

INTERNAL BULLETIN

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Issued By;
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.

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LETTER TO THE WORKERS PARTY

Socialist Workers Party
116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.

April 10, 1946

National Committee
Workers Party, U.S.

Dear Comrades:

As instructed by the PC of the SWP, we are communicating to you herewith a series of motions adopted by the last meeting of the PC with reference to the organization of the discussion of questions in dispute between the SWP and the WP, in connection with the proposal for the fusion of the two organizations.

We believe these motions are self-explanatory, but if any points seem to you unclear, we stand ready to furnish the necessary explanations either in writing or in oral discussion between our respective sub-committees.

Fraternally yours,

Farrell Dobbs
For the Secretariat

FD/sc

SWP-WP DISCUSSION

Motions Adopted by the Political Committee of the SWP, April 9, 1946

Motion One: The PC is of the opinion that important differences exist between the SWP and the WP on the following questions, and that a discussion and clarification of these differences are a necessary precondition for a definitive decision by the next party convention on the question of unification of the two organizations.

- (1) Evaluation of the split of 1940 and its causes.
- (2) Marxist principles and method. The necessity of an aggressive, uncompromising struggle against revisionists of Marxism in every field, including the field of philosophy. The impermissibility of blocs with anti-Marxists against Marxists.
- (3) Attitude toward the Fourth International since the split of 1940:
 - (a) The Emergency Conference of 1940.
 - (b) The existence and functioning of the Fourth International since 1940.
 - (c) The resolutions and decisions of the International Conference of April, 1946.

- (4) The Russian question.
- (5) European perspectives and policy. (The resolution of the International Conference of April, 1946 -- the position of the AK of the IKD: "Three Theses", "Socialism or Barbarism").
- (6) The national and colonial questions (India-China during the war).
- (7) Evaluation of the Stalinist parties and workers organizations under their leadership and control in capitalist countries, and our tactical attitude toward them.
- (8) Tactics in the American Labor Movement.
 - (a) The labor party question in the United States.
 - (b) Methods of organizing the fight against native fascism in the U.S.
 - (c) Trade union tactics and methods.
- (9) Evaluation of the YPSL and attitude toward it.
- (10) Proletarian military policy.
- (11) Conception of the party.

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Motion Two: The Secretariat is instructed to draw up a summary statement of our position on these disputed questions for publication in our Internal Bulletin.

* * *

Motion Three: The Secretariat is instructed to submit to the National Committee of the Workers Party the above list of questions which in our opinion are in dispute between our party and the WP, as a program for discussion between the two parties, expressing our readiness at the same time to add any other questions which in their opinion should be included; and if they so desire, the Secretariat will meet with a corresponding sub-committee of their organization to elaborate the program of questions for the discussion.

* * *

Motion Four: The Secretariat is instructed to invite the National Committee of the Workers Party to prepare and submit a summary statement of their point of view on the questions in dispute between the two organizations, preferably in a single document of five to ten thousand words. This document, when received, is to be published in our Internal Bulletin for the information of the party members, in the pre-convention discussion on the question of unification.

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LETTER TO ALBERT GOLDMAN

116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.
May 8, 1946

Chicago

Dear Comrade Goldman:

We have received and studied the BULLETIN OF THE WORKERS PARTY, Volume 1, No. 6, dated March 8, 1946, in which is published two letters from Max Shachtman to you, dealing with the strategy of the minority faction in the internal struggle of the SWP.

We are preparing these letters for republication in our Internal Bulletin for the information of the party membership.

In his letter, Shachtman refers to numerous letters received by him from you. If you wish us also to publish your letters to Shachtman, send us copies and we will publish them in the Internal Bulletin.

Yours Fraternally,

Farrell Dobbs
For the Secretariat

LETTERS FROM MAX SHACHTMAN TO ALBERT GOLDMAN

(Note: For the information of the party membership we are publishing here two letters from Max Shachtman to Albert Goldman, which are reprinted from the BULLETIN OF THE WORKERS PARTY, Volume 1, No. 6, March 8, 1946. The first of these letters is dated November 3, 1945, a few weeks following the October Plenum of the Socialist Workers Party, which first took up the unity proposal of the Workers Party. The second letter is dated January 10, 1946.

We urgently recommend these two documents to the attentive study of the party membership for the light they throw on two vital aspects of the unity proposal which the forthcoming convention will have to act upon: (1) The real attitude of the Shachtmanites toward the so-called unification; (2) the intimate collaboration between the leadership of the Workers Party and the leaders of the minority faction in the SWP in working out the practical means and methods of effecting a split in the SWP.

In the further course of the discussion preceding the convention, this material will be subjected to a thorough-going analysis. In the meantime we believe that every party member will recognize that the letters themselves, without any comment from us, contribute a great deal to the clarification of the question: what was the real meaning and the real purpose of the "unity proposal" of the Workers Party?)

Secretariat of the PC

* * *

November 3, 1945

Dear Albert:

This is the first opportunity I have had to reply to your letters. However, the delay is not so bad, because in the last few days I have not only had a chance to see quite a number of comrades and discuss with them all the questions connected with the unity problem, but also the chance to give more thought to the problem myself. I think it is a good deal clearer, more concrete, in my mind than before.

Your idea to take advantage of the SWP's Russian Revolution meetings to distribute a special leaflet on the question of unity was a good one. The only trouble is that it has proved to be unfeasible technically. To distribute a little one-page leaflet would be fruitless sniping and would hardly make an impression. To write the kind of leaflet that would have an effect -- one giving the details of the situation, of the negotiations, of our point of view, etc., -- would require more time than I have had in the past week, and I am afraid that by the time I got around to writing it, having it mimeographed, and sent out to the branches everywhere, we would be closer to the Lenin meetings than to the November 7th meetings. The best substitute under the circumstances is to do what, it appears from a letter I just received from Ferguson, you decided to do in Chicago, that is, make a special distribution of the documents that have already been

published in Labor Action and the New International. We will do that in New York as well. Besides, there will be more than one excellent opportunity in the future to bring all the facts before the membership and the sympathizing circle of the SWP. Cannon has not heard the last of this business, but only the first. We will make his ears ring with it before long.

The other idea is even better and above all it is feasible. It can be done immediately. I have discussed it with Felix and with Oscar and both are agreed. It gives us an opportunity to do two things at once: 1) to clear up, once more, the question of our position on the tendency bulletin. There will be no difficulty on that so far as we are concerned. For our part, we had never decided in advance that the morning after the fusion was consummated we would appear with a bulletin of our own. I even made that clear at the very first New York WP membership meeting at which the fusion question was reported on. We informed the SWP negotiators of our demand in order to see how they would react to it, and you know the results. Our monolithists professed themselves to be "shocked" at our proposal. This very profession was enough for us. You will note, by the way, that in our last letter to the SWP, mimeographed copy of which I am enclosing to you, we speak plainly of the failure of the Plenum resolution to deal with the "position of the SWP on the right of a minority in a revolutionary Marxist party to issue a bulletin of its own tendency inside the party." Our reply to your letter on the subject will permit us to reiterate our view again, and to make it as clear as any human being would wish. 2) to establish yourselves more plainly as an "autonomous" group. I agree enthusiastically with the form in which you make the proposal. That is, the letter should be addressed formally to the WP over the formal signature of the Minority Group, SWP, "per" the four NC members, (B, G, M and W). A copy should be sent to the SWP. Our reply should be just as formally addressed to your group, also a copy to the SWP. Naturally, this is not a normal procedure! Let the formalists say and do what they will about it. It will show that the Minority Group is already acting as an autonomous, if not an independent, group and that it considers the clarification of the unity question to be more important than the formal (i.e. in this case, the faction) discipline of the Cannonites. It will also prepare the ground for what I deem to be the indicated next steps.

