperialist troops remained in West Germany would be to play into the hands of imperialism. Ask yourself: Is that an expression of a mere tactical difference? Since the Soviet troops are the chief obstacle to the political revolution in East Germany, doesn't such a line of reasoning itself become an obstacle to that revolution? Doesn't it raise at least a question mark over our attitude to Stalinism, particularly to our traditional positions that the way to defend the Soviet Union is by extending the revolution and that the defense of the Soviet Union is subordinate to the extension of the world revolution. Those who refuse to recognize such a line as a danger signal pointing to the growth of sentiments conciliatory to Stalinism will probably never recognize as a danger signal anything short of a proposal to dissolve the International.

Now the rotten thing and the infuriating thing is that those who hold these ideas refuse to express them openly, confining them for the present to verbal discussion and private correspondence while they build a faction around them. And when we see what is really at the bottom of their "tactical" proposals and how much damage it is causing in terms of morale and when we want to bring the thing out into the open, we are met with evasion and duplicity and denial—and you reproach us as users of the smear tactic for wanting to discuss what people "don't write." The procedure they follow is the infallible hallmark of revisionists: unable to present their full position at the start because then they could make no headway, they nibble away at things, putting out a feeler here and a feeler there, retreating when they have gone too far and exposed their real hand, refusing to discuss the real orientation behind their tactical proposals, furiously denying any intention of abandoning principles, and vilifying those who want to come to grips with them as sectarian, ossified, helpless in the face of changing reality, etc.

You are wrong if you think the troops-withdrawal issue is the only important one involved in the dispute over Germany; the conception in the IS statement that the bureaucracy can't stop half-way on the road to concessions is a wide open bridge to the theory of Deutscher. You are wrong when you say there is only "one wrong sentence" in Clarke's article on Stalin's death. The only thing exceptional about that sentence, which mislabels the harmonious sharing of power between a section of the bureaucracy and the workers as "political revolution," is that there Clarke slipped and let too much out of the

bag. But the entire article is drenched with Deutscherism and could easily have been written by Deutscher if he were a member of our party and under compulsion of unfolding his revision of Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism cautiously and step by step. I really am surprised that you didn't see that, and I urge you to reread it, noting among other things the new terminology: Stalin, you see, may have been "anti-revolutionary," but never, God forbid, must we say that he was counter-revolutionary because all the time he was an unwitting and blind instrument of the revolution, etc. And because we dared to differ from his article, Pablo condemned us as not expressing the International's line. There was a time not too long ago when Pablo and Clarke both considered Deutscher the most adroit apologist for Stalinism; but that time is past, and they fight us because we don't want any concealed Deutscherism in our press or in the International. And it isn't Deutscher who has changed, I assure you.

But, you say, you'll dissociate yourselves from any sharing of power ideas, you'll put back the sentence on the Soviet revolution dropped from the Transitional Program, you'll reaffirm that you really wanted the troops withdrawn from Germany—in short, you'll clear up all the "misunderstandings" on these and other questions we have raised. Again, I don't question your sincerity. You want to do these things, and they may even be done. The Pablo faction is now up against the wall; they need all the help they can get from people with prestige as orthodox Trotskyists who are foolish enough to give it to them; tactically, it may serve their factional interests to retreat until the present crisis is eased for them; they may not only permit you to add or alter these sentences, they may even ask you to do so.

But it won't solve anything because it will be at the expense of blurring actual differences, of covering up their real orientation. The Pabloites won't mind such a thing happening if it will help them to maintain their control over the International apparatus, because with that control they will be able to interpret as they see fit whatever resolutions are passed. But you would regret contributing to such an evasion as long as you lived. To lend yourself to such an operation would be shameful because it would obscure differences which you know exist even if you think them tactical—and when has the revolutionary movement ever been helped by the suppression of differences? That was the role played by Shachtman in 1939-40. Burnham was breaking with Marxism but Shachtman covered up for him, softened his sentences, helped him to conceal his departure in the interest of their factional alignment at least until the factional fight was over in our party; and that was the beginning of Shachtman's ruin as a revolutionist. We called Shachtman Burnham's advocate. I hope you won't serve as Pablo's advocate.

On a few others matters handled in your letter:

I asked why you think the SWP leadership, whose principled conduct in the past you voluntarily affirmed, has now become unprincipled. The IS Bureau letter in the French Pabloite paper of December, which I presume you endorsed, talks about our "complete degeneration," resulting from our "prolonged isolation from the masses and from the terrible pressure exerted on all social milieux

in the United States by American imperialism preparing its counter-revolutionary war" and says our leaders are "really adapting themselves to the atmosphere prevailing in the citadel of imperialism and camouflaging under 'extreme left' language their own buckling under this reactionary pressure." You yourself, in the same paper, write that our leadership "has lost its principles under the pressure of the reactionary atmosphere imperialism imposes on its country." (In your letter to me, in slightly more restrained fashion, you say that "objectively this is a result of alien class pressure, without saying that your party has already succumbed to that pressure.")

As I said last time, you must do more than make statements, you must support them concretely. The only concrete attempt you make goes like this: The SWP has "broken with the International" (to use your words)—*ipso facto*, it is and must be buckling to the reactionary pressure of imperialism. But I repeat: We have not broken with the International, we have no intention of letting anyone drive us away from the International; we are fighting its anti-Trotskyist faction precisely because we don't want to break with the International.

There is a terrible pressure exerted on the revolutionary party in this country, and its results are extremely harmful. But you don't understand its results because you don't see how they manifest themselves; you have the thing upside down. How is the pressure manifested concretely? By a desire, an instinct, a hysterical drive to get out of the line of fire. That is, by a movement to get out of our party, which is branded subversive, hounded, persecuted, threatened with legal prosecution. Those who are buckling under the pressure feel uncomfortable in our party. They want the party to stop resisting the pressure—to discontinue activities that can result in casualties (in Michigan the Pabloites were bitter about our election campaign in 1952 because, according to their reasoning, "they might not have gone after us under the Trucks Act if we had not been running an election campaign that forced us to their attention"). The last thing in the world they wanted was the line of the Third World Congress that in this country we should act as an independent revolutionary party. And when they see that they can't persuade our party to try to escape persecution by playing dead (that's their concept of "propaganda activity"), then they want to get out of the party. Leaving our party also has certain attractions for opportunist elements in the unions: It is dangerous for party members to run for union office today because if elected they run the risk of being indicted and jailed for perjury under the Taft-Hartley Act, which requires an oath that you do not belong to any "subversive" organizations. Those who leave the party and thus can swear that they don't belong to any group on the "subversive" list can run freely for union office, regain a position of respectability in the eyes of the union bureaucracy, etc.

In other words, the way in which buckling under the pressure manifests itself is by a tendency to find pretexts to get out of this party, membership in which entails serious risks. But what about the International? Since we are not formally affiliated to it anyhow, our relation to the International does not and cannot play the same kind of role in this process I have described. Whether or not we actually do break with the International (and

not merely with the Pablo faction) does not affect the status of the SWP on the "subversive" list because the SWP remains on it and the International does not. That is why I say your easy little formula stands everything on its head. It is the Pabloites here who have buckled under the pressure and are driven by a desire to duck, not we. Your abstract explanation about us applies to them perfectly in the concrete. If you really believe what you have written, you must think it over again in the light of the Pabloites' uncontrollable frenzy to get out of our party as soon as possible and under any pretext. Surely their sigh of relief as they left us must have been audible over the Atlantic.

Determined to shut your eyes to the political differences that motivate our conduct, you seek another explanation. Only one has suggested itself to you, and you recur to it at least nine times in your letter. Here is how I would summarize your explanation: We never would recognize any discipline in the International when we happened to be in a minority; we denied the IS the right to reach its own conclusions on matters concerning the SWP; what we wanted was a clique in the IS that would obediently raise its hands whenever Cannon gave the signal. These are hypotheses, and nothing else; you know very well that nothing ever happened in the past 25 years to give them the slightest shred of confirmation. Now, however, you contend that they are supported and even proved by one thing: We resolved to put through a brutal and bureaucratic expulsion of the minority and demanded that the IS passively accept it, and when we saw that that was not forthcoming, we decided to "break with the FI," wrote the Letter in order to "justify" the break politically, etc.

According to this conception, everything would have remained harmonious if only the IS had acquiesced in the alleged bureaucratic expulsion. But first we must ask: Why should the SWP leadership want to expel the minority, bureaucratically or otherwise? What reason could they have? Merely because the minority expressed differences? But that had never happened before in our party. It didn't happen now with the Murey group, who also had differences and also expressed them. How could the leaders justify a bureaucratic expulsion to the members, who you admit have not been trained in such a school? What would the leaders have to gain from such an expulsion when everyone understood that the 18% minority could not hope to win the party leadership for a long time, if ever?

Your entire explanation, you see, rests on one assumption—that a bureaucratic expulsion, or an expulsion of any kind, was wanted and needed by the leadership so badly that everything else must be subordinated to it. But this assumption had no validity.

The SWP leadership had neither the need nor the desire to expel the minority—it had contained them, contained them so successfully that the minority began to disintegrate right after the May plenum and would have disintegrated further if the minority leaders had not resumed all-out factional warfare in order to whip up and hold together their followers. You say the May truce could not work; your proof—that Burns "already had information to the contrary from Cannon." This is not true. He had no such information, and neither did anyone else.

We regarded the May truce as workable, and expected it to work if the minority wanted it to work and if Pablo did not encourage it to wreck the truce. We told the party we expected it to work. We wrote it in the press. Do you think the members of our party are so blind that such a double game can be played on them?

No, you've got it all wrong, as I explained at some length in my last letter. We didn't want to expel them, we did everything we could to keep them in the party on the basis of democratic centralism. If they had wanted to remain in the party, nothing could have removed them. They wanted to get out and away, and there was nothing we could do to prevent them from going except to make an unconditional surrender and a shambles of our party. So your simple explanation falls to the ground. It explains nothing because it evades the question of why the minority left our party, of what pressure was driving them. It substitutes psychological speculation for political and organizational analysis. It answers no questions and raises many. Either your previous estimate of our party was completely wrong, or your present one.

The truth is that we were not interested in expelling the minority, but in keeping them in the party, if possible. That this was not possible. That we were not greatly concerned about what the IS thought about the minority split because we knew that no one claiming to speak in behalf of democratic centralism could possibly get away with a defense of their provocations. That our opposition to the Pablo line, expressed in the Letter and resolution, had crystallized *before* the minority's boycott action and *before* our decision to take disciplinary steps against them. That we were determined to break with Pablo and go to the International with our appeal for his removal even if the minority had remained in the party.

Believe this or not, as you please. But don't deceive yourself into thinking that your explanation rests on anything but thin air. It has no more foundation in reality than the American minority's charge that the SWP leadership has suddenly become "mad," "irrational" and "senile," which they offered in our fight to explain so many otherwise unexplainable things. But the charges against Pablo that I outlined to you last time are based on solid fact: He *did* prepare and was on the verge of expelling you and others before the Third World Congress because you dared to resist the orientation that was evidently at the bottom of his proposals for that Congress. He *did* succeed in bureaucratically getting rid of the overwhelming majority of the French party. He *did* foment a split in the British party by directing his faction to ignore its discipline and by trying to oust the majority leadership without having even the feeble pretext that is employed against us. He *did* encourage and support the American minority in their violations of discipline that could only end in split. These are not hypotheses, conjectures or "misunderstandings"—they are facts, facts with the most sinister implications for the future of the International. How much longer are you going to refuse to look them in the face? How much longer are you going to tell yourself that such acts are motivated by merely tactical differences?

You have made some dire predictions about what is going to happen to us. I want to touch on only one of the points you raise—our attitude to the French and

Chinese parties. For over two years the Pabloites here (and I imagine elsewhere) have made them the whipping boys, the bogeymen and the horrible examples of what we would become if we didn't follow Pablo's course without deviation. The French were denounced as incorrigible Stalinophobes, capitulators to imperialism and hopeless sectarians who refused to participate in the real mass movement. The Chinese were condemned and ridiculed as "refugees from a revolution," including, I presume, those who were murdered at their posts inside China. Whenever anyone would say anything about the need for an independent party, the answer hurled at him was: "Look at China. Wasn't the revolution made there without our party? Keep on talking that nonsense about the independence of the party and you will end up the way the Chinese did, unable and unwilling to see the revolution before your eyes, blinded by old schema, running away from the revolution." When someone would question the correctness of a major orientation to American Stalinism, he would get hit over the head with the French example of "Stalinophobia," etc. At first we didn't know what to make of all this. But we began to catch on. Real life helped us.

We watched the French closely for evidences of Stalinophobia as our own internal fight developed. We never found any. The policies followed by the two groups in the French general strike clinched the matter for us. In that test the majority unquestionably acted as revolutionists, which is more than could be said for the Pabloites. Whether or not they actually have shown traces of sectarianism, which is harder to detect from afar than Stalinophobia, two things are sure: this is a matter on which we will no longer be content to take Pablo's word; and the French majority has shown themselves to be Trotskyists, and therefore people with whom we can discuss and work. Similarly with the Chinese. That they made errors during the revolution we know; these were errors that were at the time shared to one degree or another by everyone else in the International, including those who now try to make them scapegoats for our common errors. But we also know now that the claim that they have refused to recognize the Chinese reality or learn from past errors is a lie. Their letter of last January, which we never saw until a few months ago because Pablo suppressed it—and this was not the least scandalous of his bureaucratic crimes—convincingly refutes this lie. They have recognized and adjusted themselves to reality, they have adopted a generally correct attitude to the government and the CP. We can work with them too, and not on the basis of any wrong position on the Chinese question, which they have corrected and are correcting. So we are no longer impressed by horror tales slanderously directed against the French and Chinese comrades, or predictions that collaboration with them will inevitably drive us to fall into errors that they have already corrected or never actually committed in the first place. And we're not going to tolerate any longer the Pabloite campaign to discredit, isolate and excommunicate them.

While we're on the subject of predictions, maybe you'd better devote some thought to the future of the Pablo faction and your relations to it. First of course there will be a period, during which the undecided will be wooed, when the Pabloites may find it imperative to blur the distinctions, protest their orthodoxy and screen

the course they are contemplating. But that will be only an interim period. When the dust has settled and all the anti-Pabloites have been expelled, what will there be to restrain them? They will be indisputable masters in whatever is left of the Pabloite house; their need for you will be diminished; freed of the restraints imposed by the presence of the orthodox wing of the International, there will be nothing to stop them from proceeding at a greatly accelerated pace along their opportunist, impressionist road toward Stalinism. You know Ceylon: if you want an image of the future of the Pablo faction, look at what happened to both the groups that broke with the Ceylon party after they were released from the pressure of the real Trotskyists. And make no mistake—at best you will be a captive, and sooner or later an unwelcome one, because these people will want nothing to do with those who are unwilling to accompany them all the way down the road of the junking of Trotskyism.

At the end of your letter, you ask some questions about our readiness to accept "an organizational compromise for reestablishing the unity of the world movement," which, if I understand it correctly, is aimed at ending or restricting the *public* struggle that is going on between the two factions in the International. It seems to me, however, that such proposals should be addressed first of all not to us, but to those who started the public struggle. If you are serious about these proposals, are you willing to and will you:

1. Demand that the Pablo faction discontinue all *public announcements* of political positions not authorized by orthodox doctrine and previous congresses, and submit their revisions of such positions for *discussion* in the internal bulletin?

2. Demand that they cancel all summary expulsions and "removals" of elected leaders of the national sections?

Don't you recognize that these are necessary conditions for the consideration of your proposals, especially since it was the Pablo faction that started the "expulsion" game? Without these conditions your proposals cannot fail to have the appearance of an unworthy maneuver.

You have made important contributions to the movement, which we all have valued greatly. But now you are at a crossroads—or rather, you have already taken a first step down a road that will be fatal for you as a revolutionist. I urge you: Reconsider what has happened. Subordinate all subjective considerations. Rid yourself of all fetishistic conceptions about the International. Restudy the political differences, and where they lead. Recognize that a historic selection, overriding all secondary issues, is now taking place in the International. I earnestly hope that you will take your place on the side of those who want it to remain a Trotskyist International, and against those whose political and theoretical disorientation is driving them inexorably to conciliation with Stalinism and other alien forces. If you do, we will be ready to discuss a common line of action with you. Organizational accommodations are not now, and never have been, a primary consideration for us. What we are concerned with, first of all and above all, is political agreement.

Comradely,
George Breitman

5. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs

Los Angeles, Calif.
December 7, 1953

New York

Dear Farrell:

I read the two Germain letters, also Breitman's reply. This is one of the most important developments, in my opinion. I do not think Germain is a revisionist or a Pablo cultist; politically he belongs rather with us. All the machinations of Pablo and his cult have obviously been carried out behind Germain's back without his knowledge or participation. He has simply been trapped, and they are now trying to use him as a front man and attorney ro rope in those who are neither revisionists nor cultists. Pablo cannot approach such people on the spurious grounds of organizational formalism and loyalty to the "International," which the Pabloites interpret as Pablo and his obscene cult. They need Germain for that, and for the time being, they don't mind his emphasis on his "orthodoxy." In practice they will "interpret" that as they see fit.

Breitman's answer to Germain is a masterful explanation of the processes by which our thinking developed on the International question and led us step by step, on the basis of real developments and concrete facts to the decisions of the Plenum. It would be very good if this letter of Breitman's could be published and circulated in the International. It might be argued that Germain can be influenced better for the time being by purely personal communication. In normal circumstances this would be the best procedure—at least for a certain period. We have to remember, however, that the international struggle is developing at break-neck speed. The problem in the circumstances, is not so much to influence Germain personally—important as that is—but to counteract the effect of his influence as attorney for Pablo.

We can't afford to delay our fire at this target while Germain is making up his mind. Public opinion in the various sections may be crystallized very quickly. Our task is not to compile excellent material for the archives, for the benefit of students of history after it is made, but to throw everything we have into the scale to influence the decision in the next few weeks. Besides that, the public pressure which will be exerted by the publication of Breitman's letter, and other material along the same line, may very well add to the persuasiveness of this material as Germain studies it personally.

I think these are the overriding considerations. For that reason I strongly recommend the publication of Breitman's letter, and that copies of it be dispatched immediately to all sections with a request that they publish it also.

I agree entirely with George's letter, including his estimate of Germain. In fact I have been thinking lately about this

side of the problem more than anything else, because I regard Germain as the only barrier standing between Pablo and the complete collapse of his whole strategy to split the international movement. It is ironic that Germain, who sincerely wishes to avoid a split and is really anti-revisionist in his basic conceptions, is virtually the sole instrument Pablo has to carry out the split and impose in practice, a revisionist policy on the rump of a minority, which he will call "The Fourth Congress of the Fourth International."

For some time I had been trying to think of some way to induce Germain to write directly to me, which would prompt an answer. I am most gratified that George has already written him much of what I would have said; but I can think of many more things to say. We want to come to an agreement with Germain; or in any case to neutralize his influence as attorney and front man for Pablo. The latter at the moment is of course the more important consideration. That's why publication of George's letter and similar material is imperatively dictated.

We will not, however, under any circumstances, agree to any more common resolutions with the Pabloites, as Germain in the next stage of developments may propose. I fully agree with the French comrades in this respect, that Pablo will sign any kind of a joint resolution as long as he retains administrative control and can use it to force his "interpretations" of the resolutions by administrative pressure, threats of "discipline," and top-lofty talk about "the line of the International," meaning himself and his spineless lackeys.