What are these steps? I believe they are indicated by two documents that have already been written. One, is the statement of the Minority to the Plenum. It starts out with the statement that the Cannon resolution is designed to prevent unity. It ends up with the statement that the responsibility for the breaking off of the unity negotiations will fall entirely on the shoulders of the Cannonites. Nothing could be clearer, so far as the Minority is concerned. Two, is the letter we have just sent to the SWP in reply to its Plenum resolution. You are probably aware of the fact that Cannon sent us the resolution with nothing more than a sentence, in his covering letter, to inform us that the resolution was enclosed -- that's all, nothing more!

I am sorry that there didn't appear to be enough time to consult with you about our letter. But I showed the whole text to Felix and Daniel and they agreed with it in its entirety; whereupon, with

the approval of our PC, we sent it off. (En passant, it is interesting to note that Johnson voted against the sentence which speaks of the right of any minority in a revolutionary Marxist party to publish a bulletin of its own tendency inside the party! Understand that if you can!) But to resume:

This letter of ours, as is clear, is calculated to give the SWP its final opportunity to clarify its position. I have not the slightest doubt about the contents of its reply. What nobody and nothing was able to do in the past, this last letter of ours will not succeed in doing. Cannon will reply (I am assuming that he answers us) with a repetition of the same old "clever" ambiguities which leave everything where it was before. With this difference: We will not reply in the same old way. We will be unable any longer to allow the Cannonites to maintain the farce. Upon receipt of their reply, we will reply in turn with a last letter. In it, we will establish the following facts: It was the Minority group that initiated the idea of unity; it was the Cannon group which resisted it and condemned it. We, of the WP then took up the question of unity and presented entirely reasonable proposals for consummating it. This too was resisted, not frontally this time but in a cowardly and deceptive way. We made every effort to give the Cannonites the opportunity to make their position honorably and honestly clear. Even though they did not take the opportunity, the fact is now patent to all that they are opposed to unity. Their opposition to unity is based on their conception of the party. It is the conception of monolithism, which is alien to the conception of democratic centralism and therefore to our conception. They are concerned only, or primarily, with the maintenance of the SWP only as a formal name for the Cannon faction; hence their opposition to the unity proposals of the Minority and the WP. We record that the failure of unity rests upon their shoulders and theirs alone. We will notify the radical public and the other groups accordingly, and we will invite the intervention of the other (foreign) groups against the monolithism of the Cannonite faction. To all intents and purposes, the unity negotiations are at an end so far as we are concerned. The SWP may continue till doomsday to take the position that it is "investigating" and "exploring" the unity question at a time when in actuality and in the eyes of all it is sabotaging it. We refuse to be a party to this deception (there has been enough of this kind of "clever" diplomacy and "maneuvering" in the movement to last it for another century).

So far as "political discussions" and "probing to the depth of the differences" is concerned, we are for it. But there is discussion and discussion. We wanted a discussion in order to smooth the road to unity. The Cannonites "want" a "discussion" only as a substitute for unity and as a cloak for their sabotage of unity. We will nevertheless engage in a discussion with them in our press. But such a discussion has nothing to do with the question of unity. It is the kind of political debate that takes place (or should take place) between politically divergent organizations at all times, each defending its views and polemicizing against the views of the other. We have had such a discussion with the SWP (if a monologue -- which is what it was two times out of three -- can be called a discussion) for the past five and a half years and are prepared, if necessary, to continue it for another five and a half years. But no fakes! We will

not label such a discussion a "preparation for unity", and contribute to the fraud that by it the SWP is moving toward, or honestly taking up the question of unity.

That (the ideas, not the exact wording) will be our final reply.

Now, what, in my opinion, should the Minority then do? It should issue a formal statement, signed by the leaders of the group, containing the following:

It gives briefly an account of the history of its fight in the SWP. It shows how many times it bent over backward in order to avert the kind of factional fighting that Cannon always seeks to force a serious opposition to engage in. It shows how it contented itself with amendments in order to avert a situation such as counter-resolutions always, or often, create. It shows how it was even prepared to sign the "peace pact," etc. It shows how it took the initiative in the unity question and tells, frankly, how it worked together with the WP to achieve unity. It tells the story of how the Cannonites sabotaged the unity proceedings and how hypocritically they sabotaged them (along the lines of Felix's excellent remarks at a membership meeting on the "two lines"). It adds that the position of the WP on the question was, in sum, unexceptionable. It concludes with this: The Cannonites have reduced the SWP to a monolithic organization in flagrant opposition to the whole struggle and tradition of Leninism and Trotskyism. The SWP is a faction, the Cannon faction. We, the Minority, are opposed to the root to its conception of the role and the inner relations of a Marxist party. We are leaving the SWP and joining the WP. But we do not for a moment consider our action a "split." We are leaving a faction, a "party" which the Cannonites have reduced to a faction, to a monolithic faction. We are uniting with the WP which has our conception of the role and relations of a Marxian party. Nor do we for a moment consider our action to be based on an "organizational" difference. The question of the concept of the party is not an organizational question, it is a political question. On that political question, there is a gulf between Bolshevism and Menshevism. On that political question, there was and still is the struggle between Trotsky and the Stalinists. On that political question, there is an irreconcilable rift between us, who stand for Trotsky's and Lenin's position, and the Cannonites, who stand somewhere between Zinovievism and Stalinism. We (it is still the Minority speaking) warn everybody against continuing to fall into this clever trap of Cannon's, of Cannon who tries to minimize (to "bagatellize") the vital and overwhelmingly important political question of the Bolshevik conception of the party by referring to it only as an "organizational" question, as if to say that it has nothing to do with politics and that, consequently, political positions and alignments cannot be taken on the basis of it. We do not deny that on some other political questions we agree with the Cannonites and disagree with the WP, just as on other political questions the reverse is true. But we are not taking our action (of joining with the WP) because of these political disagreements we have with the Cannonites. We have taken the position that such political disagreements as we have with the Cannonites (democratic slogans, defense of Russia, etc.) and even the political disagreements that the WP has with the SWP, are compatible with membership in a revolutionary party. That has been

demonstrated in the past of the movement; it is proved by the political composition of the WP. What these disagreements are incompatible with, is a monolithic party, i.e. the Cannon faction. We posed the question of unity not only because it was desirable and possible (possible, if the Cannonites had acted as genuine Trotskyists and not Zinovievists) but also because the position taken on unity was a test of the position taken on the kind of party we want and we believe necessary. With all our misgivings about the Cannonites, we were prepared to do everything legitimate to help them pass this test and thus give the American movement a new start. But they have not passed the test. They want a monolithic faction, a Zinovievist-Stalinist party. We do not. We unite with those who are for unity; we unite with those who want to build and are building the kind of party that must be built in this country and everywhere else. We do not want to conceal the fact that we have some political differences with the official position of the WP. But these differences can be fully and freely discussed and settled within the WP precisely because it is not based on a monolithic conception but on the conception our movement has always upheld. Etc., etc., etc.

(From the above, you will see that I do not agree with the criticism of the German comrades, or rather, that if I do agree with it, it is not with that part of the criticism that has to do with the policies that must now be followed. To talk about the Minority now working out a "political platform" "of its own," is, in my opinion, absurd, artificial and downright misleading. If the Minority had a dozen such "political platforms" it would not change the situation and the problem fundamentally. Such a platform would be (1) no argument for breaking from the SWP, inasmuch as we contend that "differences are compatible"; and (2) no argument against joining the WP, unless one has the conception that the SWP enjoys some sort of different status, a different official "quality" from the WP, a conception that falls down with those who contend that the two groups are to be regarded equally as tendencies of the 4th between which everyone is freely entitled to make his choice).

Such a statement as I outlined means a break, of course; in fact, it says so in so many words. It means a "short" perspective for the Minority. It means not waiting for the convention, etc., etc. I am convinced, however, that it is correct. And for these reasons:

Nothing more can or will happen up to the (unconvoked) convention or after it that can in any way be expected to change the situation or to make it clearer. Cannon has the "perfect" formula for stalling; it is as good tomorrow as it is today. It will not be more invalid, more assailable tomorrow than it is already (or than it will be by the time we have sent our final answer to their reply to our recent letter). All that is required to serve as a basis for a definitive action by the Minority is already at hand; nothing (nothing of importance) can or will be added to it.

Second, and as a consequence, there is nothing you can give to your group as a perspective. You cannot say: We don't join the WP now, but we do join it if. . . if. . . if. . . If what? If Cannon does what? If he "rejects" unity? He will do that in 1950, but not before. If he disallows fraternization with the WP? Why

should he? Then what? The only thing you can really do is to "create" a "disciplinary situation." Well, I am not against a ruse in politics. But in this case, it seems to be unnecessary. What is more, it will impress everybody with its artificiality. The "wise" ones will say: That was cooked up; it was just a pretext; why did they need it? I add my voice to theirs: Why? Isn't such a forthright, honorable and honest, politically-correct and politically-unassailable declaration as I suggest above quite sufficient?

Third, if the "split" is dragged out indefinitely, or held up for some unknown date (unknown and unknowable), what will happen meanwhile in the group? It will be heavily threatened by disintegration, for the reasons given in the above two paragraphs. Hold back in order to win Archie? A fine comrade, I'd like to have him. But you can't base a policy on him. My own opinion is that he is as good as lost now; it is too late to win him. All he can do (and does) in the Minority now is to delay it another few weeks or months. You are chasing after a car that is gone. On the other hand, this policy of chasing after a car that is gone will produce (is producing!) the greatest impatience and even demoralization among comrades who are not one whit inferior from any standpoint, to Archie. I keep urging patience upon them, but I know that they are at least 95% right. In between Archie and them, is a group of uncertain comrades. To continue the "long" perspective means only (all my experience dictates this conclusion) to keep them uncertain, but not to win them. A man who is fed uncertainty for too long a time will not suddenly change to another diet. I think they can be won, but only if a clear explanation is given to them (your letter to X is a good thing and should be followed up every other day, so to speak, with similar and stronger letters) and only if a militant determination is shown them by the leaders.

Fourth, and along the same line, the "worst" happens, let us say. Cannon will shout himself blue in the face: Look, they split, but we have Archie and Bayonne, the proletarians. Who will pay the slightest attention to this demagogue? Nobody, not even the Cannonites. Why? Because everybody, inside and outside the party, inside and outside the country, will say: Where is this Bayonne? Never heard of it! Who is this Archie? Fine comrade, no doubt, but who is he? Cannon will shout: They only took 38 or 8 people instead of 47! Everyone will laugh at him. Everyone will say: Goldman and Morrow and Williams and Bennett and their followers (if they are five or five hundred!) have broken with Cannon! That's what will stand out in the mind of everybody in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Mexico City, London, Paris and Rome. And what is more, I am convinced that when the showdown comes, and "those four" act in concert, their followers, confronted with an action, with the unpostponable actual choice, and not merely with a general and vague discussion about perspective, will more likely number 38 instead of 8. If you simply fall into the "split" or are "forced" into it, the number is more likely to be reversed.

Fifth, the "International." What will the other sections say? Will they condemn the Minority for joining the WP? Politically impossible, unless they are biological idiots. You will write them in detail; you will present your case resolutely. You will show how

Cannon flouted the International, how he ignored it, how it never even occurred to him to invoke their aid and counsel in the unity question, how he reduced the IS to a vestpocket nail-file of his own and made impossible the functioning of the elected Executive, the elected Secretariat, or the elected Secretary. Any critic should be asked -- belligerently, if you please -- why you cannot work for unity just as well as a member of the WP, which has a flawless record on the question, as you could as a member of the Cannon faction party. I think the "International" needs an added jolt about Cannon and Co., something to jerk them up in their seats and make them take notice -- and action -- against this imposter-in-Marxism. The course I suggest will be just such a necessary jolt.

A last point. In discussion with Felix and Daniel, the question arose of a joint membership discussion (Minority and WP). The more I think of it, the better I like the idea which (if I remember rightly) Felix was the one to put forward tentatively. It is this: The Minority calls a caucus meeting, inviting all SWP members to attend, and inviting a representative of the WP to come down to address it in order to give his position on the unity question in detail and in order to submit himself to questioning from the audience. Felix should be chairman, to give added "Minority-Group-Autonomy" imprint to the meeting. Why not propose this at the New York caucus meeting? Archie objects? All right, he is asked: Why do you object? You have a number of critical positions on the WP. All right, face its representative with your position and your questions! It will be our meeting! Let Shachtman answer your questions and state his views! If Archie continues to object -- vote! If the motion carries, I am invited! The Cannonite ranks are informed and invited to attend. What will Cannon say? That's my last worry! What will he do to the Minority? That should be your last worry. The Minority is, in actuality, an autonomous group, if not fully independent. It acts that way in actuality in its dealings with the WP (and in its actual attitude toward the SWP). Why not do it more and more openly?

I am meeting with Felix, Daniel, Oscar and others this Thursday night. I will put forward these ideas to them and see what they say about them. Meanwhile, I am very anxious of course to hear your reaction. To prepare Felix for Thursday's discussion, I am sending him a copy of this letter.

With warmest personal regards,

Max Shachtman

* * *

January 10, 1946

Dear Albert:

This afternoon I finished a long session with Felix in which we arrived, I think, at the clearest, firmest and most satisfactory agreement we have ever made. I hope that after Felix and I have presented our conclusions to you, you will give equally firm support to them. I owe you a long letter, but I want this one to get to you as quickly as possible, and I shall therefore make these notes as brief as I can.

We agreed, when you were here, on the issuance of the joint statement at the beginning of the new year or in the middle of this month. The closer we get to the day when the statement should be made public, the greater and clearer are the doubts expressed about it. They are expressed by such a good friend as R., by Felix and -- this is not entirely new to you -- by myself as well. This afternoon, Felix gave a series of reasons why the policy, so to speak, of the joint statement is wrong and harmful and they are both cogent and impressive. (1) The Minority has formally committed itself to doing one of two things in the event of a Cannonite prohibition against open collaboration between it and the WP: either it will abide by the Cannonite decision or it will leave the party. The Cannonite PC has adopted such a prohibition. The Minority, by issuing the joint statement with the WP, neither abides by the formal party decision nor does it leave the party. (2) The decision to issue the joint statement is predicated, at least 99%, on the idea that Cannon will follow its publication by taking disciplinary measures against the Minority. Cannon has known for some time, and if he did not know, the Germans and Jeffries made it clear to him, that the Minority prefers to take a series of steps which will oblige him to expel its supporters. What, however, if Cannon is possessed of normal shrewdness and says: "Your joint statement is only one of a series of provocations. I do not intend to accommodate you in your tactics. There will be no suspension or expulsion -- at most, a censure. Now, comrades, just what is the next in your series of irresponsible provocations?" In my opinion, that is the greater likelihood. What does the Minority do then? It has to "figure out" some additional steps which will drive Cannon to decisive organizational measures against it. It then becomes clear not only to the entire SWP and to the entire WP and to the entire International, but also to all the radical sympathizers that the course followed by the Minority was one of a series of provocations; that it did not have the courage of its convictions (namely, the conviction that its place is really in the WP -- an opinion that everybody attributes, and rightly, to the Minority), and that it sought to place the responsibility for its own political step on the shoulders of Cannon; and that the onus for the inevitable division falls not on the Cannonites but on the transparent maneuverings of the Minority. If, after a series of such open violations of party discipline, Cannon finally decides on a suspension or expulsion, at least half the advantages of the union between the Minority and the WP will go lost in the eyes of the sympathizers, of the SWP members and perhaps, above all, in the eyes of the International. Everyone will say: "Well, say what you will, Cannon couldn't very well act differently. The Minority forced him into it. Etc., etc." I wrote you a few months ago along the same line, as you will recall. Now my opinion is shared by many other comrades, especially as they see the date for the issuance of the statement staring them in the face. Felix feels especially keenly about it. So does R. So does K. So do others. Meanwhile, the group in New York is in a state of complete apathy, disorientation, uncertainty, utter disgust with the SWP, and a growing feeling that the joint statement idea is simply a device -- and not too good a device -- for a backhanded way of breaking with the Cannonites; they hope it will work and. . . fear that it won't work. I add to their feeling the conviction that even if it does "work" it will not redound to our credit.