We have had enough experience with that already, not only internationally, but also here at home. You will recall how we were all flabbergasted at the brazen way our homegrown Pabloites represented our Convention resolution as meaning the direct opposite of what we meant when we wrote it and allowed them to add a section—which we did not consider as a contradiction to the main line—for the sake of "unity" on a common resolution. That kind of machiavellianism is a deliberate technique of Pabloism, I am now convinced. It never happened before in our party or in our international movement, and we must never let it happen again in either sphere.

I would also like to make the suggestion that Burns, taking advantage of Ernest's letter to him, also write him a detailed and extensive account of the development of the struggle in the English section and the reasons which brought him unavoidably to the open clash with Pablo and the split. Such a letter by Burns should also be published.

Fraternally,
J.P. Cannon

6. Letter from James P. Cannon to George Breitman

Los Angeles, Calif.
January 12, 1954

George Breitman
Newark, N.J.

Dear George:

I am returning herewith your draft of your new letter to Germain. I have indicated a few suggested editorial corrections.

I think it best to eliminate the paragraph on the last page, which by linking your letter to the PC, tends to give it an official character. From a tactical point of view I think your remarks to Germain would be better contained in what appears to be a personal letter. As the discussion develops, what we have to say officially or semi-officially about Germain will be a great deal harsher. This will not be a difference in real content, but rather a tactical division of labor.

Germain and others, as his letter of December 9 indicates, will be looking for an organizational compromise. They may very well be assigned this role by the real Pabloites, as a division of labor. The aim would be to throttle the discussion, while they proceed merrily with their program of expulsions, "removals" and excommunications. We have no interest in becoming involved *officially* in such piddling maneuvers.

Our strategy must be a full-scale, all-sided discussion to bring about not an organizational compromise, but a clear political division between the Trotskyists and the Pabloites. I think your letter, with a little touching up, can serve very well as a part of this discussion, bearing in mind that much more will be said by others, and in some cases by official declarations. For that reason I am not inclined to consider your letter a final, full and complete statement and to suggest rewriting it from that point of view. Everything that you say seems to be all right as far as it goes, and that is far enough for one contribution.

I suggest two additional points which I think will strengthen your letter.

One is to place more emphasis on the Cochranite boycott of our 25th Anniversary Celebration and to ask Germain why he evades it, and what he thinks of it. I have written in my suggestions for an amplification of this point on Page 1 of your draft.

The second addition I suggest relates to Germain's claim that the publication of our Letter represents "a break with the International." You simply refer him to the reasons for publishing the Letter, given by me in the December 28 *Militant* and you say you will not repeat them. Since this is a very important point, and seems to be interesting to many international comrades, I suggest that you repeat these reasons in your letter somewhat as follows:

"What do you mean when you accuse us of 'a break with the International' by publishing a defense of orthodox Trotskyism against deliberate public attacks on it? Didn't Clarke publicly violate our program by forecasting the possible self-reform of the Soviet bureaucracy in our magazine behind the backs of the editorial board? Haven't the new Pabloite conceptions about Soviet development, to which we object, been published? Didn't the French Pabloites publicly defend the Stalinists against the criticism of the French Trotskyists of the Majority in a public leaflet? etc.

"Is it 'loyalty' to the International to defile its program

and tradition in public, but 'a break with the international' to defend this tradition and this program in public? The members of the SWP don't think so, and no pontifical pronouncements, no factional expulsions, excommunications or 'removals' will change their opinion.

"I agree that, as a general rule, internal disputes in our movement would perhaps better be discussed internally, although a public discussion is nothing new. We conducted a limited public discussion before the 1940 split in the SWP, and Trotsky did not hesitate to attack in the public press the capitulationist position of Roman Weil and others in the German section in 1932. Trotsky's polemic against Uhrbahns, in the formative stage of the International Left Opposition, was also published in *The Militant*. In any case, we will never agree to a one-sided rule whereby revisionists enjoy the right to attack the program in public and the orthodox have no right to defend it."

* * *

Organizationally our position, as I see it, is very strong. I am not too much impressed by circumstance that a number of weak sections, without serious cadres or tradition, support Pablo precisely because they are Pabloites and know nothing else. That's too bad, of course, but we must recognize that people who have been educated in the Pablo school are not going to agree with those who have been educated in the Trotsky school.

What is important is that the most solid cadres, educated in the Trotskyist doctrine and tradition, have already taken a firm stand against the revisionists and liquidators.

An "International" made up of the rumps of the minorities and small weak sections, without these tested cadres, would be somewhat farcical. Even as things stand right now, the *real* relation of forces, as they are measured by *cadres*, is plainly in our favor. The thing to do is to recognize this reality and to recognize also that we have no need of any compromise whatever.

That, of course, does not exclude our taking a formal position which opens an approach to the hesitating elements. Such a position, as I see it, requires the designation of the struggle in the international movement as a *factional* struggle; the consolidation of the International Committee of the Fourth International as the rallying center of *the Trotskyist faction*: the insistent contention—which is the plain truth—that the Pabloites initiated the *public* struggle against the Trotskyist program and that we are simply answering them on their own ground, etc.

I believe it very important for the International Committee, as well as all the sections supporting it, to stand firmly on these formal positions without in the least restricting their freedom of action in the struggle.

Right now a problem is presented by such people as the Ceylonese, some of the Canadians, etc., who sympathize more or less with us politically but have been caught on the hook of organizational formalities, "discipline," etc. The thing is to understand what this problem is and how to deal with it. I will give my opinion first, before the explanation for it: No compromise whatever with such tendencies. I give this answer all the more confidently because the problem is not new to me.

There were such people—many of them—in 1928 in

the American CP as well as in other sections of the Comintern. All those who tried to out-wit the Stalinists by organizational concessions and diplomacy, came to disaster. Once they recognized the rules laid down by the Stalinists, their doom was sealed; one capitulation followed another until there was nothing left to give away. The Stalinists first coddled them and then cut them to pieces step by step—according to the "disciplinary rules" to which they had agreed in advance. The cadres of international Trotskyism were created by those who rejected this maneuverist policy and embarked on a straight-out public struggle.

That's the way it's going to be this time too. By that I do not at all mean to cross off and ignore such hesitant, conciliatory elements as those mentioned. On the contrary we should pay a great deal of attention to them, but our attention should consist of the following elements:

First—and most important—an incessant, merciless hammering of the Pabloites in our public press as well as in *Internal Bulletins*.

Second, repeated, insistent demands upon the hesitators that they take a position on the principal questions in dispute and let the world movement know where they stand in regard to them.

Third, tell them that if they want to restrain the *public* struggle, their demands should be addressed not to us but to those who *started* it. The conciliators should demand of the Pabloites:

a. That all *public announcements* of political positions not authorized by orthodox doctrine and previous decisions of world congresses, be discontinued. Let them hereafter submit their new revelations for *discussion* in *Internal Bulletins*.

b. That all summary expulsions, excommunications and "removals" of elected leaders of the national sections be cancelled.

I think you should consider answering Germain's questions to you by posing these two points to him—in the form of questions—and asking if he doesn't recognize that they are a necessary a priori condition to the consideration of his proposals—since the Pabloites started the "expulsion" game.

There is no question of the Pabloites accepting these demands. It would be quixotic at this late date even to present them in this camarilla, and still worse to entertain illusions about their acceptance of them. As I see it, these proposals are designed for conversation with the hesitants who claim to agree with us politically but give their support to Pablo on organizational grounds. We can suggest to the hesitants, as a division of labor, that they make the proposals for a revision of the rules of the fight while we concentrate on frontal political attack on the big questions at issue in the fight.

* * *

The Pabloites are clearly bent on a formal split to be effected by the simple expedient of expelling and excommunicating all opponents before the discussion gets a good start. The "unanimous decisions" of their December Plenum proves that, if more proof was needed. They aim to compromise the name of the Fourth International, as much as possible before formally "junking" it. I don't think the Trotskyists should facilitate their game, either by a policy of formal withdrawal or by recognition of their expul-

sions. We fight not only for the doctrine and tradition of the International, but also for *the organization and the name*.

The International Committee of the Fourth International, as the organizing center of the Trotskyist faction, recognizes the right of the Pablo faction neither to outlaw it; nor to expel any of its affiliates; nor to "remove" the elected officials of any section; nor to appropriate the name of the Fourth International. We should fight it out on this formal ground all the way through to the end, without permitting our fight to be hampered at any point by rules laid down by the liquidators.

Given the principled nature of the fight, no one who takes principle seriously can justifiably object to our stand on these formal positions. If anyone does object we have a simple answer: We take principles seriously and fight for them openly and honestly; and in the fight we claim the same rights for ourselves that our opponents claim for themselves. We recognize the usefulness of "rules" but the rules must be observed by both sides.

* * *

One more big difference between us and the supporters of Pablo is reflected in the line-up of forces and should also be reflected in the nature of our work and struggle. In addition to everything else, two different conceptions of the International are involved in this struggle. I expect to write about this at some length, but here I would like to indicate the main points.

We conceive of the International, first of all, as a program and second, as an organizational means of coordinating and unifying the policy and activity of the functioning sections by means of political and ideological collaboration. Discipline in secondary matters follows as a matter of course; and it has never been a serious problem among people who are really united on the program, either nationally or internationally. On the other hand, discipline never yet succeeded in reconciling the adherents of contradictory programs.

Programmatic differences can be resolved—if they can be resolved at all—only by discussion, argument and persuasion, never by force. The history of the innumerable splits since the beginning of the International Left Opposition, as well as the history of the disputes which were settled without splits, gives definitive testimony on this point.

From our point of view, the one who will not observe discipline on secondary matters is an intellectual anarchist, unfit to belong to a serious organization, and the sooner he is thrown out the better. On the other hand, the one who will surrender his right of discussion and criticism on primary matters of principle under threats of discipline, or for any reason whatever, is an ideological traitor; or, as Trotsky said in blunter language, "a scoundrel."

The dupes who follow Pablo, like those who facilitated the corruption of the Comintern, really think discipline is the first principle of international organization. Along with that, they regard "the International" as a sort of substitute for functioning national sections with solid cadres and indigenous leaderships occupied with the problems of their own country. The weaker they are on their home grounds, the more they depend on "the International" to answer all questions for them, and the readier they are to "condemn" those leaders who have built serious organi-

zations in their own countries and assert some independence of judgment in international matters.

The less impression these "leaders" of pseudo-sections are able to make in their own country, the more they seek fictitious importance as international politicians. Clarke is perhaps the arch-type of this pseudo-leader, but there are others and they are all yapping at our heels.

The task and the test of the real internationalists is to build organizations in their own countries, as well as to help the other sections, and the international as a whole, by an informed and lively participation in their affairs. Believing that, we must be careful now not to allow our activities to become too one-sided in the present international struggle. Our task is not merely to give advice to the Trotskyist world at large, but also to set the example by doing serious work and building serious organizations in our own countries.

I am very glad to see that the Political Committee in New York is not neglecting this basic task while the international fight goes on. The campaign you are developing around the issue of McCarthyism, the subscription campaign, the speaking tours, etc., are convincing evidence

of this. The Pabloite leaders, who as a general rule don't have to bother with those burdensome "national" tasks, may seem to have an advantage over us in the "international" struggle, since they have nothing else to do. But these political operations in the stratosphere will never reap any serious results on this earth.

I notice that the French comrades complain that they are somewhat handicapped in the international work by the fact that their leading militants are so fully absorbed in mass work and the general practical activity of the French section. The same thing applies to England. But, among other things, it was the obvious proofs that the Majority in France were really active in the class struggle of their own country, while the Pabloites were merely commenting about the activities of others—to say nothing of commenting falsely and shamefully—that obliges us, and all other real Trotskyists in the International, to collaborate with the French Majority and to support them despite secondary differences which may arise between us.

Fraternally,
J.P. Cannon

7. Letter from James P. Cannon to George Breitman

Los Angeles, Calif.
March 1, 1954

George Breitman
Newark, N.J.
Dear George:

I received your two letters of February 11 and February 14 on Germain's latest effusion. I think we should stop the correspondence with him for the time being and concentrate on direct communication with the national organizations which are already close to us politically. The text of my letter to Goonewardene which has already been forwarded to New York, is intended in part as a sort of answer in advance to any Germainistic proposals inspired from Paris, which might come from one or another of these organizations.

I don't agree with your statement that it would be wrong "to mix up what we should do now with the tactics that, maybe, should be employed at a different and later stage." On the contrary, I think we should have a clear picture in our own minds of what we are going to do in the next stage, and even in the next stage after the next, and prepare the way for those later decisions in the answers we give today.

My letter to Ceylon was written with this in mind. We have to dispel the illusion that everything can be settled by an unprepared common Congress; or that the Trotskyist faction can be induced by any maneuver to participate in such a Congress rigged against them in advance, and thus give it a cover of legality. In our minds we must resolutely rule out all ideas of a common Congress at the present time. I have tried to make the reasons for this clear in my letter to Comrade Goonewardene. The position of the Trotskyist faction would be weaker if they should go to such a Congress and then repudiate its decisions afterward; and still worse if they should legitimize a trumped-up Pabloite majority and accept

a position as a minority tendency, with its struggle muffled by Pabloite rules and regulations.

* * *

Our objective is fundamentally different from Germain's. In the last resort, it traces back to a different theory of the role of the revolutionary vanguard, and its relation to other tendencies in the labor movement. Germain thinks he is orthodox on this question—he even wrote an article about it in *Quatrieme Internationale*—but in practice he compromises the theory. We alone are unconditional adherents of the Lenin-Trotsky theory of the party of the conscious vanguard and its role as leader of the revolutionary struggle. This theory acquires burning actuality and dominates all others in the present epoch.

The problem of leadership now is not limited to spontaneous manifestations of the class struggle in a long drawn-out process, nor even to the conquest of power in this or that country where capitalism is especially weak. It is a question of the development of the *international* revolution and the socialist transformation of society. To admit that this can happen automatically is, in effect, to abandon Marxism altogether. No, it can only be a *conscious* operation, and it imperatively requires the leadership of the Marxist party which represents the conscious element in the historic process. No other party will do. No other tendency in the labor movement can be recognized as a satisfactory substitute. For that reason, our attitude towards all other parties and tendencies is irreconcilably hostile.

If the relation of forces requires the adaptation of the cadres of the vanguard to organizations dominated at the moment by such hostile tendencies—Stalinist, Social Democratic, centrist—then such adaptation must be regarded at all times as a *tactical* adaptation, to facilitate the strug-

gle against them; never to effect a reconciliation with them; never to ascribe to them the decisive historical role, with the Marxists assigned to the minor chore of giving friendly advice and "loyal" criticism, in the manner of the Pabloite comments on the French General Strike.

* * *

Germain doesn't know it, but at bottom our differences with him are the same as our differences with Shachtman and Pablo in this domain. Germain offers us an "entrism" policy; he wants us to content ourselves with the position of a critical opposition in a Pabloite International, just as Pablo, implicitly, would reduce the Fourth International to the role of a critical wing of Stalinism, and as Shachtman explicitly advises the revolutionary vanguard to be satisfied with the ignoble destiny of a "loyal opposition"—the formulation is Shachtman's—to the Social Democracy.

The main difference between the conceptions is that those of Shachtman and Pablo have a certain superficial plausibility, because of the disproportionate relation of forces at the present time between the Marxists on the one side and the Stalinists and Social Democrats on the other. This unfavorable relation of forces does indeed impose a large measure of tactical adaptation upon the Marxists in order to connect themselves with the mass movement. But the relation of forces between us and the Pabloites in the Fourth International is entirely different. It would be simply stupid for us to throw away those advantages for the sake of organizational formality. The "entrism" policy sometimes has its uses for a minority in its struggle to become a majority. But it is of no use to a majority, unless it is an idiotic majority determined at all costs to maneuver itself into the position of a minority.

The Fourth International, in the present stage of its evolution and development, is not a mass organization in which different and even antagonistic tendencies could accommodate themselves to each other for a long time, while the struggle continues for the allegiance of the masses in its ranks. *The Fourth International today is a cadre organization.* Its striking power and historical justification derive from its program and its ideological homogeneity. Pabloism is not a mass movement to be penetrated and influenced, but a revisionist tendency which discredits the Fourth International and disrupt its cadres. The revolutionary task is not to "live with" this tendency—which, moreover, is a minority tendency—but to blow it up.

* * *

As I visualize the next stage of our strategy, it should proceed from the uncompromising determination to annihilate Pabloism politically and organizationally. This will take time, and we should adjust our thinking to a drawn-out struggle along three lines, in the following order of importance.

First: to consolidate and re-educate the cadres already supporting the International Committee.

Second: to secure the organizational alignment with the International Committee of those sections already in substantial political agreement with us, or still undecided.

Third: to consolidate minorities in those sections whose top leadership is already corrupted by Pabloism, and arm

them for an irreconcilable struggle.

I attach the greatest importance to the first point: The consolidation and ideological hardening of the ranks of the orthodox cadres. As I see it, the polemical material we are turning out is intended mainly for their benefit, to involve them in the discussion and assist them to move forward with us consciously at every step. We should look back to the early days of our movement and recall that our voluminous polemics against the Stalinists were not merely a debate with them; they were the means whereby our own basic cadres were educated and consolidated.

We should deliberately aim to accomplish the same results again this time on a higher level. This is very important for us in the SWP, for it is obvious that our party is being rebuilt from the bottom up in the course of this discussion. It is ten times more important for such organizations as the Canadian and British, and others who are obliged by circumstances to follow a policy of "deep entry."

* * *

This "deep entry," which absorbs the energies of the comrades in all kinds of small maneuvers and tactical adaptations, carries with it the danger of *de facto* liquidation by a creeping process. This process can become irresistible if it is not consciously recognized and arrested, either by an undisguised Trotskyist publication of our own, or—the next best thing—by the constant involvement of the rank and file of our organizations in a discussion of the big questions of principle which demarcate us from the Stalinists and the reformists.

The most striking part of Murry's report on his Toronto visit, which should be an alarm signal to us, is his impression that an imperceptible "creeping liquidationism" has already reached an advanced stage in the Canadian organization. The same thing was probably true in England with this fight began. The outbreak of the fight, pulling up short all the rank and file activists and compelling them to reexamine the question of what their activity is for, has undoubtedly been a blessing in disguise. The burning task now in England, as well as in Canada, is not merely to get a formal majority for the International Committee, but to see to it that this majority is developed into a homogeneous body of conscious Trotskyists.

The best means to serve this end right now consists of our merciless polemics against the Pabloites on every point. But this means will be partly wasted if the polemical material is confined only to the leading circles and is not widely distributed in the ranks, and studied and discussed by them. Otherwise Pabloism, the end result of which can only be a liquidation of the Trotskyist cadres, could eventually gain the victory by default, even though the cadres formally renounce the Pabloite faction.

The *process* of liquidationism is implicit in a policy of tactical adaptation to the Stalinists or reformists, if it is not counteracted either by an independent Trotskyist organ or by lively internal discussion of principled questions. We must be aware of this danger and consciously aim to overcome it. This cannot be done by slackening or neglecting our practical work in the mass movement, and certainly not by a policy of withdrawal into isolation from the mass movement. The effective combination

of practical activity in the mass movement, which requires a certain *formal* adaptation, with deliberate work of ideological demarcation, is the problem our "entrist" sections would have to solve, even if there were no liquidationist tendency of Pabloism to deal with.