Alternative? An alternative is absolutely essential. More and more comrades, at least here in New York, want out and want out badly. This group now includes Felix, and that is most significant and important. I understand this reaction to the full. There is absolutely no party work for these comrades to engage in now. Sniping at Cannon for this or that reason, is no substitute for party work. It does not even make up a real factional fight. There is nothing for the comrades to do in the form of party work. How can they possibly get interested in it when they know that their whole future, beginning tomorrow, or if not tomorrow than a week or a month from now, lies with the WP?

One alternative suggested, by R., is this: the joint statement is not issued. We wait until after the pre-conference abroad. Inasmuch as it can pretty safely be foretold that the resolution on the American question will be less than satisfactory (short of a miracle), the Minority then issues a statement saying, in effect: the European comrades do not understand the situation; their resolution is unsatisfactory; we do not blame them, they simply do not know what is actually taking place here; we find ourselves obliged, consequently, to leave the SWP and to join the WP.

At first, Felix was strongly in favor of this alternative. It did not take too long to show that this alternative is, if anything, a poorer solution of the problem than the "joint statement policy." First of all, it is extremely bad to break with Cannon not on the basis of something that happened or was decided here but on the basis of what was decided by the International, so to speak. Cannon can easily argue, in such a case, that the Minority broke not with him but with the International; that it refused to abide not by his decision and his discipline but by the decision and discipline of the International. And that is how such a step would actually appear on the surface. Secondly, there is absolutely no assurance that the pre-conference will take place on schedule. It has already been postponed once; there is as much reason to believe that it will be postponed again as not. After all, there are good objective grounds for a postponement, all other considerations aside. To date, not a single resolution has been presented, at least not in this country. The delegates will come there cold. Some pre-conference! Besides, there has been an increasingly conciliatory attitude in the sections toward the WP (which is the common future both of us and of you). If you pull out after a decision by the International, which will probably say in so many words that you should remain inside the SWP, it will be construed as an action against the International by you which was prompted by us, which would retard the slow but important improvement in our relations with the other sections.

There is another alternative, one I put forward and which Felix firmly agrees to follow. Immediately, the Minority issues a statement of its own. In it, it says: We have fought for a long time for unity. Here is the record. Cannon is absolutely against it, as the record shows. We and the WP are for it. The WP was ready to go to the most extreme lengths to achieve it. Now we summarize. We acknowledge frankly that there is no immediate prospect of winning the SWP to the idea, for Cannon has done a good job of poisoning the membership. We are confronted with a choice; one, stay in the SWP and

continue a fight. Given the Cannon regime, it can only be a disruptive as well as a futile fight (for the next period). We are not interested in disrupting the SWP, nor do we seek to destroy it. Everything we want is embraced in the word unity. The other choice is joining the WP. That we are hereby doing. We have already declared that we are closer to the WP than to the SWP (i.e., Cannon). The W.P.'s position for unity brings us even more close together. We are revolutionists who do not want for too long to substitute the factional struggle for participation in the class struggle for the purpose of building the Trotskyist movement. We cannot do any effective work along that line as things stand now in the SWP. We can do such work in the WP. If there was only one Trotskyist party, we would absolutely oppose a breakaway. It would split the movement and add confusion. But there is no question of split involved now. We oppose splits (heavy emphasis on this). We are not splitting, however. We are leaving one revolutionary organization in which we cannot function and which stands in the way of unity, and joining another revolutionary organization, which is not one whit less meritorious, and in which we can function. The W.P., and we as members of it, will continue as before to fight for union of the two groups. We will work for affiliation to the International and for building it up in this country and abroad.

That's all! Of the three "lines," this is by far the best. First, it is honest and forthright. It tells the truth (which the other proposals do not). It simply avoids the whole formal (and complicated, and hard to explain, and futile to argue) question of national and international discipline. We are not provoking anyone. We are not engaging in small maneuvers. We are not violating discipline. We are simply shifting from one Trotskyist organization to another Trotskyist organization. We are simply going to work in the party in which we can do something effective for the movement. We are not splitting and forming a new movement (this is most important!), we are simply strengthening an already existing section of a common, Fourth Internationalist movement.

If such a statement is drawn up in dignified language, with no invective against the Cannonites or the SWP -- rather in the tone of regret that the SWP did not see fit to take the necessary forward step toward unity -- with a minimum of condemnation (not no condemnation, only a minimum!) of the Cannon faction for paralyzing the unification; if the statement is as honest and forthright and undiplomatic and truthful as it can and should be, it will not only be a desirable "innovation" in the movement, but it cannot fail to make an impression on the radical workers and intellectuals, on the sympathizers and others, who are serious and thoughtful.

I am for Felix and you drawing it up immediately, without another moment's delay. Then, put it to the vote of the two groups. If you and Felix are firmly for it, there is no question of how the vote will go. Those who don't vote for it, will go along, in four cases out of five. Those who don't go along, will come later. Our attitude toward them should be the same as that which you expressed in your letter to Jeffries. The sections will not "go along"? Probably not. But we will still confront them with the demand: Are

you for unity, as we still demand? Then say so. If you are not for it, we demand to know why. Give political reasons. If you don't do so, or if your reasons are childish and pouting reasons, we will continue the work of trying to reorient the International movement -- we have a lot of patience. In the long run, Cannon cannot win in the International. The whole trend is against him. The worst that can happen is that this trend will be interrupted for a few months by the Minority's statement. But the trend will inexorably be resumed. We must hammer and hammer and hammer on the significant fact that every single International comrade who is here or who has been here is against the Cannonites: they have been on the spot; they have seen; they know.

Such a line will cut right through the German arguments; it will challenge them frontally as they should be challenged. It puts to them the blunt question: Have workers and militants and revolutionists the right -- yes or no -- to choose the WP as a legitimate Trotskyist organization in place of the SWP? Is the SWP the Trotskyist movement here, or the only one -- the one in which all Trotskyists must function? If we cannot join (i.e., choose) the WP instead of the SWP, mustn't we, and you Germans, and for that matter the WPers themselves, tell everybody that the SWP is the organization they must join, come what may? And is it not your own intention, dear friends, to form a faction inside the SWP with the (secretly avowed! secretly avowed to Shachtman!) intention of organizing a "bigger and better split"? I am not in favor of ignoring the Germans (or anyone else in the movement), whether I agree with them or do not agree with them.

There are fifty arguments I could add for the policy I propose, including the urgent need we, of the WP, have of the talents represented by the Minority comrades. The problem, after all, is one of concentrating all efforts on building an honest fertile, democratic Trotskyist organization in the U.S. But this letter is already too long. Felix agrees and, I repeat, agrees firmly. We are so convinced of its correctness, and so much aware of the importance of your agreement, that we have decided to have Felix leave for Chicago immediately to consult with you and the others. Please listen to him most attentively. He is absolutely on the right track. And, in Cannon's brilliant phrase, now is the time to strike, when the iron is hot. I count heavily on your agreement, on your speedy and vigorous action. We will all gain by it.

With warmest personal regards to you and the other comrades,

Max Shachtman

###

LETTER FROM D.D. HARBER TO J.P. CANNON

London,
13th February 1946

Dear Comrade Cannon,

I have gathered, from my reading of the documents relating to the internal discussion within the SWP on the proposed fusion with the Workers' Party, that it is possible that disciplinary action -- amounting perhaps to suspension or expulsion -- may be taken against the Minority or its leading members on the basis of the independent discussions which this Minority has been having with the leadership of the WP. In particular, certain statements of your own on the subject of the necessity of first dealing with the "disloyal SWP Minority" have led me to such a conclusion.

I am therefore writing you this letter (a copy of which I am sending to Comrade Morrow for his information) with a view to reminding you of the attitude taken both by leading SWP members, and by the IS, towards a very similar situation which existed a few years back in Britain.