* * *

The history of our period of entry into the American Socialist Party has never been fully told, and its lessons have not yet been fully assimilated even by our own cadres, to say nothing of the cadres of other sections. You probably know that when Trotsky first devised the tactics of entry into the Socialist Party in France in 1934, he laid down as a condition, that our French section must maintain its own independent paper. Otherwise, he said, he would not recommend entry. Later he modified that condition in the case of some other sections, but only with the greatest misgivings. Trotsky was not a fanatic of "entrism" and never prescribed it as a panacea. Entrism, for him, was a tactical means to build our movement in struggle against our ideological opponents who happened to control much larger organizations than ours.

At the time of our negotiations for entry into the SP, we bargained hard for a long time with the SP leaders for the right to maintain our press. In the end we had to surrender this right as the price of entry. I personally hesitated a long time before agreeing to this enormous concession. Our final agreement to give up our press in order to effect the entry, was motivated at the time by two special circumstances peculiar to our situation. One, we had assurances that the "Socialist Appeal," already being published as a mimeographed bulletin in the SP by Goldman, would be placed at the disposal of our faction. Two: I believed that our cadres were ideologically much stronger, more experienced and more homogeneous than the European cadres of that time, and that they would be able to hold together for a considerable time even without a fully independent organ of their own.

This second consideration, by far the most important one, proved to be correct in the end result. But it was not an automatic guarantee; and in fact we came very close to disaster with our entire strategy. A section of our leading cadre, headed by Burnham and Shachtman at the time, adapted themselves so comfortably to the SP milieu that they nearly wrecked the whole experiment.

When the Emergency Convention of the SP, in the early spring of 1937, adopted the resolution banning all internal party organs, Burnham and Shachtman wanted to take the prohibition in stride and continue as if nothing had happened. Even when the prohibition of tendency organs was supplemented by the prohibition of controversial resolutions, they wanted to swallow that too. The appetite for conciliation grows by what it feeds on. Adaptation can become a "way of life," until there is nothing left of the original principle which the tactical adaptation was designed in the first place to facilitate and to serve.

* * *

It is not generally known, I suppose, that there was

constant friction and disagreement, almost from the beginning of our work in the SP, between the NC group in California, where I worked during that time, and the New York leadership. Things came almost to the breaking point in the summer of 1937. In a letter to the center at that time I posed the question of winding up the experiment and starting to publish our own press again in order to consolidate our gains and to prevent the demoralization of our own cadres. Burnham and Shachtman reacted violently against the proposal.

They were bent on struggling endlessly without adequate weapons, and began to make almost a fetish of SP party unity. It just happened that at the same time Trotsky, on his own initiative and without prior consultation with me, wrote to New York along the same lines as my letter and in even sharper terms. Burnham and Shachtman suspected collusion between Trotsky and me, but it was just a coincidence. They still resisted. The correspondence between Trotsky and Burnham on the subject sharply illuminated the difference between a policy of entry in order to build the revolutionary party and entry more or less as an end in itself.

It was not until Shachtman came to California a month or so later that we finally got an agreement with him to wind up the experiment, prepare the split and the publication of our own press again. After the agreement, we hushed up the dispute and very few of our members ever heard about it. I think an article on this hidden chapter of our party history, which I intend to write if I can ever get around to it, could have a considerable importance for our international movement at the present time.

We always speak of our experiment with entry into the SP as a success, which in the main it was, for we more than doubled our membership and knocked the SP out of our road. But even so, there were some heavy overhead costs which we had to pay later. The softening up of Burnham and Shachtman, during the period of the entry, persisted as a hangover. We felt the full force of it when the factional struggle broke out over the Stalin-Hitler pact in the fall of 1939. The back-sliding Burnham and Shachtman and the non-fully-assimilated left-socialists, who had come with us in the split, found themselves in a natural alliance against the orthodox line and the leadership. The petty bourgeois opposition had its main base of support in these unassimilated left socialists, who numbered over half of the party, and took several hundred of them along in the split after the 1940 Convention.

I don't cite these facts as an argument against the entry, which on the whole brought us more gains than losses, but as a reminder that the policy of entry is no panacea. It entails dangers as well as opportunities for advancement, even in the best case. The question of whether a policy of entry will ultimately lead to a strengthening and expansion of our movement, or to its imperceptible liquidation, depends on the cadres; especially on the consciousness of the leadership and the deliberate measures it takes to combat the dangers while exploiting the opportunities.

Fraternally,
J.P. Cannon

**SECTION XVI: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN JAMES P. CANNON
AND LESLIE GOONEWARDENE**

[This exchange is reprinted from *SWP Discussion Bulletin* Volume XVI, A-16, 1954.

[Goonewardene was Secretary of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International.]

1. Letter from Leslie Goonewardene to James P. Cannon

Ceylon
January 26, 1954

Dear Comrade Cannon,

I placed your letter of December 16 before the Politbureau and the Central Committee of the party and this reply is in accordance with their instructions.

At the time your letter arrived here, the CC had already adopted a resolution regarding the publication of the "Letter to All Trotskyists" in *The Militant* of November 16. I enclose a copy of the resolution. It was forwarded by us to the IS on December 22, 1953.

I would stress that this resolution was adopted only after prolonged discussion and the most earnest consideration because we could not doubt that the National Committee of the SWP would not have taken so grave a step except for the most deep-going considerations. Nevertheless, and after the further consideration we have given to the matter in the light of your enclosures, we see no reason to alter the position taken in our resolution.

It is also our considered opinion that the step taken by the U.S.A., British and Swiss majorities in setting up a Provisional Committee to summon a World Congress of the Fourth International is likely to be catastrophic to our movement as a whole. We understand the documents issued by this Provisional Committee to mean that they are working towards a separate and rival World Congress. If this should happen, the consequences are incalculable. It may well disable the world forces of Trotskyism decisively in a decisive period of world history.

However, we do not wish to leave these matters at the point of merely expressing our considered opinion about them to you. The situation itself is too grave for that. Besides, our long course of intimate collaboration, the deep respect and unqualified comradeship we have always had towards you and your colleagues, and the impression that our regard for the National Committee of the SWP is not wholly unreturned, persuade us to the belief that our directly addressing you on these matters may yet serve the purpose of preventing the permanent breach in World Trotskyism's forces which seems now to loom before us.

We address you on the footing that we have not yet taken a position on the political issues which have arisen. We have been awaiting sufficient material and have also to complete a full discussion before we take a position on those issues. But we address you also on the footing that the political differences which exist, however deepgoing they may be, require first of all to be thrashed out within our movement and fought out at the coming World Congress.

May we appeal to you even at this stage to stay the course taken of attacking publicly the very motivation of the duly elected official World Centre of the International. May we also appeal to you to use your every effort and influence with those concerned to prevent them heading towards a separate Congress in rivalry and hostility to the officially planned Congress. May we appeal to you further to cooperate in making the officially planned World Congress as fully representative as possible of the various trends in our movement so that all these trends can join together in discussion of all issues with a view to a considered and democratic decision. In particular, may we earnestly plead with you to persuade the U.S.A., British and Swiss majorities, and those associated with them elsewhere in the working of the Provisional Committee to come into the officially planned Congress and to fight the battle there, thus rendering a full-scale battle on those issues, with all sides drawn up in full force and array, possible at the official World Congress.

We would add that if there is any manner in which our good offices can serve in ensuring a single World Congress in which the entire forces of World Trotskyism will be represented, we would be only too happy to make ourselves available in that behalf. We believe that coming together for discussion and democratic decision in a single World Congress is the only way to ensure that those who have marched shoulder to shoulder so long and in such difficult circumstances shall continue to march shoulder to shoulder in order to take the fullest advantage of the new and unprecedented opportunities which are opening up on a world scale for Trotskyism, its programme, its ideas and its organizations. It seems to us from the latest communications of the IEC that it should be possible to arrange for representation at the Congress to be accorded to all Trotskyist tendencies which are ready to come in on the basis of willingness to accept the Congress decisions. May we therefore ask you what you have to say thereon and whether there is any manner in which we can assist to bring into the World Congress comrades and organizations whom the movement has so long held in the highest comradeship, to whom the movement owes so deep a debt, and whom the FI can ill afford to lose.

In respect of your inquiry about the Ceylon party, we fear that you have been misinformed about the relations with the IS of the group which split away. We enclose a statement released by us in regard to that matter, which is in the form of a reply to certain statements in *La Verite*.

As far as we know, the pro-Stalinist faction has gone out of the party completely. The party is united as never before, ideologically and organizationally; is getting again

into fighting trim, is studying hard and working hard; and is in no mood to tolerate anything pro-Stalinist within its ranks, either open or covert. We are being assisted in our recovery from the faction fight and split by dissensions in both wings of local Stalinism, dissensions which have broken out into the open recently. I think we can say that, although we do not under-estimate the difficulties

of the fight against Stalinism, we are confident of victory against them in the struggle for our continued leadership of the mass movement in Ceylon.

Yours fraternally,
Leslie Goonewardene
Secretary

2. Letter from James P. Cannon to Leslie Goonewardene

Los Angeles, Calif.
February 23, 1954

Leslie Goonewardene
Secretary, Lanka Sama Samaja Party
Colombo, Ceylon

Dear Comrade Goonewardene:

This is in answer to your letter of January 26, concerning the crisis in our international movement, which we take as an offer to cooperate with the SWP in organizational measures looking toward its solution.

As far as we are able to judge, there is a sound basis for such cooperation in all fields. We study your press attentively, and do not see any serious differences between your line and ours on the most important questions of principle, as well as in their application in analysis and political action on the most important events of the day. The two parties speak the same language on the struggle of the workers and colonial peoples against imperialism and its war program; and also on the concrete struggle against Stalinism and the analysis of its policy, as it has unfolded in the events since the death of Stalin.

This political collaboration in developing the general external work of our international movement—a collaboration long ago established in practice—really ought to be extended to internal affairs. We take particular note of the statement in your letter that the Lanka Sama Samaja Party "is in no mood to tolerate anything pro-Stalinist within its ranks, either open or covert." This attitude coincides entirely with that of the leadership of the SWP in its own internal policy. But we cannot stop there. As internationalists, it is obligatory that we take the same attitude toward open or covert manifestations of Stalinist conciliationism *in other parties, and in the international movement generally.*

This is, in fact, the touchstone of internationalism in the present crisis.

Trotsky laid down this principle in the first formative period of our international movement. In a circular letter of that time (December 22, 1930) he wrote: "For a Marxist, internationalism consists, first of all, of the active participation of every section in the life of the other sections. Only under these conditions is there any sense in calling an International Conference later on." I cite this quotation as a "text" and introduction to the following explanation of our position.

* * *

A realistic approach to the present crisis must take

as its point of departure the recognition that the Fourth International is no longer a politically homogeneous organization. The issues of the factional struggle are matters of principle which put the Trotskyist movement squarely before the question: To be or not to be. The attempt to revise the accepted Trotskyist analysis of the nature of Stalinism and the Lenin-Trotsky theory of the party, and thereby in effect, to deprive the Trotskyist parties and the Fourth International as a whole of any historical justification for independent existence, is at the bottom of the present crisis in our international movement. In connection with this as a highly important, although subordinate issue, matters of organizational principle—not merely procedure, but principle—are also involved.

There is no way to get around the fact that we are up against a revisionist tendency which extends from basic theory to political action and organizational practice. We have not imagined this tendency or invented it; we simply recognize the reality. We have become convinced of this reality only after the most thorough deliberation and consideration of the trend of the Pablo faction, as we have seen it manifested in its concrete actions as well as in its crafty theoretical formulations and omissions. We have declared open war on this tendency because we know that it can lead to nothing else but the destruction of our movement; and because we believe that silence on our part would be a betrayal of our highest duty: that is, our duty to the international movement.

The fight on national grounds in the SWP is already finished, and the victory of orthodox Trotskyism is definitive. The Pablo faction which threatened the existence of the SWP, has been isolated and reduced to a splinter of a split. The party is bounding forward with the development of its agitational struggle against the raging reaction in this country—which in reality represents incipient fascism in its specific American form—with firmly united ranks and high morale. If we continue to preoccupy ourselves with the struggle against Pabloism, it is not from national considerations, for such considerations no longer have any urgency.

* * *

Our attention in the ideological struggle has shifted almost entirely to the international field. We are fighting now in fulfillment of the highest duty and obligation which we undertook when we came to Trotsky and the Russian Opposition 25 years ago. That is the obligation to put international considerations first of all and above all; to concern ourselves with the affairs of the international

movement and its affiliated parties; help them in every way we can; to give them the benefit of our considered opinions, and to seek in return their advice and counsel in the solution of our own problems. *International collaboration is the first principle of internationalism.* We learned that from Trotsky. We believe it, and we are acting according to our belief.

Our international struggle against the new revisionism is not simply a literary affair of the leadership, or a section of the leadership. The party is constantly informed and consulted about every step we take; and the entire membership, in all branches and locals, are completely involved in the discussion. Our membership is experiencing in this international struggle, a new, rich period of ideological life, in preparation for future tests of our doctrine in action in the class struggle. Just as our party was created, in the first place, in the fires of a great ideological battle over international questions of major importance, so it is today being re-shaped and re-educated in another battle of the same order.

The new, young cadres of the party, who have been recruited in the course of our agitational work on elementary issues of the class struggle in this country, are being introduced to the great issues which unify our party with co-thinkers throughout the world. They are learning, in the course of this intense discussion, the indissoluble connection between the policy of the party on the simplest questions of the national struggle and the world program. We fervently hope that the membership of the other national Trotskyist parties—not merely the leading staffs, but the entire rank and file of the organizations—are being similarly informed and involved in the present international discussion. Only in that way will they re-learn and fully assimilate the full meaning of our doctrine, and emerge from the experience as real Trotskyists who have once again verified their doctrines in a test of struggle.

* * *

We have set forth our opinions in the Letter of our 25th Anniversary Plenum to all Trotskyists throughout the world; in our criticism of the draft resolution on "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism" adopted by the same Plenum; and in numerous articles amplifying and concretizing the basic position outlined in these documents. More of the same will follow.

In the course of the open struggle we have already found basic agreement with a large majority of the oldest and the most tested cadres of Trotskyism on the international field. We expect to find agreement with all the real Trotskyists in the further course of the discussion, which is only now beginning to unfold in full scope.

Although not organizationally affiliated with the *International Committee of the Fourth International* set up by the French, British, Swiss and New Zealand sections—since the legal right of international affiliation is denied to us by the Voorhis Law—we are in full solidarity with this International Committee and fully support its stated aims, while retaining, naturally, the right to offer this committee suggestions as to its course.

The International Committee of the Fourth International, as we understand it, is the political and organizing center of the Trotskyist faction in the international movement. In this respect, it is similar in its function and aims

to the International Left Opposition organized by Trotsky in his time. In another respect it is different. The International Left Opposition had to struggle as a small minority for the *reform* of an organization whose cadres were already in an advanced stage of degeneration. The International Committee of the Fourth International begins with the real relation of forces in its favor in a movement whose main cadres remain basically sound and revolutionary. Its stated objectives are not the "reform" of a movement which needs no reformation, but rather the reaffirmation of the accepted program and the removal of a usurping secretarial apparatus by administrative action.

Pablo and his personal circle have set themselves up as an autonomous, uncontrolled and irremovable body, standing above the living movement represented by the national sections and outside their control. Such a regime is, in general, acceptable only to those sections without experience, definite opinions, self-confidence or qualified leadership of their own, who implicitly regard "the International" as a substitute for real national parties, and look to Paris for instructions on all things great and small. Such a regime unfailingly runs up against the opposition of those sections which have firm cadres and democratically selected leaders who do some thinking for themselves, and rightfully consider themselves a part of the international leadership, sharing in its rights as well as in its responsibilities. This has already happened, and could not fail to happen—first in the French section, then in the Swiss, English, New Zealand and Chinese sections, and then in the SWP. The open revolt of the Canadian section is taking place right now. Others will follow.

The International Committee of the Fourth International is organizing the revolt against the revisionist usurpers. According to the accepted rules of democratic centralism this Committee has full right to exist and carry on its work without threats or reprisals designed to throttle the discussion which this committee is leading in the furtherance of its declared program. Factional organizations in national parties are "abnormal" manifestations, since every serious factional struggle entails the danger of a split. Nevertheless, our movement has never prohibited factions, for it has learned from the costly experience of the past that the cure is worse than the disease.

Even when the majority and minority in the SWP agreed upon a truce at the Plenum last May, the Plenum resolution specifically stated that the minority could maintain their faction if they wished to. It makes no sense to acknowledge this right in national parties and deny it on an international scale. Like the International Left Opposition, the initiating nucleus of our present movement, the International Committee exists and functions as a matter of right; and in my opinion, it should not and will not surrender this right under any threats or reprisals from any source whatever.

* * *

I grant that the publication of the Open Letter of our 25th Anniversary Plenum and the formal constitution of the International Committee of the Fourth International were, as Comrade Peng, the International Representative of the Chinese section of the Fourth International, has described them, "extraordinary measures." But there was

nothing "illegal" about them. As Peng also said, they were "revolutionary measures" imperatively dictated by an extraordinary situation.

This extraordinary situation consists in the fact—and there is no getting away from it, for it strikes everyone in the eye—that the personally-monopolized International Secretariat of Pablo has attempted, and is attempting, to impose upon the Fourth International a line of policy and political action not sanctioned by our program or by any Congress, and against the will of the great majority of the strongest Trotskyist cadres. The attempt of Pablo and his personal circle to impose this unauthorized policy, and to choke off a free discussion, by means of threats, expulsions, excommunications and other measures of Stalinist discipline, confronted the orthodox "old Trotskyists" with inescapable alternatives: to capitulate or to fight.

But precisely because they are "old Trotskyists," precisely because they learned in Trotsky's school how to stand up for their "old program" under any and all circumstances, and to grant no one the right to proscribe it, they have decided to fight. In taking part in this fight with all our strength, we are simply remaining faithful to the tradition in which we were politically raised and educated.

We know that some international comrades, primarily those who lack the experience of the old struggles in which our movement was forged, have been caught in the trap of organizational fetishism promoted by a usurping minority. But the usurpers will not catch the SWP. We had to fight our way out of such a trap in the old Comintern and we know all about it. Our procedure has nothing to do with anarchism, arbitrariness or irresponsibility in organizational affairs. Quite the contrary. We are fighting with the highest sense of responsibility, by such means as are at our disposal, to prevent the prostitution of normal organizational formalities to the service of minority rule.

* * *

In our theory and practice, organizational policy, important as it is in and of itself, flows from and is subordinate to principled positions and political aims. Without agreement on the latter, it is usually quite useless to count on consistent cooperation on the former. Political disagreement, of course, does not always necessarily exclude organizational compromises to maintain the normal functioning of the movement while disputed questions are under discussion, prior to a decision with the informed participation of the membership. As past experience shows, however, the efficacy and even the possibility of such organizational compromises are usually determined both by the extent of the differences and the good will of both sides.

Do the necessary conditions for such a compromise now prevail in the Fourth International? Or if, as we are convinced, they do not prevail, can they be imposed by the intervention of responsible organizations, such as yours, which have not yet taken a definitive position on the side of either of the contending factions? We are open to conviction on this point, and ready to consider any proposals put forward in good faith.