I must state first of all that I, personally, utterly condemn any independent discussions which may have taken place between the SWP Minority and the WP, since I consider that all such discussions with an organisation outside the Fourth, should take place through official party channels.

However, such was not the attitude adopted by leading SWP members, by the IS and the IEC in regard to the fusion discussions between the RSL and the WIL which began in 1942. At that time a minority in the RSL were in favour of immediate fusion with the WIL upon an organisational basis, regardless of the political differences. Such a fusion was then opposed by the majority of the British Section, and, by a specific resolution of the leading bodies of that organisation, the minority was forbidden to put any other than the majority position in discussions with the WIL, or to hold any discussions with the WIL behind the back of the RSL.

Nevertheless, such discussions between the Minority of the RSL and the WIL did in fact take place, in secret.

When, towards the end of the summer of 1942, Comrade Stuart of the SWP arrived in Britain, he (1) urged that the RSL Minority should be represented on the Committee which was to carry on negotiations with the WIL; (2) urged that members of the Minority get into the closest possible contact with the WIL. In his own discussions with the WIL leadership, Comrade Stuart was accompanied by members of the RSL minority.

When later, the RSL leadership obtained proof of the secret negotiations which the Minority had been carrying out with the WIL, that Minority, or most of it, was expelled for breach of discipline. However, as you are aware, the IEC did not consider that this was

sufficient ground for expulsion, and later re-instated those who had been expelled.

The analogy with the present position in the SWP, is, as you will see, a very close one -- except, of course, that the RSL Minority had been specifically instructed not to carry on independent negotiations with the WIL, whereas, so far as I am aware, no such specific prohibition has existed in the SWP. I would therefore urge that you pay particular attention to the experience of the fusion negotiations in Britain, when condemning or contemplating disciplinary action against the SWP Minority.

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COMMENT ON COMRADE HARBER'S LETTER

By J. Stuart

May 6, 1946

Dear Comrade Dobbs:

Your letter of April 19, with the enclosed copy of the DDH letter arrived the other day. In reply to your request for information, I can state the following:

1. At the time of my arrival in 1942, the RSL minority did indeed cooperate with the WIL and was on the verge of joining it.
2. I met one of the leaders of this minority at the house of a WIL leader, who was the first friend I contacted. Since I only had two days to spend in the city, I naturally went to the nearest address, which happened to be the one of the WIL leader. It must be remembered that at the time very little was known about addresses and very scant contacts had previously been made.
3. At the house of the above-mentioned WIL leader, I discovered in discussion what the situation was: That the WIL leadership encouraged the RSL minority to break discipline and provoke expulsion. I disapproved of that line immediately and, indeed, earned from the WIL leadership their sharp displeasure for taking this stand.
4. The RSL minority ("Right Wing") I advised to immediately comply with the organization's discipline and to fight for unification, with which I agreed as a perspective, inside the RSL, as a disciplined opposition. They had, upon agreement with the WIL leaders, drawn up a resolution defying the RSL leadership. I persuaded them to withdraw the document and to make a declaration that they would abide by the decisions of the RSL. Upon this basis, I proposed to DDH that they be given representation in the negotiating committee.
5. The minority ("Right Wing") did indeed carry out the advice I gave them, and thereupon came into conflict with the WIL leadership. DDH, expelling them for their previous stand, refused to readmit them until the IS made the specific demand for a reorganization of the RSL. The IS approved of my advice and recognized that the minority made every effort to correct its mistake and to act as a disciplined group within the RSL.

6. To the WIL leadership I stressed the need to carry on negotiations seriously with the RSL as a whole as the only way to obtain unification. I pointed out to them that cooperation with the minority alone, which was leading to the split of the latter, could only serve as an obstacle to unification. They disagreed sharply. But after the RSL minority changed its stand and took a disciplined stand toward their organization, direct negotiations between RSL and WIL did finally ensue and eventually led to fusion.

In addition, it must be borne in mind that the disagreements with the WIL were never on questions of principle, as is the case between the whole movement and the WP, and that on tactical questions (mil. policy) the WIL was closer to the line of the movement than the RSL. However, regardless of this fact, the IS as well as I personally always insisted on correct organizational procedure: On direct negotiation between the WIL with the RSL, which was the official section, and on discipline of the minority within the RSL.

###

RESOLUTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
OF SOUTH AFRICA

To: The Secretary, SWP

February 28, 1946

Dear Comrade,

Below please find resolution of PC of FIOSA (Fourth International organization of South Africa).

Greetings,
H. Jaffe

RESOLUTION ON UNITY BETWEEN THE SWP AND THE WP IN AMERICA

(Adopted by the PC at its Meeting on February 27, 1946, Unanimously)

1. The FIOSA accepts the characterisation of the WP as a petty bourgeois tendency, forming the tailend to the Trotskyist revolutionary party.

2. The petty bourgeois nature of the WP manifests itself in political and organisational instability and deviations. To enumerate:

(i) Its policy of abstentionism from the colonial and national struggles in India and China, arising out of an ultra-left policy of withdrawal from national struggles in which the national bourgeoisie participates, and in the case of China from a false position on Russia as well. These attitudes have never even been seriously defended, but are thrown out as the gracious contributions of "literary radicals."

(ii) Its entirely meaningless characterisation of the USSR as an imperialist, bureaucratic collectivist state, despite the clear meaning given to imperialism by Lenin; and despite the

necessity for the defence of the USSR as a degenerate workers state, the WP refuses to defend the gains of the 1917 Revolution.

(iii) Its ambiguous, undefined attitude to the Three Theses of the IKD and the democratic question in Europe.

(iv) Its flagrantly Zionist policies to solve the Jewish problem, e.g. calling for unrestricted immigration into Palestine, and contemptuously subordinating the struggle of the Arabs for self-determination to the slogan of free immigration. This is in line with the pernicious policies of the WP in India, China, and their disregard of the struggles of the colonial masses.

(v) Its flippant attitude towards the anti-Fascist United Front, and its opposition to the CP being party to such a front.

(vi) Its peevish attitude to unity with the SWP, e.g. it issues an ultimatum that it will proceed no further if the discussions are to continue, and if the SWP maintains its stand on party-regime. It professes grave political differences necessitating an internal bulletin, but then again is ready to forego this right without even indicating its intention of fighting for the acceptance of its views.

(vii) The literary style in which Labor Action and New International are written is transparent, thin and uncertain, while, in reference to the SWP it is peevishly insolent.

3. While we recognise the advantage of bringing into a unified Trotskyist party all the political and intellectual material in the WP we fully endorse the necessity for the fullest possible discussion before unity in order to make clear the position of the WP as defined above, particularly at the present stage of the working class struggle in the USA when organisational strength, coherence and militancy are of paramount importance for the application of correct tactics and to avoid dissipation of energies.

4. We have to hand despite all the internal publications, no tittle of evidence for the existence of a bureaucracy in the SWP.

5. We deplore the methods of the SWP Minority of entering into independent negotiations with the WP. We deplore the split-orientation of the SWP Minority. While recognizing the great services rendered by Morrow, Goldman and Logan on the political plane, we feel that the former's approach has become more and more mechanical and less and less dialectical.

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THE DANGERS OF UNITY WITH THE SHACHTMANITES

With Special Reference to Their Attitude Towards
The National and Colonial Questions

By Hosea Jaffe

The factual side of the dispute emerges from the documents at hand. In outline, the development took the following lines:

1. A Minority faction led by Goldman, Morrow and Williams formally opened the question of unity with the Workers Party. Goldman, by the way, was described by Trotsky as being uncertain in the 1939-1940 dispute, although then he was with Trotsky and Cannon.

2. The WP led by Max Shachtman (who broke, after the 1940 split with the anti-Marxist Burnham and the anti-Bolshevik Macdonald) followed up their friends' resolution, which the SWP Majority, naturally, did not act upon, waiting for a move from the WP itself. The WP letter proposed unity discussions.

3. The SWP accepted these proposals and two meetings were held with the WP. Discussion also developed inside the SWP.

4. The WP raised the matter of a tendency organ as a condition of unity. Under pressure from the Minority the WP agreed not to issue a tendency organ, but, then raked up another condition for unity.