I feel obliged to state at the outset, however, that in my opinion the prospects for the success of your endeavor, in the given state of affairs, are not very good. At any rate, there should be no illusions of a quick solution by a

single action. Realism must compel us to recognize, that as the result of a long chain of circumstances, the Fourth International stands on the brink of a definitive split. *The most that could be realistically hoped for now is that a counter-process might be set into motion.* Maneuvers along this line will do no good; but honest proposals, which conform to the realities of the situation, can count on our cooperation.

Our willingness to encourage any sincere effort in this direction even at this late hour, must also be taken together with the distinct understanding that our political position cannot be compromised; and that the necessary discussion, now just at its beginning, cannot be summarily shut off or stifled by any administrative decisions on the part of anybody. Eventual decision by a Congress must come *after* the discussion, not *before* it.

* * *

From an organizational standpoint, the situation, as we see it at present, is as follows: A factional struggle which concerns questions of political program and policy, as well as organizational conceptions and procedures, is in full swing throughout the international movement. This factional struggle has already resulted in formal splits in the French and British sections of the Fourth International and in the SWP (I leave aside for the moment the split in the LSSP, which I will discuss separately.)

The Pablo faction, which found itself in the minority in each of the three national organizations above mentioned, deliberately provoked these splits in order to deprive the majorities of their legal rights, and is now working deliberately to make the split universal. In pursuit of this aim, this faction is resorting to arbitrary expulsions, excommunications, and removals of all opponents in order to establish a fake majority at a rump Congress.

* * *

This formal *international* split, however, has not yet been fully consummated, and this brings us to the main point in your letter: Does the possibility still exist, as your letter states it, "of preventing the permanent breach." That depends not only on your party and ours, between whom there is neither the political ground nor the will for any serious conflict, to say nothing of a split, but also on the Pabloites. Their disposition, in turn, may possibly be regulated to a certain extent by the position which your party and others take in the next period.

The Pabloite faction at present lacks the forces and the support to effect a "disabling" split, that is, a split which would fatally disrupt the Fourth International and prepare the way for its dissolution, whatever their disposition may be in this regard. One has only to look at the lineup of forces to recognize that. Their projected "Fourth Congress," to be held without the participation of the majority of the strongest and most important sections, is a foredoomed fiasco, since these "expelled" sections are internationally organized and alert, and can neither be dispersed nor by-passed.

The consciousness of their weakness in this respect is undoubtedly responsible for the maneuverist policy of the Pablo faction toward different parties and different elements at the present stage of the struggle—their brutal

ultimatum toward those who have taken a firm political position against them, and their simultaneous offers of conciliation and compromise, both political and organizational, to those who have not yet announced a definite political position in the dispute.

This two-faced maneuverism with respect to your party is indicated by their special communications to you, to which your letter makes reference. You state: "It seems to us from the latest communications of the IEC that it should be possible to arrange for representation at the Congress to be accorded to all Trotskyist tendencies which are ready to come in on the basis of willingness to accept the Congress decisions."

First of all, it must be recognized that this assurance to you is flatly contradicted by the published decisions of the recent rump plenum of the Pabloite IEC. These decisions specifically exclude from participation in their proposed rump Congress not only the French, British, Swiss and New Zealand sections, and all those who have expressed agreement with their declaration (which now includes the Chinese section and tomorrow will include Canada), but also those who may express agreement with them in the future. Their assurance to you that, nevertheless, such "expelled" sections, and those who may agree with them in the future, may somehow be represented anyway can only be regarded as a ruse designed to deceive you as to their real program.

* * *

You say: "May we therefore ask you what you have to say thereon and whether there is any manner in which we can assist to bring into the World Congress, comrades and organizations whom the movement has so long held in the highest comradeship, to whom the movement owes so deep a debt, and whom the Fourth International can ill afford to lose."

Although such an inquiry from the Pabloites, in view of their actions, could only be regarded as a ludicrous masquerade—they want nothing better than to "lose" the "old Trotskyists"—we have not the slightest doubt that you ask this question in good faith. I will answer in the same spirit, with complete frankness. The hour is late; but in my opinion, the present drift toward a definitive international split, signalized by the holding of separate Congresses, can possibly be arrested, and the definitive split prevented or delayed, on certain conditions.

It is obvious that the first prerequisite for a realistic consideration of your proposal is the unconditional cancellation of all the expulsions of genuine Trotskyist parties, beginning with the French, and the announced discontinuation of such procedures. As long as these expulsions stand formally on the books, there is no basis even to discuss the question of whether the expelled parties would participate in a common Congress with the Pabloites or not. Naturally, those concerned are not going to pay the slightest attention to their "expulsions." Neither, in my opinion, would any of them agree to appear at any Congress as convicts on parole, with special conditions attached to their participation.

These parties cannot feasibly participate in a Congress of an organization from which they have been expelled, or in which their rights are in any way infringed. And it likewise goes without saying that serious revolutionists

will reject out of hand any proposal that they participate in any Congress that is rigged against them in advance, or on any other basis than that of equal rights and full representation according to the strength and importance of their organizations.

The "special condition" now being bruited about by Germain, in his capacity as attorney and "orthodox" frontman for Pablo, that the expelled sections be required to agree in advance "to accept the Congress decisions" is based on a historical precedent absurdly inapplicable in the present conflict.

This "special condition" was, in fact, devised by us in 1940 to close the doors of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International to the Shachtmanites who had broken with the organization and betrayed its program. The Emergency Conference of 1940 had been called to put the formal seal of approval on the decisions already taken by the majority in defense of the program and the organization. The Shachtmanites simply wanted to use the Conference as a forum for another round of discussion without taking any responsibility for its decisions. The "special condition" was merely an answer to an obvious maneuver.

The present attempt to lay down the same condition to the sections united under the International Committee, has none of the justifications which prompted its first use 14 years ago. The expelled sections have neither betrayed the program nor split from the organization. They are not seeking access to a forum of discussion and have no desire to degrade a World Congress to that level. They are still members of the Fourth International and will continue to be such under all circumstances. What is required in their case is not an extension of the privilege of participating in a Congress of their own organization, with special conditions attached, but simply a restoration of their rights.

It has always been self-understood among Trotskyists that membership in their organizations presupposes an obligation on their part to respect its decisions honestly arrived at by a majority after a democratic discussion. The demand that they make special pledges in addition to such self-understood obligations, has to be brushed aside as an infantile insult, as well as a too-clever maneuver designed to deceive some members of our international movement who are not sufficiently acquainted with its practices and history.

* * *

The second prerequisite, to prevent, or at least to delay, a definitive international split, is for the Pablo faction to *cancel* their announced decision to hold their congress at an early date. That could only be a congress of a faction. The holding of a congress *by either side*, at the present time, would only formalize the international split. A *joint* congress, prior to adequate discussion in the national sections, the clarification of all issues in dispute and the informed decisions of all sections upon them, could be expected to yield the same results.

As I understand it, the International Committee of the Fourth International has thus far confined itself to the organization of the forces of the orthodox Trotskyist faction in the development of the international discussion. It has not yet projected an international congress; and I believe

it will refrain from doing so until the discussion is completed and all the sections—not merely the leading committees but the organizations as a whole—have had adequate time and opportunity to study and discuss the questions in dispute and make their decisions.

The Pabloite IEC, on the contrary, has simultaneously announced the exclusion of all its opponents, including ten of the elected members of the International Executive Committee, and set a date for the holding of the "Fourth Congress." These cannot be recognized as anything but deliberate actions designed, first to split the movement and then to formalize the split by a so-called Congress. In order to prevent, or at least delay, the definitive split, your first demand, therefore, should be for the postponement of this announced Congress of the Pabloite faction. The SWP, on its part, has already suggested to the International Committee of the Fourth International that it defer action on a formal Congress, and will repeat the suggestion once again.

* * *

A World Congress, if it is to have any real meaning and binding force in the present situation, must be fairly organized after a free and democratic discussion in which all the sections have had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the issues in dispute, to take positions on them, and to instruct their delegates accordingly. The World Congress must be a congress of delegates representing *organizations*, who come prepared to make *decisions*, with the authority of these organizations behind them.

Can Pablo's personal IS, or his rump IEC, from which 40 percent of the elected members have already been excluded, be trusted to organize such a fair and democratic Congress? No, that is totally excluded. It would not be realistic to suggest such trust to the expelled sections. If the elementary rules of democratic organization had not been violated by the Pabloites in the first place, there would be no splits in the several parties today, and no talk or prospect of an international split. The expelled sections would certainly require guarantees.

In my opinion, the Trotskyist faction united in the International Committee would consider proposals for a common Congress as a serious project, and not as a mere maneuver, only after substantial proof of a radical change of *organizational policy* on the part of the Pablo faction. Mere talk about such a change wouldn't do a bit of good. The test is action, as suggested above. There would have to be guarantees; and they would have to begin at the top, where all the trouble started. If and when the tangle begins to unwind at the top, a gradual straightening out of the snarls at the bottom would naturally follow.

There are certain things about which one should not jest. A World Congress of the Fourth International is far too serious a matter to maneuver with. If we recognize that, and regard the Congress with all the seriousness and responsibility which it deserves, we must recognize that the time for another Congress has not yet come. Nobody can invent a formula to work a miracle. To put hopes in an early Congress to work the miracle, before the conditions for it have been prepared, would only lead to disillusionment. I feel obligated to tell you this frankly.

Nobody will doubt your sincerity and good will when

you say: "we would add that if there is any manner in which our good offices can serve in ensuring a single World Congress in which the entire forces of world Trotskyism will be represented, we would be only too happy to make ourselves available in that behalf." If and when the time comes for a united Congress, after the conditions for it have been fully prepared in advance, your good offices can without doubt be an important factor in guaranteeing its representative, democratic character and, consequently, the authority of its decisions.

* * *

You err, however, in bringing the question of the Congress into the foreground as the central question at the present time, and in expecting more than a Congress could possibly give under present conditions and at the present stage of the struggle. This exaggerated estimate of the potentialities of a Congress at the present time, is expressed in your letter as follows: "In particular, may we earnestly plead with you to persuade the New Zealand, British and Swiss majorities, and those associated with them elsewhere in the working of the Provisional Committee to come into the officially planned Congress and to fight the battle there, thus rendering a full-scale battle on these issues, with all sides drawn up in full force and array, possible at the official World Congress."

The SWP will most certainly act as you suggest, if and when preliminary conditions are established, such as to give a reasonable assurance that the projected Congress can be a democratically representative body. But the primary function of the Congress will be to put the official seal of formal approval on decisions already made by the participating organizations on the basis of full information and adequate discussion. More than that even a well-prepared and democratically organized Congress cannot give. And since these preliminary conditions for such a Congress are not yet established, any serious program designed to "serve the purpose of preventing the permanent breach in world Trotskyism's forces which seems now to loom before us"—as you have expressed your purpose—must begin with a demand *that the Congress be postponed*.

The conflict in the Fourth International will not and cannot be decided by debates at any projected Congress. It will be decided by the democratic action of the membership of the national sections after they have discussed the matter fully and made up their minds, and instructed their delegates accordingly. That's the way the Fourth International was created in the first place, and that's the way it will be re-created and rise again this time.

* * *

In recent years the Pablo regime in the Fourth International has steadily cultivated a fetishistic conception of the powers and potentialities of congresses and committees which has no sanction in the long tradition of our movement. The Fourth International is not a Congress, or an International Executive Committee. Still less is it a subcommittee of the IEC known as the International Secretariat, or a subcommittee of the International Secretariat known as the "IS Bureau." To put the matter bluntly, but all the more correctly, none of these bodies has any real significance except as representative bodies of the

movement. When they fail to have this representative character, or lose it for one reason or another, they forfeit their powers and the right to speak and act in the name of the movement. That is the case right now with the Pabloite committee.

I know very well that such bluntly-expressed conceptions have been derided as a peculiar "American heresy." But there is nothing heretical about them at all. The movement of the Fourth International, from its inception, was built precisely around these conceptions; and every time attempts were made to depart from them they encountered the brusque repudiation of Trotsky himself. He would have nothing to do with the idea that a collection of individuals could get together in a Congress and settle everything.

All that we know about the real meaning of revolutionary internationalism was learned and re-learned in the school of Trotsky. It is necessary to return to this teaching once again. Whether we like it or not, the Fourth International is going through a crisis of reorganization, and we need a principle to steer by.

* * *

No one could justly accuse Trotsky of underestimating the importance of formal international organization, committees, etc. In the first four years of his final exile—from 1929 to 1933—he struggled consistently to give the Left Opposition a definite organizational form on an international scale. From the time of the Stalinist betrayal in Germany in 1933, his whole political activity was pointed toward the constitution of the Fourth International.

But he did not begin in either case with international conferences or congresses. He began with the work of *preparing* such gatherings beforehand, so that when they finally convened they would actually represent real organizations united on theoretical and political positions previously arrived at in free discussion. He was continuously plagued by conference fetishists with their proposals to unite the movement organizationally and settle questions which had not yet been settled beforehand. He would have nothing to do with such proposals.

Moreover, when serious differences arose within the ranks of the International Left Opposition, as they have arisen in our international movement today, his first reaction was never to rush through a conference or congress to decide the disputes there. Just the contrary. His unvarying response was to propose a postponement—even of a conference already projected—until the disputes had been clarified and a selection of forces had taken place in a previous discussion. I can give you numerous examples of that procedure.

When occasions arose—as was the case more than once—where elected committees failed to represent those who had appointed them, and departed from the program which they had been elected to defend, he promptly demanded the replacement of such bodies by others of a representative character. In the early days the International Secretariat was reorganized at least half a dozen times. The same thing was done with the International Executive Committee, in 1940.

Perhaps it is not generally known in the International that in the 1940 struggle in the SWP, the Burnham-Shachtman minority was supported by the majority of the resident IEC of the Fourth International, at that time located in

New York. (This was prior to the passing of the Voorhis Law.) Burnham and Shachtman, who had been elected as the representatives of the SWP at the Founding Congress in 1938, together with Johnson and Lebrun, from the British and Brazilian sections respectively, made up the majority. These gentlemen also referred to "the statutes" and pronounced themselves irremovable, despite the fact that they had abandoned the program of the Founding Congress on which they were elected and no longer represented the majority opinion. They still claimed the formal right to speak in the name of the Fourth International. But neither Trotsky nor the SWP would tolerate these pretensions.

The Convention of the SWP (April, 1940) paid no attention to the formalistic arguments, which were undoubtedly in their favor. The Convention declared Burnham's and Shachtman's mandates null and void and replaced them by others who had remained true to the program. In cooperation with Trotsky, and on his initiative, we then organized an Emergency Conference of the Fourth International, with only a handful of delegates from those sections which stood by the program and were able to attend, and set up a new International Executive Committee. The Shachtmanites and their supporters howled to high heaven against this revolutionary procedure. They invoked the statutes and claimed that they could be removed only by a World Congress which they, as a formal majority of the functioning IEC, would have the sole right to convene. Trotsky gave a contemptuous answer to these pretensions in the following words:

"As the French say, we must take war-time measures during a war. *This means that we must adapt the leading body of the Fourth International to the real relationship of forces in our sections.* There is more democracy in this than in the pretensions of the unremovable senators." (Emphasis added.) You can find this reference on page 164 of *In Defense of Marxism*.

If one wishes to condemn the SWP for its undoubted violation of strict organizational formalities in the present crisis, he can strengthen his case by citing this proof that we acted rather irregularly in a similar situation once before. We would have to plead guilty to this indictment too. But at the same time, we would offer in our defense the fact—which hardly anyone today would deny—that the resolute action taken at that time on the initiative of Trotsky, rearranged the leadership of the Fourth International in accordance with the real relation of forces, saved the continuity of functioning of the Fourth International, and protected its program against the revisionists of that time. Our present action has the same purpose, and no other.

There is still another instance in the history of the Fourth International of a similar action to break through formalities in order to protect the program and assure the leadership in accordance with the real relation of forces. Once again, after Trotsky's death, when the IEC elected by the Emergency Conference in 1940, departed from the program and defaulted in the functions assigned to it by the Conference through the defection of Logan and the German retrogressionists (IKD), a new body was improvised to carry on the work until the Second Congress in 1948. This improvised body, consisting of the European Secretariat plus some additions, directed the international work without statutory authority from 1945 until

the World Congress in 1948. The SWP supported this improvised committee, not because of its formal authority—which, strictly speaking, it did not have—but because of its orthodox stand against the revisionists of that time, a consideration which stood higher in our eyes.

* * *

I don't believe that in any of the cases cited, did the defaulting committees so flagrantly violate the trust that had been given to them, or so grossly and bureaucratically abuse their official powers, as have Pablo and his personal circle. If the orthodox Trotskyists were to recognize organizational formalities as the highest law, and agree to govern themselves by the rules laid down by the usurpers, the wrong would have no remedy. The irremovable secretary could maintain himself in office until he finished his destructive work, and even be certified in this right by a Congress, by the simple expedient of expelling his opponents beforehand.

That is precisely what would have happened if the SWP had remained silent, and if the revolting sections of orthodox Trotskyists had not organized their struggle under the International Committee. It is a great mistake to separate the Open Letter of the SWP and the Declaration of the International Committee from their contextual circumstances. In the circumstances they were *political actions* of the highest order. They may be approved or condemned on that ground; but it only adds confusion and aids those who profit by confusion, to judge them purely and simply by an organizational yardstick.

A crisis involving questions of program and policy has never yet been solved by putting organizational considerations first. The history of the movement is saturated with proofs of the relentless operation of this law of revolutionary politics. The case of Abern in the 1940 struggle comes immediately to mind as an illustration, carried out to its tragic denouement. But the most tragic illustration of all is that of the political oppositionists in the Russian Communist Party and the Comintern, who sought to outwit the Stalinists by submitting to their formal disciplinary rules. By that, they only facilitated the destructive work of the Stalinist revisionists; and the fetishists of formal discipline themselves, all of them without exception, ended up as wretched capitulators.

* * *

I must tell you frankly that I think the LSSP entered on a dangerous path when it adopted its resolution condemning the publication of our Open Letter, in advance of taking a position on the political questions in dispute. Unless the LSSP radically changes the political line expounded in its press, it will be compelled to recognize—and that in the very near future—that its line is contrary to the line of the Pabloites and very near to, if not identical with, the line of the SWP. Meantime, your action gave objective political support to the Pabloites and counted more in their favor than all the stereotyped resolutions of the Pabloite handraisers.

I have the definite impression that your action was motivated by the conception that the formal unity of the international movement is the most important consideration at the moment, and by your sincere desire to main-

tain this unity. If my impression is correct, your action contained a double error. Formal unity is not our first, nor even our second, principle; it is not the most important question in the present situation; and your action did not serve the cause of unity anyhow.

The first concern of Trotskyists always has been, and should be now, the defense of our doctrine. That is the first principle. The second principle, giving life to the first, is the protection of the historically-created cadres against any attempt to disrupt or disperse them. At the best, formal unity stands third in the order of importance.

The cadres of the "old Trotskyists" represent the accumulated capital of the long struggle. *They are the carriers of the doctrine*, the sole human instruments now available to bring our doctrine—the element of socialist consciousness—into the mass movement. The Pablo camarilla set out deliberately to disrupt these cadres, one by one, in one country after another. And we set out, no less deliberately—after too long a delay—to defend the cadres against this perfidious attack. Our sense of responsibility to the international movement imperatively required us to do so. Revolutionary cadres are not indestructible. The tragic experience of the Comintern taught us that.