5. The second WP condition for unity, after the question of their tendency organ had more or less fallen away, due to the correct traditional stand taken up by the Majority, was that the SWP Majority had to accept the WP views on party-structure!!

6. From the outset the SWP Majority approached the question in a careful way. Emphasising that unity followed by a paralysing faction fight and then a disastrous split would be tragic, the Majority stated that before making a unity declaration it was essential to have full discussions to sound the depths of the differences, and to secure programmatic agreement as the only sound basis for a lasting unity. Through full discussions and through cooperation in certain fields it would be seen whether the differences were compatible with membership in one party. In this spirit the SWP Majority entered into unity discussion with the WP. When the WP raised the matter of a tendency organ as a condition to unity the Majority did not reject this demand but considered it in the concrete situation. While the WP look on factions and tendencies as the normal state of affairs, the Majority looks upon faction fights and organs as the abnormal, necessitated only in order to resolve internal disputes and, on resolving a question, the party should return to normal functioning. Had the WP really gone all out for unity it would have accepted the SWP point of view that the WP, once in the party could issue a tendency organ and form a faction only when necessary, and only later on, so that unity would not be immediately followed by a fierce faction fight and a split.

But not only did the WP raise this as a condition for unity, but actually, later, went so far as to insist that the SWP Majority drop its concept of party organisation!

7. The Minority, seeing the firm, principled stand of the Majority, transformed its "unity perspective" into a split perspective, causing the faction to begin to break up. The leaders of the Minority openly violated party discipline as the above summary shows and compelled the party to give the Minority a warning. This behavior of the Minority reflected the petty bourgeois "anti-centralism" of the Shachtmanites, and itself, by developing towards a split orientation, showed the great dangers of unity with the WP. Disloyalty, disdain for party tradition, recklessness when politically defeated -- these traits of petty bourgeois elements came to the fore. In spite of the services which the leaders of the Minority, especially Goldman, and Morrow, have rendered to the movement, their conduct sadly justifies the estimation of our Argentine comrades.

Underneath the organisational developments raised by the unity discussions with the WP and the Minority, lie the deep, serious theoretical, programmatic and organisational differences between the WP and the Fourth International.

It is important to review these differences. This is all the more necessary because the SWP Majority itself did not, at least in the material in our hands, deal with the WP attitude, approach and slogans on the colonial question. Shachtman's rotten stand on Zionism recently warranted a strong attack, which we have not yet seen. This brief review of the dangers of unity aims, inter alia (among other things) to introduce into the question of unity the WP stand on the national question IN THE COLONIES.

Organisational Differences with the Shachtmanites

When it thinks it convenient the WP supports various sections of the FI. On the other hand the WP itself has attempted, fortunately with dismal success, a rival "international." The WP set up a Commission FOR the Fourth International, i.e., a rival, new body to the established centre of the International. By using the term "for" it is meant that there is not yet a Fourth International in existence, and that one must still be formed.

The FI has held two international congresses, one in 1938, the other during the war. First of all the FI is an international programme. Lenin proclaimed the 3rd International on this same basis, before strong national groups let alone parties had grown up in the various countries. While it is true that the national sections of the FI are still very weak, it cannot be denied that there are such sections in every important country, that all these sections stood their ground ideologically during the war-years of chauvinism and democratic illusions, that some sections are fairly strong, and that the bourgeoisie singled out leaders of the Greeks, French, German, Dutch, Belgian, Italian, Indian, British and American comrades for "special attention," if not through imprisonment, then through the firing squads. BECAUSE OF ITS PROGRAMME Trotskyism is considered an international menace by the bourgeoisie; we should not scorn the views of

the reaction, which usually recognise far better than some of us do what our programme entails and what our historic mission is. In the teeth of opposition by the ruling class, the Social Democracy and Stalinism, under the most difficult conditions, the FI cadres, despite relatively high losses, held their ground, not only programmatically but also organisationally. Even here in South Africa we are a long way from a party, but we have not lost ground in any way but have made significant strides into the national, trade union and student movements, residents' Action Committees, etc., and continued with our Workers Voice despite three warnings by some pretty high authorities to tone down or shut up, and despite Provincial Council resolution to ban us.

Above all, however, despite almost total isolation during the war, the various national sections developed practically identical views on all major questions, thereby illustrating the viability of the International. In spite of the sabotage of the Shachtmanites, the new sections now arising after the war, one after another declare their allegiance to the International, as an established fact, an existing body, with a developed program and strategy. This must be kept firmly in mind, whenever we try to open our eyes a little too wide at the many admitted weaknesses in the International. And when Shachtman and his friends shout: "The FI is dead! the FI died during the war!" it is hardly unnatural for James Cannon to suspect that the WP kept its tongue in its cheek when it, at the same time, shouted for unity.

In addition to the WP attitude to the International, is its attitude on the question of the party. This is expressed in its criticism of the "regime" in the SWP. I can see no evidence of bureaucratism on the part of the SWP leadership. The Minority is given every chance to state its views. Its resolutions are published in Internal Bulletins. Far more space is not infrequently given to the Minority than to the Majority. On international questions (e.g. the democratic question in Europe), its views are openly aired in the Fourth International. It was free to form a faction to fight for unity with the WP. What is bureaucratic about such a "regime"? Is this Zinovievism or Leninism? The fact that we are able to know the views of Morrow and Goldman is already a good answer.

All this talk of monolithism and bureaucratism is strongly reminiscent of the petty bourgeois opposition in the 1939-40 controversy and split. Such talk almost invariably paves the way for a flagrant violation of party discipline and for a criminal split. The Minority merely repeats the split-recklessness, bred from petty bourgeois pessimism, disillusionment, frustration, instability and the "I don't care" attitude, which characterised, with few exceptions, the splitters who left Trotsky and the FI in 1940. The new petty bourgeois minority proclaims "Zinoviev! Stalinism! Monolithism! Bureaucratism!" when they feel the heavy hand of the "Cannon regime" come down on them. But they forget one small thing. That a Bolshevik comrade only raises his hand when his party is being struck.

Theoretical Differences with the Shachtmanites

It will still be remembered, let us hope, that Shachtman

formed a bloc with Burnham who rejected dialectical materialism and Marxist method. Eastman and others also began with an attack on dialectics and ended up with Roosevelt. Shachtman and Burnham left each other, but their association was not without its effect on the WP. Dialectics, at least in those New Internationals which the WP sends us whether we order, or do not order them, is no longer demanded and propagated by the WP. In the SWP Goldman, leader of the Minority, ridiculed a genuine effort of a young SWP comrade to apply the dialectic to the industrial methods of arc welding.

The WP attitude on Russia, China, etc., flow from a study of these events in isolation from their world and principled context -- a drift into the mud of empiricism. Specific events and not general tendencies form the cornerstone of not a few of the WP judgments. In one of the documents relating to unity, a Minority member stated that the correctness of a position can only be checked by the passage of time. This is a tendency towards pragmatism, being connected as it is with a tendency which is rather quiet on dialectics nowadays, and lays itself thereby bare to all sorts of bourgeois-democratic and Zionist impressionism.

Programmatic Differences with the Shachtmanites

The WP attitude on Russia -- that the gains of 1917 have in toto been destroyed, that Russian foreign policy is imperialism, that its defence against imperialism is a betrayal of socialism -- constitutes a great danger to our international. Shachtman has deserted a vital position before it has been lost. The question of Russia, however, is not only a matter of still defending Russia against all the imperialist preparations against her nationalised property relationships, while placing in the foreground the necessity to defend the rising, spreading revolutionary wave. Flowing from this principled stand on the USSR arise some very important practical considerations related to our work in each country.

If the CP is merely the foreign tool of Stalinist imperialism, then we cannot work with the CP, cannot form a united front with the CP, cannot support the CP in elections, etc. This is the attitude of the WP. Such a course if pursued by us would lead to stagnation and disaster. A correct orientation towards the CP and its rank and file is very essential.