* * *

Have you read the account of the struggle in France in the Bulletin of the International Committee? That is something to make one's blood boil. The French Majority have stood up for two years against unimaginable bureaucratic injustices, manipulations and intrigues, and have shown their revolutionary calibre in the test of the French General Strike. But if they had been allowed to remain in isolation much longer, to fight alone without international connections or support, they could hardly have failed to suffer discouragement and demoralization. The first letter in the Trotskyist alphabet says that no national party can stand alone, and sustain a correct revolutionary policy in this epoch, without international collaboration and support.

The cadres of British Trotskyism, so painfully assembled in long years of experience, under the terrible handicap of inadequate and unworthy leadership for so long a time, were marked for attack in the summer of 1953. We saw this incredible operation develop step by step, like a series of irrational actions in a nightmare world. But it was all too real. The British section of the Fourth International would be a shambles today if the leading cadres had been abandoned, and left without international support against the treacherously deliberate campaign to disrupt them.

The letter which Comrade Peng addressed to me, published in the February, 1954 Discussion Bulletin of the SWP (No. A-15), is one of the most devastating, and at the same time one of the most poignant, documents in the history of our movement. Here is a heroic section of the Fourth International, with 25 years of experience in a struggle which has cost them many victims. This cadre, by rights, should be estimated as one of the greatest treasures of our international movement, the pledge of its future in the Orient. Our Chinese cadre should by all means have been encouraged, nurtured and assisted in every comradely way.

Instead of that, we have seen them hounded, persecuted and derided as "fugitives from a revolution." The SWP leadership felt very deeply and bitterly about the abominable mistreatment of the Chinese comrades. We felt that we had kept silent about this scandal too long, especially after we learned that Peng's "Open Letter to Mao," and the "Appeal of the Five" against the murder of their comrades inside China, had been submitted to the International Secretariat last May and were never distributed to the national organizations. These documents, of such great political urgency and historical importance, were only published in October—five months later—when *The Militant* finally received copies by independent means.

Most alarming of all to us, were the repeated reports we had direct from Hong Kong that the cadre was stagnating without perspectives, feeling isolated and helpless in the international movement, and appealing to the SWP for aid. Peng's letter confirms the reports of the comrades in Hong Kong that the organization "was more and more approaching the edge of disintegration." He further states that since the publication of the SWP Letter, "they have recovered their original confidence." I consider this alone a sufficient justification of the actions which have been taken by the SWP and the International Committee to rally and unite the real cadres of international Trotskyism.

* * *

The formal unity of the international movement is important. There is no doubt about that. But formal unity has no real meaning, and is not worth a cent, if it represents a fictitious legal form to cover the actual disintegration and demoralization of the old cadres. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

But even from the standpoint of preserving the formal unity of the international movement, your resolution had a contrary effect to that which you intended. The real Pabloites—that is, the conscious revisionists and liquidators—after all, don't represent very numerous forces. They are ready for any adventure, as we have already seen in France, England and the United States; but there is not much that they can do by themselves. Least of all could they take the road of a definitive international split at the present time. For that, they need the cover and support of orthodox elements and organizations whose support can be attracted on formal organizational grounds and other considerations of a secondary order.

Germain, the only one of the Paris group who retains any standing among the orthodox Trotskyists, renders that service to them in Europe; and, unfortunately, his maneuvering is not entirely innocent. Your resolution, despite your intentions, had the same effect. It emboldened the Pabloites to take further organizational measures of a disruptive character in the direction of a definitive international split. They would hardly have had the courage to take these actions if they had not been able to count on your support, as stated in your resolution.

To the extent that your resolution may have been designed to stop, or to slow down, a drive toward split from the other side, it was also misdirected. From the very start, the forces united in the International Committee did not set an international split as their goal. They were sure they could win a big majority in a fair, democratic

discussion and saw no need of a split. But at the same time, they began with a resolute determination to fight without compromise to reinstate the basic program, and to stop the disruption of the cadres, and to permit no considerations of a secondary character to cut across this line of principle.

We have no reason to doubt that the real movement of world Trotskyism, represented by its cadres, will be united on this basis in any case, and that the revisionists will be isolated and rendered powerless to disrupt this unity. All doubts on this score will be settled when the orthodox Trotskyist national organizations decide to put first things first, and to align themselves in the factional struggle with those whom they agree with, or stand nearest to, on the most important questions.

Trotsky said many times that the real political position of any group or party is determined by its international alignments, even more than by its resolutions. Internationalism is the test and guiding line of every national group or party in the modern epoch. And the touchstone of internationalism is international alignment. So taught Trotsky.

* * *

The SWP is in favor of the unity of all Trotskyists in one faction, as a stage on the road to the re-unification of the Fourth International, on two fundamental points, as stated in its Open Letter of its 25th Anniversary Plenum: The reaffirmation of the Orthodox Trotskyist program, and the recognition that the historically-created cadres are the human forces upon which we must build. The Trotskyist faction of the Fourth International does not require agreement on tactical questions or other questions of secondary order, including questions of procedure in the factional struggle. Differences on these questions are not only permissible and subject to discussion. Such differences cannot be prevented, and it would be stupid to proscribe them.

But in order to discuss such questions profitably, and to settle them either by agreement or majority vote, it is necessary first to establish the principled framework within which the proposals can be discussed, and to agree upon the aims they are designed to serve. Discipline is a problem of tenth-rate importance for real Trotskyists, and is taken as a matter of course, as long as the things which unite them are more important than the things which divide them. When this condition prevails, they advocate and observe an iron discipline. When this condition is lacking, the attempt to enforce conformity by police measures becomes a horrible caricature of discipline, capable of producing nothing but splits. There is plenty of experience to convince us of that, and the Pablo regime has provided additional proof.

For the reasons given we have started our struggle to unite in one faction only those who are in principled agreement, and will continue along the same line, expecting and allowing for differences on tactical and organizational questions. The Pablo faction on the other hand, is attempting to gather up anybody and everybody, the orthodox and the revisionists, as well as those who don't recognize the differences, as long as they agree to certain organizational rules laid down by the Pablo faction, or interpreted by them as they see fit. The difference

between the two factions, as far as methods are concerned, is the difference between principled politics and unprincipled combinationism.

* * *

Since there are no discernible differences on the most important questions between us and the LSSP, we expect to find agreement with you for cooperation as members of the same faction. We do not see how this cooperation can be avoided. A decision to that effect by your party would virtually settle all doubts of the victory of orthodoxy in the internal struggle in the international movement. It would also operate powerfully to protect the formal unity of the movement in two ways: First, it would be a warning to the Pabloites that any adventure with a formal split would be doomed to destruction. Second, it would bring to bear the influence of your party for moderation, responsibility and restraint within the councils of the orthodox faction.

* * *

Our comments on the pro-Stalinist split in the LSSP were not based on misinformation, as your letter suggests, but rather on deductions from the role played by Pablo in France, England and the United States, which we knew very well. We, like all the other parties in the international movement, were kept in the dark while the crisis in your party was unfolding. The first information we received about the full seriousness of the pro-Stalinist disruption in the LSSP was contained in press dispatches in the New York papers last October, on the eve of our 25th Anniversary Plenum. These dispatches told of a split at your Congress and reported that a third of the delegates had demanded uncritical recognition of the leadership of the Soviet bureaucracy before leaving the Congress. We also heard that the Silva group had quoted Pablo and Clarke at your Congress. Prior to that, we had heard only rumors of some kind of a pro-Stalinist tendency in your ranks and had assumed that it was an isolated group of no great importance.

We could not separate the developments in your party from similar manifestations in our own ranks, which had been cultivated and encouraged by the Pabloites from the beginning—although they avoided any explicit pro-Stalinist formulations themselves, and conveniently disavowed their factional supporters in Seattle when they carried the Pabloite revelation to its logical conclusion and openly went over to the Stalinists.

We received no documents, no official information whatever, from the International Secretariat while the pro-Stalinist faction in the LSSP was building up its struggle toward the split. At the same time, Pablo tried to lull us to sleep, and to assure us that our apprehensions about the tendency toward Stalinist conciliationism in the SWP were unfounded, and contrary to the general trend in the international movement. He actually wrote to Manuel, under date of March 23, 1953:

"Since the Old Man's death up to now we have not had to deal in the world movement with pro-Stalinist tendencies (I don't speak of individuals here and there) who have capitulated or wanted to capitulate to Stalinism, but on

the contrary with tendencies which have gravely erred in the opposite sense. . . . It is there that the principal danger lies, and there is still the danger today against which we have effectively fought. All those who have quit us have not gone to the Stalinists but to the reaction and have become both anti-Stalinists and fierce anti-communists."

In the light of the actual situation in your party at that time—which was known to him but unknown to us—this statement can be considered as nothing but deliberate deception. I must say, to our credit, that we did not take this reassurance for good coin as far as the SWP was concerned. We campaigned against Stalinist conciliationism as an alien tendency in our ranks, and thereby protected the party from a disabling split on that issue. When the Seattle Pabloites openly went over to Stalinism, they gave the party members all the confirmation they needed of our warning, and put an end to all possible further recruitment into the Pabloite faction in the SWP.

* * *

The International Secretariat's letters disavowing the pro-Stalinist faction in the LSSP, after the latter had dispensed with hypocritical formulations and unfolded its real pro-Stalinist program, does not convince us that this faction was not instigated and encouraged, directly or indirectly, in the first place. It is simply inconceivable that 8 out of 17 members of your Central Committee, just one short of a majority, could submit a pro-Stalinist resolution unless a favorable atmosphere had been previously created in the international movement; and if it had not received some direct or indirect encouragement to begin the struggle.

It goes without saying, that no one can propose an unambiguous pro-Stalinist policy in any section of our movement, raised and educated in the doctrine of Trotskyism, with any hope of success. The Seattle Pabloites recognized this when they accompanied their open avowal of Stalinism with a formal withdrawal from the party. The Open Letter of the SWP stated correctly that Pablo's method is to introduce Stalinist conciliationism in graduated doses; to maneuver the movement in that direction step by step; and to accompany the maneuver with disruptive assaults on the orthodox Trotskyist cadres by instigating factional opposition.

That's the way the game was worked in France, then in the United States, and after that in England. Now we have the testimony of the Chinese that the same perfidious operation was attempted there by offering the Chinese student in Paris the "support" of "our International" in a factional struggle to overthrow the Chinese leadership. (See the Letter of S.T. Peng in the *SWP Discussion Bulletin* No. A-15, February, 1954, page 10.)

From our knowledge of Pablo's real intentions, as they have been revealed by his devious and treacherous maneuvers to disrupt the cadres in other parties, we came to the logical conclusion that he was playing the same game in the LSSP. And we still think that is the case. However, the open defection of the Silva faction will not put an end to these maneuvers. It is not convenient for Pablo to engage in an open conflict with your leadership at the present moment. His hands are quite fully occupied, for the time being, with the revolt of other sections organized

under the International Committee, and he badly needs the organizational support of the LSSP on any basis that it can be secured. But if he could succeed in breaking up the orthodox cadres in other parties, the LSSP could be the next easy target at any chosen time.

* * *

In this letter I have placed your international obligations as of first importance in determining your policy in the present struggle. But this is not meant to suggest that you should sacrifice the interests of the LSSP to the higher interests of the international movement as a whole. In fact, the two cannot be separated. The future of the LSSP, as a Trotskyist organization, also depends on the victory of the Trotskyist faction in the international struggle.

The LSSP—more than any other party, I venture to say—requires an international leadership which will be a source of strength and support to its Trotskyist ortho-

doxy—the sole condition for its survival and eventual victory—rather than an organizing center of creeping liquidationism and disruption. If, as I strongly suspect, you have a secret Pablo faction in your midst, its present tactics in Ceylon, as in Canada, will be to subordinate the political discussion and political issues to the single issue of organizational formality, until the international split is completed with your support.

The LSSP would then be the next place for the secret Pablo faction to come into the open with a disruptive attack against the leadership—in the name of "our International." Such an eventuality cannot be averted by diplomatic maneuvers, but only by an action. The adoption of a firm position by the leadership on the issues of principle, and a corresponding alignment in the international factional struggle, would be the surest way to protect the unity of your party against future attacks.

Yours fraternally,
James P. Cannon

SECTION XVII: THE STRUGGLE OVER THE "FOURTH WORLD CONGRESS"

[During this period, the International Committee did its utmost to convince the wavering elements to break with Pablo. The most important of these was the Lanka Sama Samaja party of Ceylon which called for removal of all disciplinary measures against supporters of the International Committee and for postponement of the "Fourth World Congress." This period ended with the holding of the "Fourth World Congress" under Pablo's aegis.

[This proved to be a pyrrhic "victory" for Pablo, however. The Ceylonese section, followed a little later by

Ernest Germain, began to differentiate themselves from some of his more extreme positions. Major amendments proposed by the Ceylonese delegates to "Rise and Decline of Stalinism" were passed. The Pablo faction was dealt a severe blow when some of his closest associates—George Clarke (United States), Michelle Mestre (France), John Lawrence (England), and Murray Dowson (Canada)—walked out of the Congress. Mestre and Lawrence joined the Communist parties of their respective countries almost immediately thereafter.]

1. *Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs*

Los Angeles, Calif.
April 13, 1954

New York

Dear Farrell:

I received your letter of April 9, enclosing the proofs of your magazine article. Over the weekend, I had a chance to discuss the question again with Tom and Murry.

The more I think about it the more I am convinced that we should now pull up short and deliberate over tactics in the next stage of the international fight. Factional excesses are more or less unavoidable in every serious struggle, but there is always a danger of overdoing this business and risking an adverse reaction. The problem is to stand a little above the fight and keep a

general, overall view of the struggle, so as not to be carried along too far by the momentum of our own factionalism.

We ought to remind ourselves that it is now five months since the Plenum, the split, and the beginning of the public struggle on the international field. We cannot proceed indefinitely in the same way and at the same pace, as though the fight had just begun. As a matter of fact, the fight is long since finished on national grounds, and the internal struggle in the international movement is about three-fourths finished. The struggle against Pabloism becomes less and less an internal factional struggle and more and more an ideological and political struggle between conflicting tendencies which have grown farther apart, and which, in the main, are already functioning in separate organizations.

In such circumstances, the hustle-bustle and tension, inseparable from a factional struggle in a common organization, when the majority is not yet determined, is something like an artificial fever. Questions of "regime," internal organizational methods, etc., become of diminishing interest, since in the essence of the matter neither side is bound in any way by the methods of the other.

In my opinion we should now eliminate all discussion of the organization question, including the question of the Congress, and all related questions of the regime and the internal affairs of the Fourth International, from the public press. Even in the internal bulletins, we should eliminate repetitions and re-statements of our indictment on these questions, and refer to them only when some concrete question arises—as in the case of the correspondence with Ceylon.

This applies also to the question of entrism. There should be no further public discussion of this question as such. Even in internal discussion of this question, the most carefully worked-out tactical formulations and reservations must be resorted to, in order not to jeopardize the work of those sections which are obliged by circumstances to apply the entry tactic.

The entry question, as a question of *tactics*, is a fit subject for discussion only among genuine Trotskyists. Between us and the Pabloites, what is really involved in the issue of "entrism" is not a tactical question, but the Lenin-Trotsky theory of the vanguard party. That is the way we should present it in the future and then, as a rule, only in broad general terms, not concretely with reference to the tactics of one party or another.

The public ideological and political fight against revisionism should be continued—but in a somewhat different form. It should no longer present the public appearance of a campaign against "Pablo," with Pablo's name in the headline of every article we write. This can impress the average reader as an exotic business. We will never be able to get the American workers excited about it.

Our polemical articles along this line in the future should take the form of general statements of our position, with occasional sideswipes and references to the Pabloite heresy, rather than emphasizing the name of Pablo in the titles, beginnings and ends of the articles. Murry tells a story about a contact reached in our current campaign against McCarthyism, who said: "I think I know who McCarthy is, but I can't figure out who this guy Pablo is."

The struggle against revisionism should be completely subordinated also in *volume* to our broader agitation on McCarthyism, the economic situation, the war threat, Stalinism and the labor bureaucracy. The Winter Number of the Fourth International, with three big slabs on Pabloism dominating the issue, can perhaps be justified by the technical difficulties and delays which caused the material to pile up. But by no means should this issue set the pattern. One article per issue ought to be enough on this theme in the future. Even in the current issue, I think it was a mistake to eliminate a survey of the economic situation to make room for Pablo.

The general reader of our press is not much interested in the organizational grievances of one side or the other, but only in what each side stands for and in what it is doing in the broader field of principle and politics. I

don't think the Shachtmanites ever gained any recruits since the 1940 split by their public complaints against our organizational methods. Those few whom they got after the split were attracted mainly by their criticism of our policy. Our recruits were attracted by our policy and still more by what we were doing about it. If organizational complaints are a losing game even for a seceding minority, they are still less valuable for a consolidated majority.

The Cochranites, of course, made a mistake by precipitately dropping their polemics against us, since a seceding minority has to give some public justification for its separate existence. But if we are not careful, the continued preoccupation of our press with organizational complaints against the Pabloite regime can boomerang against us and help the Cochranites to gain some sympathy as the more constructive, non-factional group. I imagine that some sympathizers of the movement might say to themselves: The Cochranites were a small minority; the SWP threw them out five or six months ago. What in the hell are they still kicking about?

When we began our struggle against Stalinism in 1928 our position was quite different. We were then a very small minority, bureaucratically expelled, and could appear justified in howling about our grievances in the first stage after the split. There was a still more important difference: At that time the members of the CP and its periphery were virtually the sole audience to which we addressed ourselves and from which we had to recruit our original cadres. In these circumstances, our factional struggle from 1928 to 1933 had the element of realism, even though we were an expelled faction, and it yielded the needed results.

But after the formal break with the Comintern in 1933, the struggle took a different form in two respects. First, we addressed ourselves to a different audience of newly awakened militants outside the Stalinist periphery with our slogan of a new party. Second, we shifted our line of attack on the Stalinists almost entirely to their policy. Their "regime" was no longer of much interest to us since we did not belong to their organization and were not seeking admission.

I have been frequently amused by the fact that the Shachtmanites never quite caught up with this decisive turn in the method of struggle against Stalinism. To this day, they still criticize the regime in the CP, which is not their business, whenever they take a breather from complaining about the regime in the SWP, which properly speaking, is also no concern of theirs, and still less any concern of radical workers outside any party.

On the international field, as far as organizational questions are concerned, we have already stated our case, if indeed, we have not overstated it. It is worth noting, however, that the line-up has taken place everywhere on the political issues. Even those sections such as the North-erners, who were first caught in the trap of organizational fetishism, have realigned themselves along political lines. That, I believe, will eventually be the rule everywhere.

We have stated our position on the Congress question in the letter to Ceylon. We should stand pat on that and say no more. The next move is up to the Pabloites. We

can wait calmly for that, because they are bound to lose either way they answer. If they decide to go ahead with their rump Congress, that will cut the one thin thread that still connects them with the orthodox Trotskyists. The orthodox will then begin a preparatory discussion among themselves and the drafting of documents for their own Congress. If the Pabloites decide on a postponement, they will thereby surrender their claim to be the central authority with the right to decide everything. We will then simply insist that it be a real postponement until the issues are fully discussed in the sections and they have taken a position based on full information. That

position has also been stated in advance in the letter to Ceylon.

It would be risky to predict what the Pabloites will do. Adventurers, cut off from any real organizational base anywhere, are capable of jumping in any direction or simply of collapsing. They will come to this eventually, in any case. But what they do, and how they do it, is their own affair. We don't need to worry about it.

Fraternally,
J.P. Cannon

2. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs

Los Angeles, Calif.
April 24, 1954

New York

Dear Farrell:

RE: THE APRIL 9 MEETING OF THE PABLOITE I.S.

I received your letters of April 20 and 21 with the enclosed material from Ceylon and the Pabloite IS. It is quite clear now that relations between the Trotskyists and the Pabloites are entering a new and final stage. The announced refusal of the Pabloite IS to postpone their Congress signifies their determination to formalize the split on an international scale. That is their affair; there is nothing for us to do about it, but to recognize the fact and proceed from there.

Our position on the Congress has been stated in the letter to Ceylon and made known to the international movement by its publication in the Internal Bulletin. We have nothing to add or detract from that. The postponement of the Congress was stated there as the prerequisite to arrest the trend toward a definitive international split and, possibly, to set a counter-process into motion. The Pabloite IS circular of April 9 flatly rejects the postponement.

This bars further negotiation, since there is no agreed-upon common ground to begin with. Any discussion or negotiation over the composition of a commission to decide representation, or any other organizational and technical details of the Pabloite Congress, are a family affair of the Pabloite faction. We have nothing to say and nothing to offer in this respect. It is not our business.

For us to become involved in any way in negotiations about these technical matters of the Pabloite Congress would not be simply a stupid organizational mistake, but a political crime. Such procedure would debase the great struggle for political principle into a petty game of organizational maneuver, at the moment when the Pabloites are adapting themselves to Stalinism more grossly and more treacherously than ever. This is shown most clearly in the program for a proposed International Workers Conference set forth in the appeal of the Pabloite IS under date of April 9. This is a program not of workers'

internationalism but of Kremlin diplomacy.

I fully agree with your characterization of this program and cannot improve on your formulations: "They call for an armistice and free elections in Indo-China, instead of the Trotskyist demand that the imperialists get out of Indo-China and let the people there settle their own affairs. They call for admission of China to the UN, causing illusions about the UN. They call for prohibition of atomic weapons, a pacifist disarmament slogan."

Your comment, however, that "these shifts in line mark new adaptations to Stalinist policy," appears to me as not entirely adequate. What struck me in the eye, on reading this Pabloite declaration, is that here for the first time they have openly thrown aside the Trotskyist program of revolutionary internationalism in favor of the pacifist diplomatic formulas of the Stalinists. This is not a mistake or an oversight but a calculated betrayal of our program, published in the name of the Fourth International.

Here Pabloism takes off the mask and shows its real face. And all those who want to see, can see the reason why they chose this occasion for self-revelation. The same April 9 session of the Pabloite IS, which issued this infamous declaration, made the decision to formalize the split with the Trotskyists who remain faithful to the program of revolutionary internationalism. The two actions fit together. The Pabloites had to cut the last thread connecting them with the Trotskyists before they felt free to dispense with diplomatic formulations and openly reveal their real program.

We will see more of this from now on, and everything will become clear to everybody. Our interest on the international field henceforth is not to haggle over organizational formalities and technicalities with the Pabloite scoundrels, but to consolidate the forces of international Trotskyism in the struggle to defend the program of the Fourth International, and to cleanse its banner of the Stalinist filth splashed upon it by the Pabloite gang.

I fully agree with the party Secretariat that this Pabloite-Stalinist programmatic declaration must be publicly blasted in our press. However, I would like to make two suggestions.

First, hold your fire a little while to see if the Cochranites dare to publish this appeal in their magazine. If the

Cochranites don't publish it, wait until you get a copy of the text as published in some other Pabloite paper. That will provide the best occasion for a suitable public answer on our part. The readers of our press will be less interested if we appear to be answering some internal circular of the Fourth International.

Second, along the same line, I don't think our answer to this Pabloite program for an International Workers Conference should be connected with any comment about their decision to hold a Congress. As an internal affair of our international movement, that question was not of much interest to the general reader in the first place. And now, with the decision of the Pabloites to go ahead with a Congress of their own, the question has become narrowed down to an internal affair of the Pabloite faction. We should center our fire on their political program, not on their internal organizational affairs.

It is above all necessary to recognize and to emphasize that, beginning with the April 9 session of the Pabloite

3. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs

Los Angeles, Calif.
April 28, 1954

New York

Dear Farrell:

I have just received by Airmail a copy of the *April Internal Bulletin of the LSSP*. I assume that you also received a copy of this LSSP Bulletin. If not, let me know and we will forward you a copy immediately, and will also make copies for the International Committee and the sections affiliated with it.

This bulletin contains, along with a reprint of their December resolution deploring the Open Letter of the SWP and their statement against the La Verite article, the following material:

1. The March 13 letter of Goonewardene to the Pabloite IS, proposing a postponement of the World Congress, etc.

2. A reply to this letter by Pablo's IS, dated March 23.

3. Another letter to the Pablo IS from Goonewardene, under date of April 12, requesting that their proposal for a postponement of the Congress be placed before the IEC, and the additional statement: "We have also to state that if the IEC finds itself unable to accept this proposal, we give notice that we shall move this proposal at the World Congress." This letter also requests that the correspondence be circulated to all sections as soon as possible.

4. Another letter, dated April 12, reporting the resolution adopted by the CC of the LSSP. This proposes: the removal of the suspensions; the admission of the French Majority to the World Congress with full rights of participation; the appointment by the IEC of a commission which would include representatives of the suspended organizations; and the statement that, if they are rejected by the IS and the IEC, these proposals will be placed before the World Congress. Finally the resolution requests

IS, which closed the door on negotiations for a common Congress and simultaneously came out openly as a subsidiary supporter of Stalinist politics, we have entered a new stage in the struggle for the program of international Trotskyism and the reconstruction of its international organization.

All questions of organizational formalities and technicalities, whether right or wrong in any given instance, which previously may have been a fit subject for discussion among the forces of orthodox Trotskyism, are washed out and worthless now. Nothing counts from now on but the lines of political principle which divide the Trotskyists from Stalinist agents and apologists. The realignment of the international movement can only take place on that basis. This is the real state of affairs and we must proceed from it. Nothing else matters now.

Fraternally,
J.P. Cannon

"That those proposals be circulated to all sections immediately."

5. A resolution of the CC of the LSSP on the "Rise and Decline of Stalinism."

This complete bulletin gives a much clearer picture than the fragmentary material we had previously received, and changes the international situation radically in our favor. I would like to offer the following provisional opinions about the new turn in the situation and how we should deal with it.

1. *LSSP Political Position:* Most important of all, is the clear statement of political position in the LSSP resolution criticizing the "Rise and Decline," and their conclusion: that "the single governing concept" of this Pabloite document "not only leads to a fundamental revision of the positions of Trotskyism in regard to Stalinism but also denies to the Trotskyist movement all justification for its continued independent existence."

Here, for the first time, the LSSP explicitly confirms in an official resolution its fundamental opposition to Pabloite revisionism, along the same lines as the position taken by the forces supporting the IC. We should not allow our impatience with their organizational procedure to blind us to the decisive importance of this basic fact.

2. *Pablo reply to LSSP proposals:* The second most important new fact emerges from the March 23 reply of the Pablo IS to the LSSP. In my letter to you under date of April 13, when we were awaiting the Pabloite answer to the Ceylonese demand for a Congress postponement, I remarked that "adventurers, cut off from any real organizational base anywhere, are capable of jumping in any direction or of simply collapsing." I should have added that they are also capable of trying to do both at the same time. That is substantially what the Pabloite answer to Ceylon under date of March 23 looks like to me.

First, they refuse to postpone the Congress fixed for

June." Then they threaten to resign if it is postponed beyond that date. Then they leave open the question "whether this assembly of June should be called the 4th World Congress, or an international conference in view of the concrete proposals of the Cannonites, and it be decided that another Conference or Congress should be held later," — this, they say, is a matter for this "June Assembly" to decide. All this in one letter. Both the content and the tone of this letter indicate that the LSSP proposals have created a crisis in the Pabloite ranks.

3. *LSSP tactics:* It is clear by now that the LSSP is determined to carry out an organizational strategy of its own, at least up to the time of the "June Assembly," which they obviously plan to attend. I am now strongly inclined to think that this special strategy is dictated primarily by internal considerations of their own, rather than by any tendency toward political conciliation with Pabloism.

I noticed that your letter of April 20 expresses a contrary apprehension. I leaned to the same opinion on the basis of the Ceylon letter to me of April 15. The explicit statement that "there could be no question" of the LSSP affiliating with the IC, was especially disturbing in this respect. Having seen organizational adaptations lead to political compromise too many times, I began to feel uncomfortable about their course. I started to express this thought in my letter to you of April 24 but then deleted the reference, withholding judgment until their political resolution on the "Rise and Decline" would be at hand. That removes all doubt of their basic political position.

Even if we still don't agree with their procedure, I think we can now understand it a little more sympathetically. They have the problem of party public opinion in their own ranks to consider and probably feel that they understand that better than we do. Our decision of last November came only after five months of systematic discussion and preparation of our ranks for the unavoidable action. Our Open Letter, for which our ranks were fully prepared, hit the Ceylon party and a number of others like a bombshell.

The question we now have to ask is whether the steps taken since that time by the leadership of the LSSP lead toward us or away from us. Their first actions — deploring our Open Letter and repudiating the La Verite article — were undoubtedly a big help to Pablo. They appear to have traced a zigzag course since then. But on the whole, the general direction is clearly in our favor. Their sharp, unambiguous resolution against the "Rise and Decline" formulations is a real blow at Pabloism. This, in my opinion, far outweighs the negative effects of their organizational policy. The LSSP resolution on this point should go a long way toward consolidating public opinion in the LSSP for a definitive break with Pabloism, all along the line, organizationally as well as politically.

4. *Our tactics in the new situation:* The new developments on the whole are all in our favor, and will work that way increasingly if we proceed correctly, avoid all jumpiness and make no foolish mistakes. The thing is to agree upon our next steps and then to centralize the direction of our moves so that we don't work at cross purposes in a delicate situation. The LSSP leadership

wants to avoid any breaches of formal legality at the present time. That is manifestly the reason why they have adopted the method of communicating with me personally, rather than with the SWP officially, or the IC.

This, of course, is a rather thin distinction in the circumstances, but it seems to serve their purpose and we must respect their wishes in the matter. Our strategy seems to me to be very simple.

The most important thing is to follow up the advantage we have gained by the formulations in my letter to Goonewardene; add nothing new at this time; let the Pabloites stew in the crisis which our two proposals — cancel the suspensions and postpone the Congress — have created in their ranks. Meanwhile, we should continue to hammer at the Pabloites *politically* while eliminating the organizational question entirely from our press.

5. *The Pabloite Congress or Conference:* If the Pabloite IS complies with the LSSP demand that their letters and proposals "be circulated to all sections immediately," it is bound to precipitate a new discussion in the organizations supporting Pablo, and will at least raise the question of a postponement amongst them. Unless they have lost all sense of realism, the LSSP's devastating criticism of the basic Pabloite document on the "Rise and Decline" would also call imperatively for an answer and the extension of time for further discussion, and consequently, for a postponement.

Whether things will turn out this way we cannot predict because nobody knows which way adventurers will jump. But in any case, the firm and decisive intervention of the LSSP has called the whole project of a shotgun Congress into question. If they go ahead with it anyway on schedule, the "June assembly" — the delicate new Pabloite designation for what was originally proclaimed as a sovereign Congress which would decide and settle everything — will meet under a cloud of uncertainty and indefiniteness and will decide nothing.

The Pabloite Congress, or conference, or "June assembly," or whatever they eventually decide to call it, if and when it is held, is the affair of the Pablo faction. We should not magnify it and center attention on it. In my opinion, there should not even be any mention of it in our press.

6. *Our answer to the LSSP:* Our answer to Goonewardene's letter to me under date of April 15 should be carefully formulated with the above considerations in mind, adding nothing substantially new and avoiding entanglement in negotiations over details of the Pabloite Congress or Conference, which we do not accept or recognize as a sovereign body in any case. We have no grounds to discuss details of a common Congress until our two preliminary *minimum* conditions are met, namely, unconditional reinstatement and postponement for further and more adequate discussion.

I will go to work right away on a draft of a reply to Goonewardene from this point of view. Meantime, the main slogan for all the supporters of the IC is: "Take it easy." Or, if the comrades in more civilized countries don't understand this American lingo, we can translate it as follows into international seaman's language: "Take it on the slow bell."

Fraternally,
J. P. Cannon

4. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs

Los Angeles, Calif.
May 12, 1954

New York

Dear Farrell:

I am enclosing herewith a draft of a reply to Tilak's letter of April 15. This draft takes into account the new developments within the Pablo camp and the opinions expressed by Joe, Burns and Bloch. The purpose of the letter, as I have conceived it, is to strengthen and encourage the Ceylonese in their stand for postponement and to suggest supplementary proposals which could facilitate their aim, either to postpone the Pabloite Congress, or if it is held anyway, to limit its character to that of a conference which does not pretend to assume the definitive powers of a congress.

I think Joe and Burns are correct in pointing out that we should recognize the rift between Pablo and his subordinate disciples in the U.S. and England, and take advantage of it to introduce some counter-proposals to the Pabloite "Appeal." This is best done indirectly, however; and I think the Ceylonese are the best medium for such an approach. Since Pablo's Appeal was not addressed officially to the International Committee or the elected leading bodies of the national sections of the expelled, suspended and excommunicated Trotskyists, it would not be correct to direct our reply to his IS or IEC.

It would also be a profound mistake for us to even think of a bloc with Pablo against Cochran and Collins. Pablo is the real source of liquidationist corruption in the Fourth International, and a real reunification of the international movement on a sound basis will never be accomplished in partnership with him. The differences between Pablo and Cochran and Collins are tactical differences of timing. They have existed for a long time, and they have been aggravated and expanded by the resolute action taken in the U.S. and in England to bring the struggle to a head.

Pablo wanted more time to compromise the Fourth International, and demoralize it step by step. His timetable was upset by our actions here and in England, which forced the local Pabloites to show their colors and, simultaneously, provided a point of crystallization for the anti-Pablo struggle on the international field. Pablo wasn't ready for that yet.

Besides the orthodox Trotskyists, who already have his number, he has such elements as Germain and the Ceylonese to contend with and string along. No doubt there are also others in the Pablo camp who recognize the actual relation of forces, and shrink from a definitive split. Now he has the revolt of Cochran and Lawrence, who are confronted with a life and death struggle for survival and are determined to cut out all the double talk and get loose from "the sectarian past" of our movement at all costs.

As you remarked in your letter of May 8, Pablo's reply to Cochran is an unintended admission that he was acting as advisor to the American Cochranites all the time, and

that he differed with them only on the tactical question of timing. He wanted more time to demoralize and disrupt the SWP. His strategy was upset by the provocative conduct of the Cochranites, on the one side, and on the other, by our resolute counter-blow which forced the whole struggle for the Fourth International into the open before he was ready.

I am heartily in favor of a flexible tactic to add to Pablo's difficulties, as indicated in the draft of my letter to Ceylon. But I am completely opposed to anything even remotely resembling conciliation with Pablo, or any suggestion of a bloc with him in order to isolate Cochran and Collins. We must proceed from the point of view that the international fight as a whole is the main consideration. Nothing which might possibly compromise it can be contemplated.

If we look first at the real nature of the fight on the international field, and then break it down into its national component parts, we will see that any suggestion of collaboration with Pablo could be compromising and self-defeating. Such a course would blunt the edge of the ideological and political struggle in the international movement as a whole, and also in those sections which are just waking up to the real issue.

In France the fight is against Pabloism, without, as far as I can see, any modifications—the French Pabloites being pure and simple agents of Pablo without any independent position or aims of their own.

In the United States the fight is already finished on national grounds. Our efforts in the struggle now are almost exclusively designed to help the other national sections cure their organizations of the Pabloite infection. Any sign of softening up on Pablo to concentrate on Cochran would weaken that fight without doing us a bit of good on national grounds. Cochran is already isolated, as far as our ranks and periphery are concerned.

In Iceland it appears that the fight is just about finished. It was a pure and simple fight against Pabloist revisionism there. The remaining problem there, as I see it, is to continue the ideological campaign to re-educate the cadres on the big issues, and further isolate the local Pabloites in the process.

The Icelanders have nothing to gain by trying to show that Cochran and Collins are worse than Pablo, or that Pablo is not as bad as they are. The real task of education there is to show that Cochran and Collins are Pabloites with the mask off, that their extreme positions, frankly breaking with the so-called "sectarian past" of the Fourth International—they mean the *whole* past—are simply Pabloism skipping over stages of step-at-a-time liquidationism and developing to its logical conclusion.

In England the fight is still going on, and, different from our situation, has to be fought out in the mass movement. But to judge from the published polemics, the issues are becoming crystal clear and they will have to be fought out on English grounds. England is by far the most important sector of the international struggle at the present time. The only way to win there is by an all-out fight.

It would be a terrible mistake to think that any conciliation with Pablo would help to isolate the Collins group. On the contrary, it would introduce elements of confusion and indecision which would redound to the benefit of the national liquidators. The extremes to which Collins is going in his abandonment of principle, and in organizational treachery, undoubtedly present great difficulties and entail losses at the moment. But for the long pull, it is a decided advantage, in my opinion, to have this outfit really out in the open where the fight can be a real showdown.

There is no difference between Collins and Pablo except that Collins, in his desperate fight for survival, imposed upon him by the decisive actions of the orthodox Trotskyists there, is "skipping over the stages" of Pabloite liquidationism and "telescoping the nuances of the process." That is not Pablo's way of doing things, and to that extent there is a difference between him and Collins. But it is their family fight about the best way to fight us. It is not our fight. We should make no mistake about that.

I am not familiar with recent developments in the various other European countries. But it seems to me self-evident that the minorities, sympathizing with the International Committee there, can be developed and consolidated only by a further extension of the ideological and political fight against Pabloism, rejecting all suggestions

that the differences can be patched up by any kind of compromise resolution.

The same is true in Latin America, where things should continue to develop favorably for us, now that we have perfected and speeded the work of translating our material into Spanish and breaking through the censorship of the Pabloite functionaries. The Latin American movement has to be re-educated and re-constituted in an irreconcilable and long-drawn-out fight against Pabloism from A to Z.

As far as I can judge the new developments from a distance, they are all in our favor. We have no reason to get nervous, to jump, or to rush around making statements and issuing proclamations about the Pabloite Congress. I think the less we say about it the better. In fact, I think we should eliminate all mention of it in our press before it is held, while it is being held, and afterward, and do nothing whatever to advertise it or attach any importance to it. The relations we have with Ceylon provide us all the medium we need to add to the Pabloite difficulties from within their own camp.

My draft of a reply to Ceylon has been conceived from the general point of view set forth above.

Fraternally,
James P. Cannon

5. Letter from Farrell Dobbs to James P. Cannon

New York, N.Y.
May 8, 1954

Los Angeles

Dear Jim:

We have forwarded to you under separate cover translations from the Pabloite internal bulletin dated April 1954 of an exchange of letters between Pablo and the LSSP concerning the Ceylonese rejection of the Pabloite IEC "appeal" of April 15 and an exchange of statements between Pablo and the Cochranites and Lawrenceites on the same subject. This material, together with the April 1954 LSSP internal bulletin which you already have, provides all the latest available information concerning the projected Pabloite rump congress. The following appears to be the most pertinent aspects of this material:

The "appeal" seems to have been adopted by an enlarged meeting of the Pabloite IS and submitted to a referendum of the Pabloite IEC. This referendum produced four votes in opposition to the "appeal": Tilak, deSilva, Lawrence and White.