To be sure, the CP policy follows the dictates of the Kremlin. But the CP line is also influenced by the capitalist class in its own country. It was no accident when the former leader of the U.S. CP Browder said that he would be with American democracy in a war between the USA and the USSR. National patriotism, connected with the Popular Front, pro-war policies of the Stalintern mingles with Kremlin influence inside the CP and exerts its pressure on the line. But there is a third force operating on and in the CP: the workers and oppressed races. The CP is a workers party. In S.A., most of its members are Non European. They joined the CP because it has fought their battles, has a tradition, talks socialism, opposes the colour bar. The working class factor lends its due weight to CP policy. Thus the policy of the CP is in detail (while keeping within general limits of Stalinism) determined by three interacting forces. Take

South Africa, and the CP line on the colour question which varies according to the relative pressures of various factors. Firstly, the foreign policy of the Stalin regime. Secondly, there is the pressure of Liberalism (imperialism) and petty bourgeois Whites on and in the party, pushing the CP into compromises on the colour question. Thirdly, there is the pressure of the Non Europeans and other militants. The resultant CP policy is determined by the relative strength of these forces. The CP has to be approached as a workers' organisation with a false leadership and policy. This has in the past been our approach when we supported the CP candidates, attended conferences with them, entered united fronts, etc., with the CP. Entry of the WP into the SWP might dangerously affect this part of our work and of the work of almost every section which seriously wants to grow at the expense of the CP. The theoretical dangers of the WP position are dangerous in practice as well.

At a time in history when the proletariat in America, Europe and England is conducting a grand struggle, and when socialists are playing a leading role in the nationalist revolutions in the East, the IKD a small German group came forward (or rather still does) with its theses that the FI must stop talking about the Proletariat and its revolution, and instead propagate the slogan of "Peoples' National Struggles". This revisionism has been given the widest publicity and sympathetic treatment, by the WP. This theory strikes at the roots of Marxism, and also the Theory of the Permanent Revolution.

The WP attitude on China recently found an echo in the Indian party, with the Ceylonese opposing (according to our information). While the question of the anti-imperialist war in China has been pushed into the background by the defeat of Japan, the question of the civil struggle in China is of the greatest importance for our comrades there and elsewhere. The WP during the anti-Japanese war withdrew its support for the national-liberatory war against imperialism and for self-determination. Now, with this war over, the WP advances the notion in Labor Action that the struggle today is ONLY a fight between Stalin-imperialism and American imperialism. The WP does not take the view that this struggle expresses the class civil war in China, of the workers and peasants against Imperialist (USA) interference and domination, and against Chinese landlordism and capitalism. The WP does not support the ACTUAL struggle of the workers and peasants against Chiang Kai Shek, although "in principle" (!!) it "advocated" this struggle while opposing the national war against Japanese imperialism. Is this not treachery to our movement, to the idea and practice of the class struggle? Originally the WP attitude on China grew out of their attitude on Russia. Now, again their "theory" of Stalin-imperialism forces them into an abstentionist position (to be mild) with regard to the class struggle in China and also the new anti-imperialist struggle. For us this is tantamount to a betrayal of the struggle for national emancipation. For advanced Europe it is OK for WP writers to flirt with "national" (petty bourgeois) struggles. But it is not OK to give a hand to the national movements of backward, semi-colonial countries!

The same type of "abstentionist" policy was followed by the WP with regard to India when Congress led the 1942 struggles and its leaders and rank and file were gaoled. The Indian Congress is led by

Indian bourgeois, and so: no support for the Indian bourgeois! This is the false attitude of the WP judging by the meagre information we have been able to read. Our comrades were once said to have one member on Congress Executive. Our Indian comrades are most energetic in fighting for independence, and solidarised with Congressmen who were gaoled. They criticise Congress, but did not oppose Congress, especially at the pre-independence juncture. Nor is it only a question of critical support for Congress, but of our comrades getting into Congress to fight the bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas inside Congress, and to win cadres to the ideas of the Permanent Revolution which alone offers a way out for India. But, no! The WP does not want to be mixed up in such complications, where there exists a colonial bourgeoisie which opposes imperialism and exploits workers and peasants. Although WP came out in support for Indo-China and Java, their stand on China and India was an ideological betrayal which, if brought into our ranks and translated into action will besmirch our banner, for all time.

On yet another colonial-national issue the WP swerved off the rails -- on Palestine. On the basis of a rigid, simple principle of free immigration, the WP forgot about the principle of self-determination for Palestine (or subordinated it), focussed attention on Palestine as a solution to the Jewish question, repeated the old Zionist wailings about the broken promises of GB and demanded free immigration of Jews into Palestine. The WP had yielded badly to Zionist pressure, and floundered again on the all important question of national struggles in backward countries. Instead of placing the stress on the opening of the doors of the big countries to all refugees, on the rehabilitation of displaced Jews in Europe, they placed all their emphasis on Palestine as the immediate solution, and, sadly ignoring the national aspirations of the Arabs, subordinated the slogan of self-determination to the slogan of unrestricted immigration. For WP all solutions must be as simple as possible. If you can say, for instance, that Britain should be open for persecuted Non Europeans to enter, then, for Shachtman, it is the same thing to say that South Africa must open her doors to unrestricted White immigration. Every colonial worker will see the difference on the emphasis. The WP fails to point out this difference: that the slogan of free immigration applied to an advanced country is one matter; but to stress this slogan for an oppressed nationality and country, where the prime slogans are for self-determination, is to leave the colonial struggle in the lurch. Our PC is still busy with an article on "Zionism" which, inter alia, deals in greater length with this deviation of the Shachtmanites. What, however, is rather disappointing, is that our oversea comrades have not exposed this recent example of the WP's motion to the Right.

These are the major programmatic differences on international questions. They are obviously serious. If unity in any way has a Right-ward effect on the FI stand on the colonies it would be the greatest calamity. For a mass party unity with another, rival, party having such an anti-Leninist attitude on the colonial questions, could well be disastrous. How much more is this not the case with a party like the SWP trying to transcend the propaganda pupa?

It is the duty of our group to bring the significance of the colonial questions into the discussions on unity, so that if unity eventually comes about, we shall know that we have not done nothing in opening our eyes to the dangers of unity. Unity with caution, Comrade Cannon said in America. The eyes of the entire International must be open wide if this caution is to be exercised.

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LETTER TO THE EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT

By Natalia

Mexico D.F., March 18, 1946

To the European Secretariat:

Dear Comrades,

I have read your resolution on the question of unity between the SWP and the WP. Allow me to present to you my ideas on the manner in which it seems to me unity should be considered.

It is clear to me that the WP accepts the fundamental principles of revolutionary socialism, as they are represented in the works of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. At this moment, those who are for the European revolution against the democratic imperialisms and against Stalin should be in one party. All those who favor continued separation do the Fourth International great injury. I think it is criminal for us to contribute to the disorientation of the workers by presenting them with two Trotskyist groups, without being able to explain to them with satisfactory political arguments the reason for the separation.

There are undoubtedly important differences, but we have always declared that these differences are compatible with membership in one party. The fact that our official party has not polemicized during 6 years of complete political freedom affirms that the differences (such as the Chinese question) did not appear to it to be fundamental. In the struggle against the minority, in 1939 and 1940, L.D. explicitly declared that the minority could and should remain in the same party, even if it was against the defense of the Soviet Union. All that we asked of the minority was that they carry out discipline in action. And did we not have in France several years before the war a strong minority against the defense of the USSR? Yet no one thought of expelling them and relations between the two tendencies remained excellent.