The "appeal" holds that the Pabloites are for unity, independently of the political differences, within the organizational framework of a centralized world party. They will permit all participants at the Third Congress to attend their rump congress. The suspensions by the Pabloite IEC are held to be operative only up to the rump congress. They claim no one has been expelled. Addressing itself to the suspended sections the "appeal" says: Offer concrete proposals for your participation in the congress;

state your conditions for the future functioning and leadership of the International; submit your proposals to a commission (of Pabloites, Germainists and the Ceylonese); the commission's purpose is to achieve reunification, with the congress having sovereign decision; if you don't want to split, you must contact the commission and arrange for proportional representation for each tendency, both in the congress and in the new leadership it will elect. The "appeal" states there is no reason why the tendencies cannot co-exist within the International, if they submit to discipline of the majority, since only a much more prolonged experience can determine whether or not they are incompatible.

The LSSP rejected the "appeal" because it can be construed as a factional document and because its proposals are different from those of the Ceylonese. The proposals of the LSSP as contained in the April 7 CC Resolution are: removal of the suspensions upon an undertaking by the suspended organizations to participate in the congress; recognize two sections in Britain, etc.; admit the French majority with full rights; appoint a commission including representatives of the suspended organizations, to decide on representation at the congress. The LSSP has announced that it will again move for postponement of the congress before the IEC and at the congress itself.

In their letter to you of April 15, the Ceylonese have asked you to solicit the view of the International Committee as to whether it will agree to the proposals contained in the April 7 LSSP resolution. They state that they are not

joining the International Committee and that they continue to stand on their resolution of December 20, 1953 which deplored the Open Letter and stated that all questions must be resolved according to the principles of democratic centralism.

The Cochranites, who appear to be in close collaboration with Lawrence, state in the name of their National Committee: The "appeal" can lead to capitulation to the sectarians; what can become a source of disintegration has appeared at the top; the IS back-door maneuvers are demoralizing the ranks; Germain's unauthorized offers of a horse-trading compromise opened the way for unconditional surrender to Cannon and gave rise to the Cannon-Tilak correspondence; this policy stems from a false position on the role of the International leadership; it is a basic error to attempt to rest on precepts of organizational authority; the IS muffles the political line out of false considerations of "world leadership"; it must drop all maneuvers with the Cannonites forthwith; the IS should act as a rallying center for an ideological regroupment and work to consolidate and harden the cadre; there can be no turning back to the sectarian past of the International.

This statement provides double-barrelled proof of the unprincipled character of Cochranism. They previously defended, against our criticism, the organizational concepts of Pablo which they now attack. Moreover, their statement shows that they actually want what they falsely accused us of wanting, namely, a letter-box International. Also manifest in their statement is the fact that the Cochranites don't want to return anywhere near the SWP, just as the Lawrenceites show they have no intention whatever of moving back toward the British Trotskyists. This Cochranite attack on Pablo's organizational concepts may be a prelude to a political differentiation, since it has long been clear that Cochran himself doesn't think much of Pablo's pro-Stalinist line, although he did not hesitate to make a bloc with Pablo in order to facilitate his own split attack on the SWP.

Pablo tends to confirm this when he says he fears the Cochranite ideas about the International are close to Cannon's, states that he is not opposing Cannon only to fall under the tutelage of another variety of organizational sectarianism, and intimates that the Cochranites would be more frank if they asked about the possibility of a statute providing for a sympathizer's status in the International.

It is interesting to observe Pablo's restatement of his organizational line in his reply to the Cochranites, namely: the International is a centralized world organization; it has a discipline much like that of the national organizations; it is neither a tendency nor a faction based on *conjunctural political accord* (my emphasis); it unites in a single organization all who accept its general program; since the program is general and new realities present new problems, tendencies having divergent views on one or another question can arise; these tendencies can co-exist within the International, if they accept majority discipline, leaving it to more prolonged experience to determine whether they are incompatible.

This statement appears to reflect both Pablo's uneasiness about his political alliance with Cochran and his desire to put on a good diplomatic front, for the benefit of the Ceylonese and Germainists, with respect to his intrigues

to split the International. The by-play between Cochran and Pablo about selection of international leaders "on the basis of practical availability" also seems to reflect the unstable character of their alliance. Pablo's obvious slam at the Cochranite magazine—people who, since they gained control of their own affairs, have contributed nothing to the ideological struggle—is further evidence in the same direction.

In his reply to the Ceylonese concerning their rejection of the "appeal," Pablo says the "June assembly" itself will have to determine whether it should call itself a congress or a conference, clearly intending this for the benefit of the Ceylonese and, in part, the Germainists. In the same letter he asserts, this time for the benefit of the Cochranites-Lawrenceites, that he does not intend to "play Cannon's game" of seeking a postponement of the Congress for the purpose of strengthening the Cannonite faction. Pablo's assertion that a postponement would play into Cannon's hands is in reality an admission that a full, democratic discussion would rout the revisionists.

His reply to the Cochranites, on the other hand, uses the earlier fight in the SWP for the purpose of hitting at the Cochranites because of the difficulties they are causing him in the delicate problem of maneuvering with the Ceylonese and the Germainists. In doing so he provides devastating proof of his intrigues to build personal cliques behind the backs of the leaderships in the various parties.

Pablo quotes from his letter to Livingstone in which he wrote that "overthrow of the Cannon leadership is neither possible nor desirable at present." That letter was dated *March 28, 1953*, that is, two months before the time when he evaded answering your request that he comment on the Stone report which indicated his collusion with the Cochranites. Pablo claims in his reply to the Cochranites, that he insisted they should carry out the May plenum truce and that he *telegraphed* Livingstone not to make the Tom letter public in the party. Here are two more pieces of evidence, from Pablo himself, that he connived with the Cochranites behind the backs of the party leadership. Here also is found incontestable proof of the fact that it was the Cochranites who broke the truce.

Pablo's objections to the Cochranite tactics in the instances he cites were, of course, related only to tactical timing. He didn't object to their split perspective. He merely wanted them to slow down the tempo of their split drive and coordinate more closely with his intrigues on the international arena.

In addition to the foregoing information about the dog fight now going on within the Pabloite clique, we have received letters from some of our co-thinkers concerning these developments and the tactical course we should follow in the light of recent happenings.

Burns has written: "You will by now have received the bulletin from Pablo which advertises the deep division between them on the question of a joint conference. You will also have received the LSSP material. I think we can accept by and large the Ceylon proposals and go straight in and smash them. It is my view that the Lawrence-Livingstone outfits work together and are now about to go away politically from any symbol of allegiance to Trotskyism. We must isolate these people now. The International Committee meets in London on May 9. Would

you let me have your views: (a) what is your attitude toward the LSSP proposals for a joint conference? (b) what do you think of the Pablo-Cochran differences?"

A letter from Joe (which he informs us was written without having had an opportunity to consult with Burns) makes these main points: he thinks we must put the Pabloite proposition to the test, attempt to isolate the Cochranites and their allies, and finish them off first; in consultation with the LSSP we should take Pablo up on his request for counter-propositions; concrete proposals should be made, perhaps through Tilak, for a commission of the IS, the IC and the LSSP, in equal proportions, to establish the real relation of forces. This, he writes, would be a concession on our part, in the sense that it is not quite in accordance with our preponderant weight, but a concession to facilitate a retreat; any counter-proposition by us, he adds, must of course include the previous conditions we have stated, cancellation of the suspensions, postponement of the congress, etc.

Bloch has sent a draft of a proposed appeal by the International Committee. The draft restates the conditions put forward in your letter to the Ceylonese, refers to the support your propositions have received, characterizes Pablo's rejection of the demand for postponement of the congress, reviews the general pattern of Pabloite intrigue, contrasts the methods of the Pabloites to those of the Trotskyists and characterizes Pablo's political method. The draft makes the point that the congress can be representative only if there has been a free flow of discussion until such time as all the questions in dispute have been fully clarified, adding that the IC will not convoke a congress until the discussion is completed. The draft concludes with the following slogans: "Stop the Pabloites from causing an irrevocable international split; demand the postponement of the congress convoked by Pablo; if he takes no notice of your protests, do not lend him your authority to help accomplish his sinister stroke; refuse to play the role of hostages for him; boycott the Pabloite rump congress."

The foregoing communications from our co-thinkers were mailed to us before they had received copies of your letter of April 28 addressed to me and of my two letters under date of April 29 addressed to the International Committee. These letters of yours and mine seem to be in consonance on the main line of our tactics at the present stage of the struggle. It does not seem to us that this projected tactical line requires any important modification because of the new developments within the Pabloite faction, in fact developments of this kind were expressly anticipated in your letter. We should have no truck with the Pabloite commission, or their rump congress, or the taking of any kind of a vote on the issues in dispute on the basis of the Pabloite time-table.

We concur in your proposal to let the Pabloites stew

in the crisis created for them by our demands that they cancel the suspensions and postpone the congress; let them decide whether they want to call it a congress, which in reality could decide nothing, or a conference, which would mark a retreat on their part; meanwhile we should continue to hammer the Pabloites politically and stand firm on the position that we have no grounds to discuss a congress with them until two minimum conditions have been met: unconditional reinstatement of the "suspended" sections and postponement of the congress until such time as there has been a full, democratic discussion of all the issues in dispute.

We suggest that the Trotskyist view on the present state of the struggle take the form of a letter addressed to the Ceylonese, which would be circulated internationally. You indicated that you are already working on such a letter, and we sent you a copy of our letter to the International Committee suggesting a general line for the reply to the April 15 Ceylonese letter to you. Our suggestions are now incomplete, in view of the recent developments in the Pabloite faction, and would have to be enlarged accordingly. If the comrades of the International Committee agree, we think the letter to the Ceylonese should be sent in your name since, as you pointed out, they have consistently followed the practice of corresponding directly with you, obviously for their own tactical reasons which we should not ignore.

We suggest that we inform the Ceylonese we are not opposed to the idea of a commission, along the lines they suggest, for the purpose of determining proper representation at the congress. However, the establishment of such a commission at this time would be premature, because the holding of a congress at the present would be utterly premature, especially in view of the LSSP resolution to which the Pabloites have yet to make their promised reply. First we must have a thoroughgoing discussion, carried out to the very end. Only then will the time have come to take up the question of forming a satisfactory commission in order to make a proper determination of representation at the congress.

We also suggest that it might now be in order for our Political Committee to prepare a statement recapitulating the aims and objectives of the Open Letter. This seems a good way to counteract the Pabloite misrepresentations and slanders concerning the Open Letter and, in general, to set the record straight on the main issues in the fight. We have begun work on an outline for such a statement.

We shall look forward to a further expression of opinion from you about the present stage of the fight in general and about the particular points we have raised in this letter.

Comradely,
Farrell Dobbs

6. Resolutions Adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International at its May 11, 1954 Meeting in Paris

No. 1. RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL

The International Committee of the 4th International, meeting in Paris on May 11th 1954, takes note of:

1. The directive issued by the PABLO IS (April 9th) calling for an International Conference of all labour organizations on the basis of demands for:

- a) "An immediate Armistice in Viet-Nam."
- b) "Free General Elections in Viet-Nam to decide the Statutes and Government."
- c) "Prohibition of Atomic Weapons."

It affirms that each one of these demands is in contradiction to the traditional and established position of the Fourth International:

a) for the complete freedom of the colonies and unconditional withdrawal of all Imperialist forces;

b) for the recognition of the Ho Chi Minh Government;

c) the regard of all "disarmament" hoaxes under capitalism as a pacifist trap designed to derail the working class from the class struggle.

Further, it calls attention to the fact that this 3-point programme of the Pabloite IS coincides entirely with the current line of Stalinist agitation.

Finally, it notes that no W.C., no IEC Plenum, nor any authoritative body ever took any action in the slightest to be interpreted to sanction such a position on the part of the Pabloite IS.

2. The attempt of Collins and the British Pabloites to represent the "national front" conference in Paris (March 26th) against EDC as a "Socialist-Communist" united front for a Socialist Europe; the ferocious attack launched by Collins & Co. in combination with centrist politicians against the British Trotskyists for unmasking this effort to lend a "left" cover for Stalinist policy; of their unscrupulous Stalinist-type "amalgam" effort to link the Trotskyists with the Morrison Right-Wing and to denounce them as "splitters of the Left-Wing" for taking this principled stand; of the flirtations of Collins & Co. with chauvinist sentiment and their defense of such opportunism as "progressive"; of their unprincipled machinations utilizing Stalinist elements against the Trotskyists in press matters; finally, the complete silence on the part of the Pabloite IS on all these unprecedented betrayals of established F.I. policy and practice.

3. The latest Pabloite incitations to split at the very time their IS was meeting (Iceland).

4. The "appeal" by the Pabloite IS of the same date, addressed "to all who have voluntarily placed themselves outside the International"; of their correspondence with the LSSP; of their dispute with the Cochranites ("Socialist Union").

The IC notes that, while in practice and in policy moving ever closer to Stalinism, the Pabloite IS at the same time puts forward a "proposition" for the "reunification of the International" on the basis of the "acceptance of the principle of democratic centralism" and offers the specific proposal of an arrangements commission to organize the 4th W.C. consisting of "for example" nominees from their own faction plus 2 from the LSSP.

While making this "offer" the Pabloite IS continues to refuse postponement of the W.C. for adequate discussion or to rescind its suspensions of entire organizations constituting the great bulk of the membership of the International, as demanded by the LSSP, as well as by the organizations grouped around the IC and supporting it.

5. The IC further notes that the LSSP leadership has rejected this latest offer and that the LSSP's IEC members have in this connection noted the factional character of the Pabloite IS and its propositions and formulations, which implies that their "assembly" set for June can have only a factional character that can only prevent the convocation of an authoritative World Congress, representative of the Fourth International.

It further notes that the LSSP representatives intend to continue to use their "good offices" to obtain a reunification on the principled basis above specified.

6. The IC therefore advises the LSSP representatives as follows:

If the Pabloite IS is prepared to do more than phrases about "reunification" and the "principle of democratic centralism"—that is if its latest "appeal" is not a crude maneuver, but a serious proposition, then the Pabloite IS and IEC should:

1) Cease and desist from putting forward a public political line never sanctioned by any organ of democratic centralism in the F.I.—a line such as enumerated under (1) which we cannot but attack publicly if we are indeed to take the principle of democratic centralism seriously ourselves.

2) Cease and desist from sanctioning splits in constituent organizations and recognizing splitting minorities as "sections."

3) Call to order its followers, such as Collins, and warn them against violations of the political line adopted by all previous congresses of the International.

4) Agree to a postponement of the 4th W.C. that will allow ample time for full discussion.

5) Rescind all suspensions and other organizational sanctions against the orthodox Trotskyists and reestablish the organizational status quo at the 3rd World Congress.

Only on such a basis can the constitution of a joint arrangements commission for the 4th Congress be considered.

No. 2. RESOLUTION ON THE POLITICAL DECLARATION OF THE LSSP

The IC notes with satisfaction the political declaration of the LSSP on the Pabloite IS document: "The Rise and Fall of Stalinism," which was adopted unanimously by its CC on 24th April 1954, and characterized as "leading to a fundamental revision of the positions of Trotskyism in regard to Stalinism but also denies to the Trotskyist movement all justification for its own independent existence."

The IC records its fundamental agreement with this resolution of the CC of the LSSP, and considers it an

essential step forward towards the realization of the political regrouping of the immense majority of the International on the basis of the Trotskyist Programme.

No. 3. RESOLUTION ON THE ICELAND SECTION

The IC of the 4th International, meeting in Paris on May 11th 1954, notes with pleasure the successful outcome of the struggle against Pabloism in the Iceland section. It salutes the leadership and membership in the decisive way it defeated the attempt of Pablo to revise the basic principles of our movement. The fact that his underhanded efforts resulted in a split of a tiny minority is in itself a great tribute to the political maturity of the Iceland section.

It notes the desire of the section to affiliate to the International Committee, and takes great pleasure in welcoming this affiliation.

No. 4. RESOLUTION ON THE WORK IN ITALY

The IC confirms its previous decision to delegate to the French section, the task of re-grouping the Trotskyist forces in Italy, under the political control of the IC.

Thus, the leading bodies of the French section must take the necessary measures in order to carry out this work and are to nominate the comrades entrusted with it. Only such comrades nominated by the French section can have the authority to represent the IC before the Italian Minority.

No. 5. RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

Please note: This resolution will be sent out after the 15th May 1954.

No. 6. RESOLUTION ON THE VICTORY OF DIEN-BIEN-PHU

The International Committee of the 4th International, in the name of the Trotskyist militants of the whole world, salutes the glorious victory won by the Viet-Nameese forces of the Asiatic Revolution over the troops of Imperialism at Dien-Bien-Phu. The International Committee considers that the victory of Dien-Bien-Phu constitutes an historical event of the greatest importance, setting back the plans of aggression of American imperialism in Asia, as well as thwarting the treacherous maneuvers of the Kremlin, which seeks to strike a compromise with Washington at the expense of the Asiatic Revolution.

The International Committee congratulates the French section for the indefatigable campaign which it is pursuing for the attainment of peace in Viet-Nam, for the withdrawal of the French Expeditionary Corps and the recognition of the Ho-Chi-Minh government.

It calls upon all Trotskyist organizations to intensify the campaign for the defense of the Chinese and Viet-Nameese revolutions against Imperialism, for the withdrawal of all imperialist troops from Viet-Nam, Malaya, Burma, Formosa and Korea, for the right of the Asiatic peoples to dispose of themselves, for the recognition of the governments of the Popular Republic of China and of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam.

Paris, 11th May 1954

Present:

G. Bloch - French section.

Burns - British section.

Steven - British section.

Smith - United States.

Jacques - Swiss section.

7. Letter from James P. Cannon to Leslie Goonewardene

Los Angeles, Calif.
May 12, 1954

Leslie Goonewardene
General Secretary L.S.S.P.
Ceylon

Dear Comrade Goonewardene:

Your letter of April 15 and also the April Internal Bulletin of the LSSP, containing the political resolution of your Central Committee and copies of your correspondence with the Pabloite IS, have been considered by the organizations united under the International Committee. At the same time, they have studied my letter to you of February 23 and have expressed general agreement with its main points.

They are prepared, now as before, to keep the door open to any serious proposals which might arrest the present drift toward an irreparable international split. To that end they have agreed to suspend plans for a

formal international congress of their own, pending the final result of your efforts and proposals.

We note that your proposal for a Congress postponement was rejected, and announcement is made of the decision to proceed with the previously scheduled Congress of the Pabloites. As stated in my letter of February 23, such a congress can only be a congress of a faction. Its result can only be to formalize the international split, and to put an end to the possibility of setting in motion a process which might lead to the formal reunification of the movement. The Trotskyist forces organized in the International Committee have no intention of attending or recognizing this so-called congress, organized and arranged without their participation.

Meantime, we have taken note of two new developments which require consideration.

First, the publication of the resolution of the LSSP criticizing the revisionist line of the draft resolution on the "Rise and Decline of Stalinism;" your April 13 letter refusing to sign the so-called "Appeal" of the Pabloite IEC

to the members of the suspended and expelled organizations over the head of their official leadership; and your counter-proposals for the organization of the Congress.

Second, the March 26 statement of Collins and the April 10 declaration of the National Committee of the Socialist Union, both of which demand that the International split be formalized, and that all direct or indirect communication with the suspended and expelled sections be discontinued.