In Russia, when the question of the insurrection of 1917 presented itself, two members of the Political Bureau, over the heads of the Central Committee, distributed a document against the insurrection. They were not expelled from the party, and after the revolution they played an important role: the one, Kamenev, as president of the Moscow Soviet; the other, Zinoviev, as president of the Leningrad Soviet and later of the Third International. Lenin proposed their expulsion but did not get a majority in the Central Committee. And

during the civil war, when the life and death of the revolution were balanced on a razor's edge, there were impassioned discussions on the subject of the regular army and the drawing of military specialists into that army. No one was expelled for this. Allow me to remind you also of the well-known example of Brest-Litovsk. The situation was very precarious, the opposition to Lenin's decisions very serious. No one was expelled. And when, in the history of the Bolshevik Party, differences went so far as to produce splits, the possibilities of reestablishing unity were never scorned.

It seems to me that the best road toward unification is through concrete actions jointly undertaken by the SWP and the WP, through which one could come to understand the differences better on the one hand, while on the other hand coming closer together and overcoming the present estrangement. The refusal of common action against the fascist Smith in Los Angeles, in the municipal elections in New York, in the organization of a meeting for Greece, does this not prove how artificial this estrangement is, for one cannot explain these refusals from the point of view of principle.

You, the European Secretariat, have asked that the discussions be opened up immediately. This proposal is dictated by your lack of knowledge of the differences. As I said at the beginning of this letter, there was every possibility to discuss during 6 years, and our party did not do it. It therefore did not take these differences very seriously. In any case both parties reciprocally know their respective positions. We can collect all the relevant material, send it to you and you will study it. Your duty then will be to say, yes or no, whether these questions are compatible with membership in one party, and this within a maximum period of 2 to 3 months. There will be a Convention of the SWP in 6 months; at this convention the question of unity with the WP will be decided. If unity is rejected the minority will not be able to raise it again for two years. Whatever is necessary must be done in the remaining time before the Convention to prepare for unity. If the discussion is opened up, it must be opened not in the way proposed by the SWP, magazine against magazine, but in a joint internal bulletin and in common meetings. This is the only way to alleviate the atmosphere that has been created, in which it is difficult for the minority, and especially their rank and file comrades, to live.

If the International Executive Committee and all the sections of the International do their utmost in favor of unity between the SWP and the WP, they will make an important contribution to our movement in the United States and to the entire Fourth International.

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LETTER OF THE RCP (HOLLAND)

April 7, 1946

To the SWP:

Dear Friends,

Of course we are, as all sections of the IVth International, alarmed by the fact that a split seems to be inevitable in your Party. The threat of the Minority to join the WP "if you persist in your stand against unity" is entirely in contradiction with the duty of responsible party members who have to strengthen devotion to the Party, even if decisions have been taken which they cannot subscribe.

Still being an illegal group we convinced the members of the necessity to proclaim ourselves as a section of the IVth International, though at that moment we did not know anything about her activities and though we considered it very well possible that there would appear to be differences on some points. We knew, however, the program of our World party and were firmly convinced that the future of the World proletariat entirely depends upon the success or failing of the Fourth. It is a shame that old Trotskyists now give such a bad example to thousands of young revolutionaries in the whole world who find their way to the International.

Even if your Party had not given sufficient opportunity for discussion to the Minority (but they had any occasion a party member may want to defend their standpoint, as we saw from the material we received), it would have been impermissible to leave the SWP instead of fighting for the right of discussion. Therefore the centrifugal tendencies of the Minority can only be considered as centrifugal tendencies towards Bolshevism. The thought to serve "unity" by splitting the party (and not a menshevist but a serious party of the IVth International) is ridiculous, to say it very weakly.

We on our part think unity a very important thing though we are no unity-fools. But, in spite of all, our World party has become the revolutionary center of the world. This fact cannot but influence the attitude of all kinds of revolutionaries who were not yet convinced of the right of existence of the IVth.

Though all we read from the discussions did not encourage us very much in view of Shachtman c.s. we do not know very much about the actual Workers Party. When we pronounce our confidence in your leading comrades and condemn the split-tendencies of the Minority, we trust that you will not neglect any opportunity which can lead to the reinforcement of the Trotskyist movement in America on a sound bolshevist basis.

With Communist greetings,

E.P. Mulder
Sol Santen

STATEMENT OF THE MINORITY ON THE INTERVENTION OF THE IS
AND COMRADE NATALIA IN THE UNITY QUESTION

In our letter of January 26 to the PC Majority we wrote: "If in the coming weeks we can see any sign that we can reasonably consider as a move on your part toward resumption of negotiations for unity with the Workers Party, we shall remain in the SWP in order to work for the cause of unity. If, on the other hand, you give no sign of a desire to reconsider your stand against unity, then our place will be with the WP."

Important developments since then, however, have caused us to reconsider.

We have remained in the party, not because the majority leadership made any move toward resumption of negotiations for unity, but because of the intervention in this question of the ES (now the IS).

First came the ES' "specific recommendations" for "establishing in common with the WP a list of questions for discussion, organizing and pursuing the discussion." Now, in a reply to the WP, the IS has promised it will "bend every effort from now on to bring about a prompt clarification of this problem." Furthermore the IS has notified the SWP leadership: "The IS is unanimous in believing that this discussion should be begun and carried out not in an incidental but in a systematic and organized manner, in order to arrive as rapidly as possible at a complete clarification of the situation."

It was and is our opinion that the IS fails to understand the nature of the discussion which should be carried on with the WP. The IS shares the view of the SWP majority that a political discussion is necessary when, in reality, the majority leadership knows in advance the results of the political discussion if the IS does not. Nevertheless, whereas for the majority leaders the "party to party" discussion is a means to evade unity, for the European members of the IS the discussion is apparently seriously meant for the purpose of learning what they do not now know.

In order to leave no stone unturned in the interests of unity, we have decided to remain in the party and await the results of the intervention of the IS.

Comrade N. has written a letter to the IS and the sections urging them to take a stand in favor of unity. We must frankly state that we assume that her efforts will be in vain in the face of the resistance of the SWP majority leadership. But we must submit our assumption to the test of future events.

Many of the supporters of unity in the International believe that, if the minority remains in the party, unity will be achieved in a short period. We do not believe so but we are willing to remain and see. If there is the slightest possibility that they are correct, that is enough to compel us not to leave as we had said we would in our letter of January 26. For it is our firm conviction that unity is by far the best possible solution to the present situation.

The members of the minority, as members of the party, will of course participate in discussing all the problems arising in the International. But as a faction we continue on the same basis as hitherto -- the question of unity.

Adopted April 8, 1946, New York.

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LETTER FROM FELIX MORROW
ON THE POSITION OF THE FRENCH MINORITY

To the Editors of the Internal Bulletin:

I submit the following for publication:

RESOLUTION OF THE FRENCH MINORITY - to the CC of the PCI

March 31, 1946

1. Without prejudging the political positions which are or have been taken by the SWP minority, nor prejudging its organizational attitude, we estimate that fusion between the SWP and WP is a present problem which should be made the subject of a serious international discussion.
2. Aware of the political problems posed by this fusion we declare:
 - a) That the political differences of the WP and the SWP are not incompatible with membership in the International nor with unity in one party.
 - b) We furthermore recall that our International has always judged thus, as did Leon Trotsky himself.
3. In view of the preceding, we consider it our duty to ask the leadership of the SWP to open without delay negotiations with a view to fusion with the WP.
4. In order to facilitate the rapprochement of the ranks of the two parties, we believe that united action is necessary immediately and in as many instances as possible.
5. Finally, we ask the IS to admit the WP immediately into the International as a sympathizing organization.

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RESOLUTION OF IABCR SOCIALIST GROUP (AUSTRALIA)

Balmain, N.S.W.

April 24, 1946

Mr. J.P. Cannon
116 University Place
New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrade,

We are in receipt of documents sent by air mail to N. Origlass expressing the attitude of the C.C. RCP towards the threatened split of the Morrow-Goldman minority from the SWP, and the reply of the PC SWP to same dated March 19, 1946.

I have been instructed to convey to you the following resolution which was carried unanimously at the last meeting of the above group:

"Having studied the relevant documents in the present dispute in the SWP, we express regret at the anti-party attitude which has been adopted by Comrades Morrow and Goldman, and endorse the attitude of the SWP majority."

Yours fraternally,

(signed) J. McClelland,
Secretary

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