From these statements it is evident that the divisions which exist within the world movement as a whole, between the forces adhering to the International Committee and those formally adhering to the Pabloite IS and IEC, exist also within the ranks of the latter.

On the one hand, the political resolution of the LSSP criticizes the draft resolution on the "Rise and Decline of Stalinism" from the standpoint of orthodox Trotskyism, and you also take a stand for unification with the suspended and expelled sections.

On the other hand, the groups of Collins and the Socialist Union are rapidly developing political positions which go far beyond the piece-meal revisionism of Pablo, toward a complete break with what the declaration of the Socialist Union calls "the sectarian past of the International," i.e., its program and the activity based upon it in the past, and reject even any talk of reunification with the orthodox Trotskyists.

Since these three mentioned organizations, dissenting from the Pablo policy for different reasons, undoubtedly constitute a numerical majority of the organized forces formally recognizing the Pabloite IS and IEC—leaving aside the suspended and expelled organizations, which already constitute a large numerical majority of the organized world movement—the attempt of Pablo, nevertheless, to speak in the name of the international movement, to decide when a congress shall be called and to lay down the conditions for participation in it, becomes somewhat ludicrous. This attempt of a minority of a minority to call a quick congress to decide things for everybody must be condemned as a criminal adventure.

It is to be presumed that the differences on organizational policy within the ranks of organizations recognizing the Pabloite IS, will have to be discussed in the ranks of the various organizations before they can take an intelligent position on them; and that this alone would require a postponement of the projected June Congress. Moreover, the political resolution of the LSSP, if it is not to be given the short shrift that was the fate of the French resolution prior to the Third World Congress, will have to be translated and published, together with the Pabloite reply. Time will have to be allowed for discussion, and this also would necessarily entail a postponement of the Congress.

Besides that, the organizations affiliated to the International Committee will want to publish your document in their Internal Bulletin, to discuss it and to inform you of their opinions. It seems to me that you yourselves will expect this consideration for your resolution before coming to a congress where a vote is to be taken on it.

The total situation in the international movement, still further complicated since my letter of February 23, must convince all responsible people in our movement that the discussion must be extended and amplified; and that

a postponement of the Congress is an imperative necessity. I can tell you that the orthodox Trotskyist forces organized around the International Committee have all expressed themselves firmly on this point and will not depart from it.

This does not signify a rejection of the proposals of the LSSP for the organization of the World Congress. What is necessary first, however, is to prepare the conditions for a congress which would not result in a fight over representation and mandates, and a definitive split on such grounds, before the congress could ever become formally constituted.

Your proposal for a removal of the suspensions is certainly correct, since that is the *sine qua non* even for any talk about a joint congress. Your second point about the "admission of the French majority to the World Congress," etc., is also correct, and is likewise a pre-condition for an agreement on a joint congress with the participation of the other organizations affiliated with the International Committee.

Your third point, providing for a commission to decide on the "representation to be accorded to the organizations participating in the Congress," will also be accepted by the organizations associated with the International Committee. Some such commission will undoubtedly be necessary, and it goes without saying that the suspended organizations would have to be represented on the commission. The Pabloite's announcement of a "commission," excluding such representation, has naturally been rejected out of hand by all the suspended and expelled organizations.

If the political conditions for a serious attempt at reunification through a World Congress have been previously established, and if there is a serious will to effect a formal reunification, such questions as this will naturally be solved without much difficulty by negotiation and agreement. That has been the case in every unification I have ever had anything to do with, and such occasions have been numerous. On the other hand, all attempts to begin a reunification process on the organizational level, without a full clarification of the political questions involved, and without a real will on both sides to effect unification despite political differences, clearly established and recognized, have ended in failure.

If the *de facto* split is recognized, and if there is a will to initiate a movement toward a genuine reunification, than it is self-evident that, at a certain stage in the developments, it will be necessary to establish some kind of a commission to sift out and verify conflicting membership claims and agree on representation, personnel of Congress reporters and committees, agenda, etc., etc. I think it is likewise self-evident that, in order for such a commission to function effectively, all concerned will have to be represented.

If and when the time comes for it, when there can be a reasonable confidence that such a commission could function with some realistic prospect of success, I do not think the unification will fall on the question of the commission. But just because I consider it stupid to quarrel and split over such questions, I emphasize my opinion that conditions are not yet present for a joint congress, and that consequently discussion of organizational arrangements is premature.

By that, I do not mean to say that discussion of the question of unity and of an eventual joint congress is useless. Far from it. But the whole project must be approached realistically, proceeding from the real situation, as it is.

I note that the "Appeal" of the Pabloite IEC, dated April 15, declares its wish to "re-establish the unity of the International." If that is really the case, contrary to their previous course of expulsion, suspensions, removals, threats and excommunications, then the next thing in order is not a commission to arrange a joint congress. The first step, as already explained in my letter of February 23, is the unconditional cancellation of the expulsions and "suspensions," beginning with the French, and the announced discontinuation of such procedures.

After that, would logically come the setting up of a provisional commission, not to arrange a joint congress, but:

1. to supervise and work out practical details for the reintegration of the suspended and expelled sections;
2. to define transitional relations between majorities and minorities in those sections where the split is in effect; and
3. to organize and regulate the further course of the

8. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs

Los Angeles, Calif.
June 3, 1954

New York

Dear Farrell:

I received the notice of the Pabloite IS, indicating that they are going ahead with their so-called "Fourth Congress." If their gathering decides to constitute itself as such, it will signify the definitive international split. We should begin to consider our tactics in this event.

The first question that will be posed, if the Pabloites actually proclaim their gathering as the Fourth Congress, will be that of our public attitude toward it. For us to publicize their Congress in any way, in any polemics which we might direct against its decisions, would appear as an implicit recognition of their Congress and implicitly place the orthodox Trotskyists in the position of secessionists.

I think it will be better to ignore the Pabloite gathering and give it no publicity whatever in our press. Instead of that, the Trotskyist press should begin publishing material emanating from the IC as the bona fide center of the Fourth International, which in reality it is. From this point of view, I was glad to see that both *The Militant* and *La Verite* published the IC declaration on Dien Bien Phu without reference to the IC as a faction. That is a good beginning. I think it should set the pattern for our future tactical course.

internal discussion; and to decide and agree on what aspects, if any, of the further discussion should be conducted in public.

You will note that this letter says nothing about good or bad will on the part of any of those who profess to favor the reunification of the movement. That will be demonstrated by action, not by words. If there is bad will on either side there will be no reunification in any case, and maneuvers around the question will come to nothing.

Even with good will for formal reunification, there is no certainty that it can be re-established. But, in my opinion, there is still a chance—if your proposal for postponement of the Congress is eventually accepted. This chance is a very fragile one under present conditions, and the question of where to begin is very important. It may decide the fate of the whole enterprise.

The suggestions about procedure made above are not offered as counter-proposals to yours, but rather as indications of how I think the objective you are seeking can be approached most effectively.

Fraternally,
James P. Cannon

Our reference to the "Pabloite faction," which we have used up till now and which is also used in Murry's latest article this week, has been correct for the whole period from our November Plenum up until the present time. But if the scheduled gathering of the Pabloites declares itself to be the Fourth Congress, further references to them as "a faction of the Fourth International" would be inappropriate. Thereafter, they should be designated simply as secessionists, but not as a faction of the Fourth International; and in no case as the Congress, IEC, or IS of the Fourth International.

After the Pabloite Congress, it will be time for the Trotskyist groups to begin an international discussion of new documents of their own on the world situation. It would be a good idea for those concerned to consider the questions to be dealt with in the resolutions and assign the writing of drafts. Once acceptable drafts are approximately agreed upon, they could be published in the International Bulletin and in our Internal Bulletin and a discussion opened preparatory to a real Congress to reconstitute the bona fide Trotskyist Fourth International.

I am submitting these suggestions on tactics for a preliminary discussion among the leading people affiliated with the International Committee.

Fraternally,
J.P. Cannon

9. Letter from Gerry Healy and Sam Gordon to Farrell Dobbs

8th July, 1954

Dear Smith,

We have now concluded a series of discussions with the Ceylonese, and it is possible for us to make some propositions for your consideration.

Firstly, we are surprised that there has been no direct reply from you regarding our proposals on a parity commission, particularly in relation to the problem of the Ceylonese. Before proceeding we always appreciate discussion between us.

You will already have received the letter from Burns reporting the action of the IC.

As a result of our talks with Colvin and Tilak, we believe that it is necessary for us to take some other factors into account when planning the next step.

The Ceylonese found at the Pablo conference that the Cochran break had produced a situation in which things became more fluid than before. Their political amendments were accepted and in their opinion this indicates if not a reversal, at least a halt and a setback of the trend to revisionism, which is now recognised as a danger by far more people than before, particularly after the performance of Clarke, Lawrence and Co. Organisationally the fluidity was marked by the ambiguous position adopted. Recognising the "assembly" as the Fourth Congress but proposing steps for unification in a direct approach to us.

In their view, many people in Pablo's ranks are uneasy and could be won over, but are hampered by organisational fetishism. They believe that this could be overcome, a reunification effected that would affirm orthodox Trotskyism and put a stop to revisionism for good and all. Organisationally ways and means could be worked out to eliminate Pablo from any position of importance and effect. They are aware of, and detest, Pablo's methods, and see eye to eye with us on general organisational views of international problems.

For all these considerations they do not exclude the possibility that Pablo is maneuvering, and may be up to some trickery. But they believe that this must be put to the test. The resolution adopted (which you have no doubt seen by now) to approach us, can, in the opinion of the Ceylonese, serve that purpose. They know now of the shabby way in which this resolution has been forwarded to us, and will blow their tops about it and demand a direct committee to committee approach (IS to IC) to show seriousness. They hint that if this is not met, they will

10. Letter from Farrell Dobbs to James P. Cannon

New York, N.Y.
July 14, 1954

Los Angeles
Dear Jim:

We have already sent you copies of Burns' letter of June 25 reporting on the Pabloite rump congress and the

make an adverse report back home that will automatically mean a new formal approach to us. But if a direct IS-IC approach is made they would like us to reply proposing a parity commission with the restricted aim of distributing documents in organising a joint discussion and eventually preparing a joint conference. They understand that such a reply would start off by a rejection on our part of the validity of the Pablo congress in any shape or form.

They asked us to do this "to help them organise the fight" (their literal words). While maintaining their formal connections with Pablo they unquestionably see as their perspective, collaboration with us.

After considerable thought we don't see what else we can reasonably do except propose acceptance of their proposition to the IC. What could we possibly lose by agreeing? We obligate ourselves to nothing except to meet. We reserve our complete freedom of action. The only thing we do is to provide a vehicle which enables us to have a formal link with the Ceylonese, which they very much want, and which is their prime consideration in the immediate sense.

The Pablo resolution is in itself a de facto compliance with our terms — after their so-called "congress" they propose joint arrangements for unification. What else does this mean but making a farce of the designation of their gathering as a "Congress," and recognising the force of our position. The rest is verbiage for face saving. It looks to us that if we really want to make a bid for the forces still trapped by them, we have the Pabloites over a barrel.

Aside from the general consideration motivating the Ceylonese, cited above, it becomes clear, in discussion with them, that their local problems make this course necessary, and this aspect can be very important internationally in the days ahead.

We are for meeting their request and working as closely as possible with them, we are sure that on reflection, everyone in our IC must be of this opinion. But we believe that we will need a few weeks to discuss this matter from all angles among ourselves, and have informed them of this.

The IC meets on August 2. Can we have your views by then?

Warmest regards,

Jerry and Joe

letter of June 25 from P. Frank forwarding the rump congress resolution on unity.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter of July 8 from Burns and Joe reporting on their discussions with the Ceylonese subsequent to the rump congress and recommending a tactical orientation toward formation of a parity com-

mission. We suggest that a reply be sent to the comrades of the International Committee along the following lines:

* * *

We have defeated the Pabloites in the political struggle since publication of the Open Letter. As a result a three-way division was manifested at the rump congress: the Pabloite liquidators, the Germainist conciliators who have made political concessions to Pablo, and the Ceylonese to whom Pablo has made political concessions.

The rump congress made contradictory decisions. In proclaiming itself as the "Fourth Congress," it moved in the direction of split. The political concessions to the Ceylonese, on the other hand, implied motion in the direction of unity. These decisions of an opposite character were intended to placate the contradictory forces at the rump congress in order to hold them together. The Ceylonese could not be induced to go along with Pablo without political concessions. The Cochranites on the other hand would probably have split if the rump congress had not been proclaimed the "Fourth Congress."

We now face the question: Shall we insist that the act of proclaiming the "Fourth Congress" consummates a definitive split, or shall we accept the Ceylonese proposal to form a parity commission for the organization of a joint discussion and preparation of a joint conference?

If we say the split is now definitive our political attack on the Pabloites will continue to make its way as before. Polarization among the participants in the rump congress will continue to take place between the orthodox Trotskyist elements still entangled in Pablo's net and the revisionists who support Pablo's liquidationist line. Therefore we will sooner or later have to face the question of precisely how to bring about reunification of the viable political forces within the world movement. The question is, would acceptance of the Ceylonese proposals help to expedite this polarization, help to isolate and conclusively defeat the revisionist-liquidationist wing?

Burns' report on the rump congress seems to indicate that such a tactic would be profitable. There is no doubt that the cadres who boycotted the rump congress constitute a world majority. The political concessions Pablo had to make to the Ceylonese reflected the gravitational pull of the International Committee forces on the non-revisionist elements who participated in the rump congress. These elements were further propelled toward the International Committee by the new revisionist-liquidationist manifestations displayed by the Cochranite-Lawrenceite wing. It is significant to note that the latter voted against Pablo's political and organizational concessions to the Ceylonese.

We would be wholly justified in taking the stand that the decision of the rump gathering to proclaim itself the "Fourth Congress" had made the split definitive. However, if we were to refuse on this ground to have any relations

with those elements at the rump congress who are subject to attraction by the IC, we would be setting up organizational barriers that would help keep them in Pablo's revisionist-liquidationist net. On the other hand we can't let the struggle end in compromise solution that would slur over any of the political differences or fail to specify and denounce the precise character of Pabloite revisionism.

Consequently we must devise a tactical line that will enable us to establish relations with orthodox Trotskyists who participated in the rump congress and enlist them in a further and final stage of struggle for the reconstitution of the Fourth International on firm orthodox Trotskyist lines. Toward this end we propose:

1. Under no circumstances do we recognize the Pabloite rump meeting as a congress.

2. We will accept the proposal to establish a parity commission between the orthodox Trotskyists and the participants in the rump meeting to organize a joint discussion and prepare a joint conference.

3. Any parity commission established must be arranged through direct negotiations with the International Committee and not through any attempt to by-pass the IC in an approach to individual sections.

4. Meetings of the parity commission should be held in London in order to permit maximum IC representation.

5. Our aim in the joint discussion should be to compel the Pabloites to answer for their political and organizational crimes committed following the Third Congress, namely:

- a. Why they split the French party, discriminated against the Chinese leadership, aided and abetted the splitters in England, the United States, Canada and other sections, and "suspended" the orthodox Trotskyists in the midst of preparations for the Fourth Congress.

- b. They must explain where they stand in relation to Pablo's public repudiation of the Transitional Program, his repudiation of revolutionary perspectives for America, his apologies for Stalinism in the French general strike and East German uprising, his solidarity with Clarke's repudiation of the political revolution in the USSR, etc.

These points must be pressed, not at all out of vindictiveness against a hostile tendency, but because of the iron necessity to establish clear political and organizational lines on which a unified organization would function. Any attempt to reunify the movement without explicit reaffirmation of the fundamental Trotskyist positions and a specific rejection of Pablo's political policies and organizational methods would solve nothing. It would only lay the basis for a new and even worse internal crisis.

Before sending any reply to the comrades of the International Committee, we would like to have your views of the general situation as it now stands after the rump congress and of our proposed line of reply to the IC.

Comradely,
Farrell Dobbs

11. Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs

Los Angeles, Calif.
July 16, 1954

New York

Dear Farrell:

I received your letter and other material on the Pabloite assembly. I agree in general with the thoughts expressed by you, which appear to coincide with those of Burns and Joe.

However, I would like to make the following observations:

1. We ought to get the documents of the Pabloite gathering and give them a searching scrutiny before making a final decision on our next steps. We need the texts of the Cochranite proposals as well as the documents accepted by the majority.

It seems to me that everything is working in our favor now and it would be a mistake to think we have any need to jump into any precipitate action. There should first be an all-around confidential discussion among the leading people recognizing the IC, and full understanding and agreement before we proceed.

2. It is not quite correct to say that we have defeated the Pabloites in the political struggle since the publication of the Open Letter, but we have certainly made headway. The prospects for the near future seem to be all on our side. One big advantage we have is that our forces are firmly consolidated everywhere, while the Pabloites are running into the usual difficulties of heterogeneous combinations. We would be under more pressure to take some hasty action if the splits in the national sections had not been politically prepared and we were obliged to pay for previous mistakes in that respect by unity maneuvers.

I think the split is pretty definitive in the United States, Britain and Canada; that there is no real unity problem there; and that unity negotiations between the different groups in these three countries—if they take place at all, which is doubtful—would be rather farcical and would yield little or no result. I have the impression that the same situation prevails in France, but I would like to have more information about it.

3. I personally attach more importance to the Congress of the French party than to the Pabloite assembly, and I would like to see a full report of the proceedings, with texts of the documents. If the French comrades were able, by their own resources, to agree on a practical working arrangement for collaboration in the leadership, I doubt very much whether the French Pabloites will be much of a problem for them in the next period, with or without

a unification. But on this also we should request information and the opinion of the French comrades.

4. The first half—the bigger half—of the fight against Pabloism has been finished successfully with the consolidation of firm majorities in the different sections adhering to the IC. The victories there are politically secure because they've been based on the informed participation of the ranks at every step of the fight. These politically secured gains cannot be upset by any international maneuvers. The forces consolidated in these parties are the solid core of the international movement; the undecided elements are mainly peripheral to this core. The IC in all its deliberations from now on should proceed from this conception.

5. I agree, of course, with your position that if the Pabloites want to negotiate about unity, or any steps possibly leading toward it, they will have to deal directly with the IC, and give up their round-about approaches. I think it would be a good idea if all the affiliated sections would adopt a specific motion to this effect, to put an end to all Pabloite speculations on the possibility of separate deals with separate groups.

6. An agreement of the Pabloites to form a parity commission with representatives of the IC, to jointly arrange a discussion in preparation for a prospective joint congress, would in itself be a big gain for the Trotskyists, regardless of whether such a parity commission eventually arrived at a joint congress. The discussion will decide that, and there will be plenty of time. If we are able, through a jointly-edited Bulletin, to reach some of the undecided and misinformed people, who have been deliberately kept in ignorance of the issues, we will be bound to gain something in any case.

7. If such a parity commission is agreed upon, it will not be necessary for us to present any ultimatic formulations at its first meeting. The fact of the agreement for a parity commission would speak for itself. A little later, if it appears that there is a prospect of the Pabloites agreeing to a formal parity commission, I will suggest some formulations which the IC representatives can use to let the Pabloites save a little face without yielding anything essential to them.

I am reviewing and thinking over the past experiences with the "Committee of Four Parties," our negotiations with the Musteites, and other "parity commission" experiences of the past, from this point of view. Perhaps the past experiences with parity committees, real and fake, which I have known, can be helpful this time.

Fraternally,
J. P. Cannon